# ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP TRAITS REQUIRED FOR THE

# INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR POSITION

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by

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation research is dedicated to my father James W. Paitson.

# ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to a) examine leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors and b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, with particular regards to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors, which are concepts drawn from Zhang et al.'s (1997) Revised Leadership Scale for Sports (RLSS), an instrument specifically designed to measure research on sports-specific leadership behavior.

A purposive sampling design was implemented. Fourteen participants with extensive experience in NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA intercollegiate athletics were recruited to secure expert insight. Participants included four University Presidents and four Athletic Directors, one each from NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA institutions. Remaining participants included two Conference Commissioners, two Head Coaches, and two Senior Athletic Administrators, all from NCAA Division I institutions. Semi-structured interviews were implemented (Krueger & Casey, 2000). A listing of traits required for the Athletic Director role were collected through an inductive approach. Answers to series of follow-up questions provided the in-depth details of each behavior mentioned in the initial response. A series of structured questions—with each intended to be representative of each of the six RLSS constructs to confirm the construct validity for the current research—were implemented utilizing a deductive approach. A classical

content analysis was applied to address the research question.  A holistic coding approach was taken in reviewing the participants' initial descriptions to identify types of traits associated with the Athletic Director role.  A descriptive open-coding process was utilized to carefully code the data line-by-line to capture the overall meaning intended.  A constant comparison analysis was conducted to systematically condense data into codes and then to develop themes.  As a result, the following themes emerged as the leadership traits required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director position: (a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary.  Recommendations for future research and practical implications are offered.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**CHAPTER I**

**Introduction**

Gone are the days when the intercollegiate Athletic Director position was

primarily a landing spot for retired coaches (Belzer, 2015a). College athletics have

become big business (Koesters, Brown, & Grady, 2015), attracting dynamic personalities

and top executives from inside the sports industry, as well as individuals outside of sports

(Belzer, 2015a). As such, selecting the right leader not only includes evaluating the

candidate's credentials, but also assessing their managerial styles to decide which

applicant is the best organizational fit (Dalton, 2006). Securing the right leader is

imperative to an organization's or university's success. Business executives note

leadership buy-in and support are the foremost reasons for successfully executing

strategic initiatives (Austin et al., 2013). However, 61% of business executives recognize

their organization's inability to effectively implement their business strategy (Austin et

al., 2013). Gallup reported teams with badly managed employees are 50% less

productive and 44% less profitable than teams with well-managed employees (Ripper,

2013). In this study, the researcher explored differences and similarities between NCAA

Division I University Presidents' (also defined as Chancellors at some universities and

colleges) and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for

the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics.

**Background**

The skill sets and leadership styles required for the role of intercollegiate college

Athletic Directors vary, in part, by the level of the institution (Belzer, 2015a). To

understand the challenges Athletic Directors face, it is important to review the current

state and focus of intercollegiate athletics (Kirwan & Turner, 2010). It also is important to review the Athletic Directors' profiles, Athletic Directors' relationships with the University President, and the Athletic Directors' various leadership styles (Duderstadt, 2009).

  **State and focus of intercollegiate athletics.** In 2015, the Associated Press reported the inaugural College Football Playoff (CFP) bowl games paid over $500 million to conferences and schools, with the largest shares going to the universities in the highest-profile conferences (Associated Press, 2015). This CFP represents an increase of about $200 million from the 2014 Bowl Championship Series (BCS), making it the largest post-season football media rights payout ever (Associated Press, 2015). Additionally, the Power 5 conferences received the influx of millions of dollars in new revenues secured via media rights contracts signed between 2011 and 2013 (Cheslock & Knight, 2015). These developments have contributed to a major transition in intercollegiate athletics (Cheslock & Knight, 2015) and as a byproduct, have also created an outcry for players to receive a portion of the revenue (Fowler, 2014).

  The most appropriate person to handle the changing environment is the intercollegiate Athletic Director (Rittenberg, 2014). As the field's most expert practitioners, Athletic Directors are recognized by University Presidents, conference commissioners, administrators from the NCAA, and Faculty Athletic Representatives (FARs) as the most capable individuals to set the stage for change (Rittenberg, 2014). Dynamic personalities and skilled leaders are required to lead these complex athletic, educational, and business operations (Belzer, 2015a). In addition to their day-to-day duties, Athletic Directors have to be prepared to react to landmark court cases. A recent

example would be <u>*O'Bannon v. NCAA*</u> No. CV 09-3329 (N.D. Cal. July 21, 2009) in which it was ruled that player likeness was improperly used in Electronic Arts Sports' (EA Sports) NCAA video games, which then opened the door for student-athletes to receive the full cost of attendance (Vint, 2014). Rulings and subsequent appeals of cases on player unions—<u>*CAPA v. Northwestern*</u> and the <u>*Jenkins v. NCAA*</u>—antitrust case could further change the college landscape (McCann, 2015; Mullen, 2015; Trahan & Gomila, 2015; Vint, 2014). In 2014, it was speculated that a reaction to *O'Bannon* and the accompanying media coverage promoting pay for play (Koba, 2014), resulted in the Power 5 conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Pacific 12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference) receiving autonomy from the NCAA to create their own set of rules separate from the rest of the Division I institutions (NCAA, 2014; Solomon, 2014b). The NCAA also granted Division I schools the opportunity to provide additional benefits to student-athletes (Ellis, 2014).

The increased revenues at the Power 5 conference schools, with some schools exceeding $100 million annually in income, led to expenses rising in the form of new and renovated stadiums, arenas, ballparks, and training facilities, as well as escalating coaches' salaries (Cheslock & Knight, 2015). The spending at Power 5 conferences has spurred spending growth at the remaining Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), Non-Football (NF), and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) schools, all of which hope to complete with the bigger schools (Cheslock & Knight, 2015). However, without the same ability to drive external revenues to the levels of their high-profile counterparts, these institutions have looked to increase revenues through an expansion of student fees and university allocations, but this model will be tough to sustain in light of rising student

debt and shrinking academic budgets (Cheslock & Knight, 2015). The presence of college athletics has at times compromised the integrity of higher education institutions and produced tensions with academics (Fine, 2015). However, in some cases, college administrators either do not spend enough time focusing on the financial impact of their athletic departments or are more interested in raising their athletics profile than focusing on containing costs (Blumenstyk, 2014).

**Athletic Director profile.** For an intercollegiate athletic department to succeed, the Athletic Director must possess the business knowledge to supervise intercollegiate athletic programs and serve the greater mission of the university (Hardin, Cooper, & Huffman, 2013). However, an Athletic Director also manages the athletic department's function in relation to the university's overall mission. In recent years, Athletic Directors have become an important part of the university hierarchy, and more Athletic Directors' employment contracts have included an academic rank, such as Vice President and Director of Athletics (Chandler, 2011).

Intercollegiate athletics is an element of the larger university, and differing opinions remain as to whether athletics contributions are in sync or in conflict with the mission of an academic institution (Denhart, Villwock, & Vedder, 2010). Critics argue that an overemphasis on sports denigrates academics and creates a culture that deemphasizes the primary educational mission, while detractors claim that student-athletes in the major revenue-generating sports have been exploited by their universities (Denhart et al., 2010). Proponents of intercollegiate athletics point to leadership and teamwork skills learned by the student-athletes, as well as the national visibility provided through athletic event coverage. Advocates also note college athletics provide

entertainment value, generate campus spirit, and unite communities (Denhart et al., 2010).

Athletic Directors who invest their time in developing interpersonal relationships, empowering their staffs, and articulating a clear vision for their department are more effective leaders (Scott, 1999). Branch (1990) indicated a "need to examine in still more depth those leader behaviors having a positive influence on the relationships between Athletic Directors and their subordinates, as well as those behaviors influencing the entire organizations' health and effectiveness" (p. 172).

**University Presidents' roles in athletics.** Ultimately, it is the President of a college or university who is accountable for the integrity of the institution (NCAA, n.d.g.). With regards to intercollegiate athletics, governance comes in the form of institutional control (NCAA, n.d.g.). However, a survey of University Presidents determined that only 25% of all NCAA Division I Presidents believed the Presidents of big-time programs are in control of their programs (Green, 2012). Seventy-five percent of Presidents surveyed believed too much money is being spent on intercollegiate athletics (Green, 2012).

Mounting anxieties exist regarding to the sustainability of spending trends in intercollegiate athletics (Knight Commission, 2009). To determine whether the trends are desirable within the campus community, in 2005, the NCAA Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics was formed and collectively focused on four tasks: (a) fiscal responsibility (b) implications of academic values and standards, (c) presidential leadership of internal and external constituencies, and (d) student-athlete well-being (NCAA News, 2005).

A Knight Commission Report (2010) also noted concerns regarding spending trends and predicted any increased subsidies of athletics would affect the overall student body in the form of higher mandated student athletic fees and any cuts to spending would come by dropping non-revenue-generating teams. The Knight Commission (2010) report also called for a focus on academics first, as well as responsible spending. To accomplish these objectives, the Knight Commission (2010) proposed: (a) requiring greater transparency and the reporting of better measures to compare athletics spending to academic spending, (b) rewarding practices to make academic values a priority, and (c) treating college athletes as students first and foremost—not as professionals.

Presidential control remains a challenge (Knight Commission, n.d.b.). In a 2009 survey, Division I University Presidents admitted limitations in controlling events on their own campuses. External influences were particularly problematic. Specifically, it was perceived that lucrative television contracts undermined Presidents' influences over their athletic departments (Knight Commission, 2010). Moreover, Presidents noted prospective reforms were possible at the conference level, but were difficult given the conference's self-interest (Knight Commission, 2009). Dating back to 1991 the Knight Commission has noted University Presidents are the key to successful reform (Knight Commission, n.d.b.).

**Leadership styles.** Numerous leadership styles exist, but this research focused on styles most applicable to the Athletic Director position—executive leadership and values-based leadership. Athletic Directors must balance the role of CEO and be accountable for multimillion-dollar operations, all while maintaining focus on the overall mission of the university (Thomas, 2010). Values-based leadership behaviors are moral,

authentic, and ethical in nature (Copeland, 2014). Values-based leadership styles include spiritual, servant, authentic, ethical, and Transformational Leadership (Copeland, 2014).

As it pertains to intercollegiate athletics, academics have weighed in on the effect of leadership styles, primarily with coaching behaviors (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980). Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) devised the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) to conclude whether specific leadership theories could be applied to sports coaching (Moen, Høigaard, & Peters, 2014). The LSS is a modification of the authors' 1978 Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML). The MML stated that a leader's (i.e. coach's) success or effectiveness is reliant on his or her correspondence to the preferences of his or her members (i.e. athletes), in addition to representative environmental conditions (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). The MML (Chelladurai, 1980; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978) is an amalgamation of Contingency Theory (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967), Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971; House, 1996; House & Dessler, 1974), and adaptive-reactive theory (Osborn & Hunt, 1975). Contingency Theory maintains the leader must adjust his or her management approach to the circumstances (Miner, 2015). Effectiveness depends on the leader's style and situational favorableness (Chelladurai, 1984).

Path-Goal Theory asserts that to realize desired organizational outcomes, a leader's subordinates must be motivated to perform certain tasks to achieve the wanted results (Mehta & Anderson, 2015). As needed, the leader provides guidance and support to the followers. How effectively the follower will perform and his or her level of satisfaction is based upon the congruence between the follower's preference for a leader's behavior and the leader's actual behavior (Chelladurai, 1984). In adaptive-reactive

theory (Osborn & Hunt, 1975), conceived leader behavior is a dichotomy comprising of adaptive behavior and reactive behavior.  The researchers explained adaptive behavior as the degree leaders acclimate themselves to the requisite expectations of the organization. Osborn and Hunt (1975) defined reactive behavior by how the leader's behavior adjusts to the preferences of his or her followers (Greenwell, Danzey-Bussell, & Shonk, 2014). It also is assumed that the subordinates react principally to the leader's reactive behavior (Chelladurai, 1984).

**Previous Literature**

A few research studies exist pertaining to the Athletic Director's role and his or her self-assessment of leadership (Barnhill, 1998; Manning, 2012).  Scott (1999) sought to evaluate perceived differences between the Athletic Director's view of his or her leadership and its effect on his or her athletic department's organizational climate, versus the viewpoint of head coaches.  Organizational climate is characterized as the recurring patterns of behavior, shared attitudes, and feelings portraying life in an organization (Scott, 1999).  In a related study, Manning (2012) studied NCAA Athletic Directors' perceptions of their own leadership styles related to Transformational and Transactional Leadership.

**Problem Statement**

Identifying the right leader for an intercollegiate Athletic Director's position is critical to contributing to the overall mission, as well as the cost/benefit success, of a university or college (Hutchinson & Bennett, 2012; Nite, Singer, & Cunningham, 2013). A lack of depth in specific research on the role of the Athletic Director exists, and even less exists on his or her effective leadership styles.  The changing economic landscape of

NCAA athletics at the Division I, II, III and NAIA levels bring candidates of varying backgrounds and leadership styles to the position of Director of Athletics (Lattinville & Speyer, 2012; Wong, 2014). Additionally, the terms and conditions of hiring Athletic Directors have become more sophisticated (Lattinville & Speyer, 2012). Providing University Presidents with information that would effectively serve as a guideline to assist them in selecting candidates whose leadership style is the best match for their institution—and thus, may lead to outcomes that are improved—is important. Moreover, the enhanced measurement of Athletic Directors' and Presidents' perspectives on leadership will provide for improved research.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to a) examine leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors, and b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with particular regards to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors, which are concepts drawn from prior research.

In particular, the study drew upon prior research (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Zhang, Jensen, & Mann, 1997) to inform the development of an improved instrument for measuring Athletic Directors' and Presidents' leadership styles with particular regard to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors. Following extensive interviews of experts, an instrument was developed to examine these and other constructs.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study was to accurately measure and define the effective

behaviors needed for the Director of Athletics at NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA

levels. The study led to the initial development of an instrument used to examine

Athletic Directors' and University Presidents' leadership preferences. Results from this

study may also be used to bridge the existing knowledge gap regarding leadership styles

specific to the intercollegiate Athletic Director position. Additionally, this analysis

provides University Presidents who oversee intercollegiate athletic programs at the

NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA levels with information and tools to assist them in the

hiring of a prospective intercollegiate Athletic Director by identifying the leadership style

best matching the needs, missions, and goals of the university and its stakeholders. The

results of the research provide insight to university stakeholders, including student-

athletes, coaches, faculty members, athletic administrators, and student-athlete support

officers. The results of the research also may benefit university and government policy

and decision makers who are stakeholders in intercollegiate athletics.

**Research Question**

What are the characteristic traits of effective NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA

Athletic Directors as perceived by Athletic Directors, University Presidents, Athletic

Administrators, Head Coaches, and NCAA Conference Commissioners?

**Theoretical Framework**

Zhang, Jensen, and Mann (1997) developed the Revised Leadership Scale for

Sport (RLSS) as a means of examining six coaching behavior styles: (a) Autocratic, (b)

Democratic, (c) Positive Feedback, (d) Training and Instruction, (e) Social Support, and

(f) Situational Consideration Behavior (Pilus & Saadan, 2009). Zhang et al. (1997) revised Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) by modifying and revising the three versions (athlete preference, athlete perception, and coach self-evaluation). The RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997) also retained similar preceding phrases, and the same 5-point Likert-like response scale from the LSS. Two new factors were initially introduced: Situational Consideration Behavior and Group Maintenance Behavior (Van Gastel, 2010). Situational Consideration Behavior takes into account a coach's behavioral reaction to contemplating situational dynamics (such as the time, individual, environment, team, and game): "setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals; differentiating coaching methods at different stages; and assigning an athlete to the right game position" (Zhang et al., 1997, p. 109). The authors also recommended Group Maintenance Behavior to take into consideration the impact of a coach's behavior on group cohesion. The designation included developing the relationship between the athletes as teammates, structuring and coordinating the athletes' activities, and improving the coach-athlete relationship (Van Gastel, 2010).

A 5-stage process was established to revise the LSS: (a) preliminary modification and revision by adding factors and items; (b) a linguistic check of the initial revised scale; (c) a test of the content validity of the initially revised scale; (d) an investigation of the construct validity and internal-consistency reliability of the initially revised scale; and (e) the proposed final revision of the scale (Zhang et al., 1997). Coaches were interviewed in various sports, and, as such, 240 new items were created and added to the original 40 LSS items (Zhang et al., 1997). This list was reduced to 120 items after three linguistic specialists and 17 coaching leadership experts tested the items (Zhang et al., 1997).

Ultimately, 60 items (23 from the original LSS scale) were included in the final RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997). In the end, due to the uncertainties of the actuality of such a factor, the Group Maintenance Behavior was removed from the final RLSS model (Zhang et al., 1997).

Although the RLSS is considered suitable for assessing leadership, Zhang et al. (1997) admitted the instrument is not a "perfect measurement instrument with respect to measurement standards," (Zhang, et al, 1997, p. 114). While content validity was heightened for Autocratic Behavior, "the three versions of the factor had low alpha coefficients," (Zhang, et al., 1997, p. 118). However, the authors claim the RLSS improved the measurement characteristics of the LSS in several ways, including: (a) coaches produced the items, thus they are more sport specific; (b) the study was conducted in the U.S., rather than Canada (LSS); (c) the large samples improved the generalizability and the application of the scale; (d) coaching self-assessment measurement properties were verified and enhanced; and (e) constructs of the scale were especially upgraded (Van Gastel, 2010). Given these limitations and the desire to focus on new populations, Zhang et al.'s (1997) theory was utilized as a theoretical framework guiding this study.

**Definitions**

The following definitions were used throughout this dissertation:

**Amateurism.** As defined by the NCAA, student-athletes are classified as amateurs as long as they do not receive a salary for participating in athletics; do not have contracts with professional teams; do not collect prize money above actual and necessary expenses; play with professionals; tryout, practice or compete with a professional team;

benefit from an agent or a prospective agent; agree to be represented by an agent; or delay initial full-time collegiate enrollment to participate in organized sports competition ("NCAA," n.d.a., para. 4).

**Athletic Director.** The lead administrator of the department of athletics who is responsible for all functions of the department, including revenue generation, finance, facility operations, student-athlete development, event presentation, human resources, and public relations (Sportzedge, 2012).

**Autocratic Leadership.** The autocratic leader controls all facets of the given task and, as such, takes control of the team and closely scrutinizes a project from start to finish (Flynn, 2015; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).

**Chancellor**. A leader of a college or university system. Typically a chancellor is either the executive or often a ceremonial head of the university. For the purposes of this dissertation, the researcher refers to the lead position of the university as the University President.

**Democratic Leadership.** Democratic Leadership also is known as participative leadership, whereby the leader calls for open discussion and input in making decisions. Democratic Leadership also is based on mutual respect between the leader and his or her followers (Flynn, 2015; Lewin et al., 1939).

**Intercollegiate athletics.** The sports played at college and universities within the structure of a national governing body (NCAA or NAIA), which establish rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements for the participating student-athletes (Oregonlaw, n.d.).

**Knight Commission.** The Knight Commission is an independent reform group dedicated to ensuring intercollegiate athletic programs function within the boundaries of the educational missions of their universities (Knight Commission, n.d.b.).

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.** Described as a "hands off" leadership style, whereby the leader makes available the necessary tools and resources but followers are expected to solve the task with very little guidance from the leader (Flynn, 2015; Lewin et al., 1939).

**Leadership.** As defined by Kruse (2013, para. 1), "leadership is a process of social influence which maximizes efforts of others towards achievement of a goal."

**Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS).** Described by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) as "a 5-factor solution with 40 items describing the most salient dimensions of coaching behavior …" that were selected as the most meaningful. These factors were named Training and Instruction, Democratic Behavior, Autocratic Behavior, Social Support, and Positive Feedback (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980, p. 34).

**Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MDML).** A combination of Contingency Theory, Path-Goal Theory, and Adaptive-Reactive Theory (Chelladurai, 1980; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

**National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).** An association of 248 member small to mid-size colleges and universities charged with organizing intercollegiate athletic programs and events (NAIA, 2016).

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).** A non-profit association that regulates more than 450,000 college student-athletes in 1,281 institutions, conferences, or organizations in collegiate sport athletic competitions (Destination Athlete, 2015; National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016).

**NCAA Division I Power 5 conferences.** NCAA Division I athletic conferences with the highest public profile and revenues; many schools' budgets exceed $100 million annually (McMurphy, 2014). Members include schools from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific 12, and Southeastern Conference, as well as top independents such as Notre Dame (NCAA, 2014).

**NCAA Division I Group of 5 Bowl Championship Subdivision conferences (FBS).** NCAA Division I schools with a lower profile that generate less revenues than Power 5 Conference institutions. The Group of 5 includes schools in the American Athletic Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, Sun Belt Conference, and FBS independent schools (NCAA, 2014).

N**CAA Division I, Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).** Formerly known as NCAA Division I-AA, the FCS is one tier below the FBS in classification. FCS schools may offer a maximum of 63 football scholarships, and there is no attendance minimum to qualify for participation (NCAA, n.d.b.). These include the following conferences: Big Sky Conference, Big South Conference, Colonial Athletic Association, Ivy League, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Missouri Valley Conference, Northeast Conference, Ohio Valley Conference, Patriot League, Pioneer Football League, Southern Conference, Southland Conference, and Southwestern Athletic Conference (NCAA, n.d.j.).

**NCAA Division I, Non-Football (NF) schools.** Non-football schools participate in the America East Conference, the Atlantic Sun Conference, the Atlantic 10 Conference, the Big East Conference, the Big West Conference, the Horizon League, the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, the Missouri Valley Conference, The Summit

League, the West Coast Conference, the Western Athletic Conference, and as independents. Some schools within these leagues also participate in football, but in a separate league (NCAA, n.d.j.).

**Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS).** Zhang et al., (1997) developed the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) as a scale to examine six coaching behavioral styles: (a) Autocratic, (b) Democratic, (c) Positive Feedback, (d) Training and Instruction, (e) Social Support and (f) Situational Consideration Behaviors (Pilus & Saadan, 2009).

**Sherman Act.** The Sherman Act prohibits monopolistic business practices deemed to be anti-competitive by federal government regulators. The law is based on the concept that the public is best served by free competition in trade and business. The Sherman Act (Justice, n.d.) requires the federal government to investigate any violations of restraint of trade (Federal Trade Commission, n.d.).

**Student-Athlete.** Typically, a full-time student who also participates in a competitive NCAA or NAIA athletic program and receives scholarships in exchange for his or her participation in university sports teams (Gerdy, 2000).

**Title IX.** Title IX is a wide-ranging federal law disallowing discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded educational program or activity (Justice, n.d.).

**University President.** The head officer or leader of a college or university who develops policy, budgets, and builds trust with stakeholders, including alumni, faculty, staff, and students (Legon, Lombardi, & Rhoades, 2013).

**Delimitations**

This study is delimited to the University Presidents, Athletic Directors, Conference Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches of public and private universities competing at the NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA level. The interviews are delimited to 14 participants—University Presidents (4), Athletic Directors (4), Conference Commissioners (2), Athletic Administrators (2), and Head Coaches (2).

**Limitations**

The generalizations of this phase of research are limited to intercollegiate athletics, specifically NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA institutions. The author of this research relied on authentic responses from the participants. The research relied on the researcher accurately transcribing the participant's answers. The value of the study also relied on the accuracy of the researcher's coding of the data and determined themes. Additionally, the researcher relied on the reliability of the RLSS as a sound theoretical framework for this study. The researcher faced limitations in accessing institutional leaders and time needed to conduct interviews. Therefore, the researcher also relied on prior literature to inform the development of a new instrument to measure Athletic Directors' and Presidents' leadership preferences. Moreover, any generalizations of this research are limited to NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA institutions, as the researcher had limited resources available, preventing more extensive interviewing. Results may not be generalizable to relationships between the University President and other members of his or her cabinet or translatable to sports outside of the university situation. The researcher relied on the participants to fully understand the questions being asked in the interview. The researcher was limited by the amount of financial

resources and available time committed to the study.  Additionally, the researcher relied on the reliability of the RLSS, which serves as one potential source of guidance in developing a new instrument for the intended populations.

**Assumptions**

Several important assumptions were taken into account in order for this study to be successful.  It was assumed that the University Presidents', Athletic Directors', Conference Commissioners', Athletic Administrators', and Head Coaches' responses were based on interest in the research.  It also assumed that participants were knowledgeable enough to understand the content of all of the interview questions.  Given the extensive development and validation efforts of the RLSS, it was assumed that the RLSS can inform the development of a new instrument, though the researcher viewed the RLSS as only a starting point for this instrument's developmental effort.  It assumed participants would provide honest answers, based on confidential responses. Additionally, it assumed all data collected would be compiled from the intended participants, and the participants would respond based on interest in research.  Finally, it assumed intercollegiate athletics is an integral part of the university and the Presidents and Athletic Directors are administrators that are important to the success of the university.

The RLSS has been used in a variety of contexts to measure leadership in sports and the relationship between leadership and other variables (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Holmes, McNeil, Adorna, & Procaccino, 2008; Jambor & Zhang, 1997).  For the purpose of this study the researcher examined the reliability of the constructs of the newly developed instrument.  The RLSS has been used in a variety of contexts to

measure leadership in sport and the relationship between leadership and other variables (Beam et al., 2004; Holmes et al., 2008; Jambor & Zhang, 1997). The RLSS was developed to measure coaches' and players' leadership perspectives in six construct areas: Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors. It could be argued that Athletic Directors serve in much the same way that coaches do and, therefore, the RLSS can provide an initial perspective on Athletic Directors' leadership preferences. Thus, the instrument can also serve as an initial perspective on Presidents' leadership preferences for Athletic Directors, as the intention was to develop parallel instruments.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

This qualitative research study was organized into two phases, represented in the following five chapters: Chapter One introduces the study, the statement of the research problem, the purpose of the research, and the significance of the research, research questions, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions. Chapter II reviews the relevant literature with regards to the subjects of the state and focus of college athletics, the profile and leadership traits associated with NCAA Division I intercollegiate Athletic Directors, and the role of the University President in intercollegiate athletics. Additionally, various leadership styles were reviewed with a specific focus on the six RLSS constructs associated with this study, which may serve as an initial perspective on Athletic Directors and Presidents' leadership preferences. Chapter III reviews the methods and procedures of the two phases of this study and outline the details of the RLSS, which served as the theoretical framework for this study.

**CHAPTER II**

**Review of the Literature**

From a research perspective, there is much to be learned about the dynamics

involved in leading an intercollegiate athletic department at the NCAA Division I level.

As a lifelong professional in the sport management industry and a current Associate

Athletic Director of External Operations at an FCS Division I program, the researcher

believes gleaning more information on the Athletic Director position is valuable for

individuals in similar positions who aspire to become an Athletic Director. Within the

ever-changing dynamics of intercollegiate athletics, the researcher will evaluate,

specifically, the effective traits needed for the role by utilizing the modified version of

the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS, Zhang et al., 1997) as a potential starting

point for developing an instrument measuring Athletic Directors' and Presidents'

perspectives on preferred leadership styles for Athletic Directors.

The results of this research also are valuable to Athletic Directors currently in the

role, as the survey instrument provides an opportunity for a self-assessment and an

insight into the preferences of University Presidents. A holistic understanding of the

leadership skills and traits required for the position are valuable to intercollegiate Athletic

Directors who seek to improve themselves professionally. Additionally, the research is

valuable in assisting University Presidents who may not be fully acquainted with

intercollegiate athletics and the role of the Athletic Director. Also, the information in this

research serves as a valuable resource to University Presidents to receive a broader

understanding of the leadership styles needed for the position as they go through a search

to hire an Athletic Director for their university. In this study, the researcher focuses on

NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA institutions.  Interviews in which Athletic Directors answered questions as part of an electronic self-assessment of their leadership style support the development of a new instrument, and University Presidents answered a parallel set of questions focusing on their preferences for Athletic Directors' leadership preferences.  The following chapter offers several research studies on the Athletic Director role and leadership.  Chapter II is presented in six sections: (a) State and Focus of Intercollegiate Athletics: Amateurism Versus Commercialism, (b) Leadership Theory, (c) Previous Literature, (d) Intercollegiate Athletic Directors' Profiles, (e) University Presidents' Role in Intercollegiate Athletics, and (f) Revised Leadership Scale for Sport.

**State and Focus of Intercollegiate Athletics: Amateurism Versus Commercialism**

Many describe intercollegiate athletics as the "front porch" to, or the face of, colleges and universities (Desrochers, 2013).  However, since the beginning of intercollegiate athletic competition among National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions, a conflict between amateurism and commercialism has existed (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013).  The visibility associated with a winning program often raises a university's profile and enhances institutional reputation (Desrochers, 2013).  Many believe as a result of success on the field of play, university and athletic donations, as well as student enrollments, surge (Desrochers, 2013; Dosh, 2013; Pope & Pope, 2008), although some researchers have made the case that these claims are a myth (Zimbalist, 2001).

Universities lured in by high-paying revenue enticements in the form of bigger broadcasting contracts (Schlabach, 2010 as cited in Desrochers, 2013) have in recent years fueled a flurry of conference movement and created new concerns over academic

integrity (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). Schools choosing to change athletic conferences from 2010 to 2013 have played a role in fundamentally changing the current landscape of Division I intercollegiate athletics (Havard & Eddy, 2013). Between 2010 and 2013, 13 Football Subdivision (FBS) schools (Colorado, Louisville, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Notre Dame, Pittsburgh, Rutgers, Syracuse, Texas A&M, Texas Christian, Utah, and West Virginia) transferred their membership to other conferences (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). In 2016, Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby announced the conference's intention to expand its membership by up to four schools (Russo, 2016). However, the Big 12 opted not to expand (Thamel, 2016). These shifts also disrupted fans' strong affiliations with rival institutions and thus affected their own identity (Havard & Eddy, 2013).

That intercollegiate ideals and the principles of amateurism have more and more been placed under scrutiny and are considered by many as dubious (Weston, 2014). The clash between the free-market principles of commercialism and higher education's educational mission was recognized in recent years by NCAA leaders who stated that there is "an inherent tension between the intellectual independence of the academy and the use of corporate dollars to support any aspect of higher education" (NCAA 2010, para. 2) and "as the scale of both revenue generation and spending has grown over the past few decades, there is a general sense 'big-time' athletics is in conflict with the principle of amateurism" (NCAA, 2010, para. 3).

In some cases academic fraud has been perpetuated by faculty sympathetic to athletes and fans of sports teams (Svare, 2012). The Drake Group, an activist organization primarily comprising higher education faculty, look to protect academic

integrity from the commercialization of intercollegiate sports (Svare, 2012). However, in many, if not most, cases, the quest to increase revenues can occur concurrently with student development (Pincin, & Hoffer, 2013).

To generate revenue, athletic departments are charged with raising private revenues through ticket sales, donations, sponsorships, licensing, broadcast rights, game guarantees, etc., or publicly through subsidies from academic institutions; yet, athletic administrators assert that pursuing profits is not a leading objective (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). Instead, athletic administrators promote core values as outlined by the NCAA, including: (a) the collegiate model of athletics, (b) the highest level of integrity and sportsmanship, (c) the pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics, (d) the supporting role that intercollegiate athletics plays, (e) an inclusive culture, (f) respect, and (g) presidential leadership. Nevertheless, in light of various NCAA scandals and recent conference realignments, cynics question whether these professed values are merely rhetoric (Cooper & Weight, 2011; Splitt, 2011). Additionally, institutional priorities have been called into question in the wake of escalating athletic subsidies. Recent comparisons of university spending on student-athletes versus spending on the rest of the student body illustrates a major discrepancy (Desrochers, 2013).

Communicating a clear and articulate core set of values is the most effective way to establish or influence a culture (Cooper & Weight, 2011; Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). Communicating a mission statement to stakeholders also is an important strategy in intercollegiate athletics (Ward, 2015). A review of the research indicates there is little distinction between guidelines outlined by successful and struggling athletic programs (Ward, 2015). As part of their mission, athletic departments seek to develop student-

athletes for success after sports and to observe NCAA rules, gender equity, etc. (Ward, 2015). The praise student-athletes receive for executing on the field of play should be matched by similar acclaim for their performance in the classroom, as campus leaders in student organizations, and in their conduct on and off campus (Cooper & Weight, 2011). To reverse the trend of skepticism, Athletic Directors and their staffs must communicate a strong value system (Cooper & Weight, 2011) that "guides and inspires people throughout the organization and remains relatively stable for long periods of time" (Collins & Porras, 2000, p. 48). The idea of the value-based model was reiterated by former NCAA President Myles Brand, who affirmed that "A recommitment to the Collegiate Model of athletics . . . The collegiate model is a value-based template for intercollegiate athletics. It is a vision for the future that must guide us" (Brand, 2004).

In that vein, in 2005, foreseeing an increased scrutiny over the interference of commercialism on the academic mission of intercollegiate athletics, Brand formed an NCAA Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics. In 2006, the group published a report: *The Second-Century Imperatives: Presidential Leadership—Institutional Accountability* (NCAA, 2015). The report emphasized the "collegiate model" (the phrase appeared 22 times in the report) and presented the principle that "intercollegiate athletics is to be wholly embedded in universities and colleges," while condemning any thoughts of a professional sports model (Southall & Staurowsky, 2013). Brand warned, "If this movement continues, college sports as we know it will disappear, and with it, the educational value to student-athletes and the institutional goodwill and support from alumni and fans" (Brand, 2004). Brand also emphasized, "The threat is real, and the consequences devastating. I want to go on record

in calling attention to this potential disaster" (Brand, 2004). Brand's "integrated" view of college athletics as part of the educational environment, versus the "standard" view that athletics are an extracurricular activity separate from the true academic mission of the university, has been challenged by some critics (Corlett, 2013).

The NCAA website reflects the core values as: (a) the highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship, (b) the pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics, (c) the supporting role intercollegiate athletics play in the higher education mission and in enhancing the sense of community and strengthening the identity of member institutions, (d) an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds, (e) respect for institutional autonomy and philosophical differences, and (f) presidential leadership of intercollegiate athletics at the campus, conference and national levels (NCAA, n.d.c.).

The substantial revenues generated by intercollegiate athletics has had a destabilizing impact on athletic programs. The importance placed on winning, and with it the increased exposure through television, has shifted universities' focuses to dedicating more resources to athletics (Knight Commission, n.d.b.). NCAA Division I athletic departments are generating revenue comparable with the *Forbes* 100 Best Small Business list (Badenhausen, 2014). An *Equity in Athletics* data collecting initiative completed by the United States Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education reported the combined athletic revenues across all Title IV U.S. universities and colleges were approximately $12.6 billion for the 2010-2011 academic year (Monks, 2013). By contrast, the National Football League (NFL), the highest-grossing

professional sports league in the country, had annual revenues of $7.6 billion for 2009 (Monks, 2013).

New contract agreements with increased income in the billions of dollars has led many in the media to suggest paying college athletes (Futterman, 2015; Strachan, 2015). In 2011, the NCAA national office signed a 14-year media rights contract with CBS and Turner Broadcasting for $10.8 billion, or $771 million per year (Ingold & Pearce, 2015). About 80% of all NCAA home office revenue is generated through March Madness (Alesia, 2014). The NCAA College Football Playoffs began in 2015 after the NCAA signed a 12-year, $7.3 billion contact with ESPN (Smith, 2015).

The scale and financial scope of the various NCAA institutions, as well as their academic and athletic missions, vary by level. As of the 2014-2015 academic year, 1,089 colleges and universities participated in the NCAA (NCAA, n.d.h.). Membership broke down as follows: Division I, 345 members; Division II, 306 members; and Division III, 438 members (NCAA, n.d.h.). Division I and Division II offer athletic scholarships. By contrast, Division III does not offer scholarships (NCAA, n.d.h.). Division I typically represents schools having the largest student bodies and athletic budgets. Division I is subdivided, in part, on the school's level of football scholarships offered (NCAA, n.d.i., para. 3). Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools may offer up to 85 football scholarships. Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) schools may offer up to 63 football scholarships. A third Division I group consists of non-football (NF) schools. Division II may offer up to 36 football scholarships (NCAA, n.d.i.). Division II institutions offer a "partial-scholarship" model to their student-athletes and typically do not have the capacity to dedicate the depth of financial resources to their athletic

programs, compared to their Division I counterparts (NCAA, n.d.j.). Division III schools focus primarily on academics, have shortened practice and playing seasons in comparison to the other levels, and compete against regional competition to reduce time away from students' studies (NCAA, n.d.k.). Division III schools also are largely disconnected from the commercial enticements that encroach upon other NCAA divisions (Bowen & Levin, 2003).

In 2011-2012, median total expenses at institutions in the Power 5 FBS conferences (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, and SEC) were $81.7 million (NCAA, n.d.f., Division I, para 3) and have since risen, driven by a series of television rights deals. By comparison, the median at FBS schools in the Group of 5 conferences (American, Conference USA, Mid-American, Sun Belt, and Mountain West) was $28.8 million. Median total expenses at FCS schools were $14.5 million (NCAA, n.d.f., Division I, para 3). The median expenses for Division II institutions sponsoring football in 2011-2012 were $5.3 million, and for institutions not sponsoring football, the median athletics expense was $4.0 million (NCAA, n.d.f., Division II, para. 3). Division III median expenses were $3 million for institutions sponsoring football and $1.5 million for schools that do not play football (NCAA, n.d.f.).

Throughout history the NCAA has expressly forbidden athletic departments from paying student-athletes. The NCAA rule is that collegiate athletes must maintain their amateur status (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). Critics argue the legal merits built on the premise that the NCAA protects college athletes from exploitation (Huma & Staurowsky, 2011). To their point, the NCAA coined the term student-athlete in reaction to a 1953 Colorado Supreme Court ruling in favor of a University of Denver football player

(Makings, 2014). The plaintiff was deemed an "employee" within the framework of the Colorado worker's compensation statute and thus received compensation for his football injuries (Makings, 2014). The term student-athlete was put in place as an effort to enforce the belief that athletes cannot also be employees. A few years later, the NCAA allowed athletic scholarships as a reimbursement for services rendered (Makings, 2014). As the Division I Power 5 FBS conference schools set new standards for generating revenues, those individuals arguing student-athletes should not be compensated are drawing continued criticism (Strachan, 2015).

Detractors note that although compensation for student-athletes is strictly prohibited, the market for coaches is comparatively unregulated. As a result, salaries paid to head coaches in college football and basketball have climbed sharply (Strachan, 2015). In fact, in 39 states, the highest paid public employee is a college football or basketball coach (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). Fittingly, the highest paid public employee in the United States is the University of Alabama football coach, Nick Saban, who in June 2014 signed an 8-year contract extension for $55.2 million, or $6.9 million guaranteed annually (Baumbach, 2014).

The debate of amateurism versus commercialism continues and the courts are involved in shaping the future landscape of college athletics. On August 8, 2014, in *O'Bannon v. NCAA*, U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of California Claudia Wilken ruled that the NCAA's policy against paying intercollegiate student-athletes for the use of their names, images, and likenesses (NILs) in video games violated the Sherman Act (Jones, 2015). The NCAA appealed Judge Wilken's decision (Jones, 2015). The decision also noted that the NCAA cannot cap the amount of a scholarship

below the actual cost of attendance and that the NCAA cannot ban schools from creating

a trust fund to pay players equal shares for use of their NILs (Boren, 2014). The decision

paved the way for FBS football and Division I men's basketball players to receive

deferred compensation, capped at no less than $5,000 per year, for use of their NILs. The

deferred payments were to be placed in a trust fund until their eligibility expired (Boren,

2014). The NCAA is challenging the decision in a California appeals court (Strauss,

2015). Electronic Arts Sports (EA Sports) and the Collegiate Licensing Company settled

the case for $40 million and discontinued the video games (Risen, 2013).

About the time of the O'Bannon decision, the NCAA approved autonomy for the

Power 5 conferences (Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC), allowing these

autonomous conferences to make rules separate from the other NCAA member schools

(Babb, 2014). Five months later, in January 2015, the autonomous schools approved the

full cost of attendance for its student-athletes (Brutlag-Hosick, 2015a). Thus, student-

athletes will receive additional expenses (e.g., including academic-related provisions and

transportation) in addition to traditional scholarships for tuition, books, and room and

board (Brutlag-Hosick, 2015a). The benefit values range from $1,500 to more than

$5,000 and are set by the individual institutions. The O'Bannon opinion did not require

the university to pay but did open the doors to do so. It is still a choice (Strauss & Tracy,

2014). Additionally, during this time period, the NCAA also changed its Board of

Governors to include a student-athlete at every governance level (Brutlag-Hosick,

2015b). The updated model includes University Presidents, student-athletes, faculty

representatives, athletics directors, and female administrators (Brutlag-Hosick, 2015b).

However, although the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld the Wilken's ruling that universities could be allowed to provide cost of attendance to student-athletes, on September 30, 2015 it eliminated the requirement for schools to pay up to $5,000 for the use of NILs for Division I football and men's basketball players (McCann, 2015; Mullen, 2015).  The ruling appears to have provided a temporary victory for the NCAA (McCann, 2015; Mullen, 2015). "The principle of amateurism was something they recognized at the core of this decision," said NCAA President Mark Emmert (Mullen, 2015, para. 7).  The plaintiff is expected to appeal.

Another landmark case emerged in March 2014.  In a challenge to the bedrock principle that defines student-athletes as amateurs, *CAPA v. Northwestern*, Judge Peter Ohr, the National Labor Relations Board director for the Chicago region, ruled Northwestern football players—based on the time devoted to football, coaches' control the players' schedules, and other factors—were employees and, thus, as such, have the right to form a union and bargain collectively (Strauss & Eder, 2014).  The NCAA appealed the decision (Edelman, 2015).

On August, 17, 2015, the NLRB declined to review the Northwestern players' petition (AAUP, 2015; Rosenblat, 2015).  Due to unusual circumstances, the NLRB ultimately were not obligated to determine whether the Northwestern football players were employees (AAUP, 2015; Rosenblat, 2015).  Instead, the NLRB declined the petition to unionize, as it would not explicitly be included within the National Labor Relations Act, thus, avoiding the larger issue of the unionization of graduate student assistants in other facets of universities (AAUP, 2015; Rosenblat, 2015). Specifically, the NLRB said:

"Our decision is primarily premised on a finding that, because of the nature of sports leagues (namely the control exercised by the leagues over the individual teams) and the composition and structure of FBS football (in which the overwhelming majority of competitors are public colleges and universities over which the Board cannot assert jurisdiction), it would not promote stability in labor relations to assert jurisdiction in this case," National Labor Relations Board (Rosenblat, 2015, para. 6).

A specific ruling from *O'Bannon v. NCAA* opens the door to another notable case to be ruled on in the near future, *Jenkins v. NCAA* (McCann, 2015; Mullen, 2015). The attorney for the plaintiff is famed sports attorney Jeffrey Kessler. *Jenkins v. NCAA* seeks to eliminate the cap limiting scholarships to tuition, room and board, books, cost of attendance, etc. and to replace it with a free market value for the student-athletes (McCann, 2015; Mullen, 2015). *O'Bannon v. NCAA* found that the NCAA is not exempt from antitrust laws (Mullen, 2015). "It can't claim that it isn't commercial. It can't claim that its eligibility rules are exempt. They can't claim the Supreme Court gave it an exemption in the Board of Regents case," Kessler said (Mullen, 2015, para. 4).

In the opinion of some, in light of the extraordinary revenues associated with the highest levels of NCAA Division I competition, the NCAA has lost credibility by representing the players merely as college students and, thus, have attracted attention on this case (LeRoy, 2014). Both the *O'Bannon v. NCAA* decision and *CAPA v. Northwestern* case have Title IX implications (Buzuvis, 2015). Title IX does not differentiate between profitable sports and sports that are not (Dosh, 2014b). Although football and men's basketball may generate the bulk of the athletic revenues, for athletic

departments to remain compliant under federal law, there cannot be a disparity in male or female expenditures on travel, daily allowances, equipment, supplies, etc. (Dosh, 2014b).

The revenues generated to support programs vary by level. In 2010, a typical Division I FBS intercollegiate program generated more than 80% of its budget through external revenues such as ticket sales, sponsorships, licensing, fundraising, conference payouts, etc. (Knight Commission, 2012). At the time, ticket sales represented the largest revenue source for FBS schools, generating approximately 25% of all revenues (Desrochers, 2013). By comparison, Division I FCS colleges and universities, as well as Division I NF schools, secured 70% of athletic budgets through student fees, government appropriations, and institutional support (Knight Commission, 2012).

The rapid growth in revenues in the Power 5 conferences can be attributed to television broadcast rights fees, thus even further widening the gap between these conference institutions and other NCAA Division I schools (Jensen, Turner, & McEvoy, 2015; Dosh, 2014a). The broadcast contract revenues from the top five conferences were projected to generate more than $1 billion per year. The payout for each member school, depending on their conference affiliation, ranges from $12 million to $20 million annually per school (Knight Commission, 2011). To place this example in perspective, the cumulative NCAA media contracts exceed the annual media contracts for Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, and the National Hockey League (Desrochers, 2013).

Recent media rights contracts are as follows:

- In 2012, the ACC signed a new $3.6 billion, 15-year agreement, which provides each of the 14 institutions an average of $17.1 million (Teel, 2012). In 2016,

ACC announced an expansion of extension of its ESPN television agreement through 2035-36 (Baysinger, 2016). ESPN and the ACC also agreed to a new co-venture to launch the ACC-ESPN Network in 2019 as well as the digital platform, "ACC Network Extra" offering 600 conference events beginning with the 2016-17 academic year (Batten, 2016).

- The Big Ten, the first conference to start its own network. The network has paid dividends, with schools earning $23 million to $25 million apiece (Berkowitz, 2013). The Big Ten total media package includes The Big Ten Network, ESPN, CBS, and Fox and is valued at $4 billion (Ozanian, 2013).

- In 2012, the Big 12 signed a 13-year deal with ESPN and Fox for $2.6 billion (Hawkins, 2012).

- In 2011, the Pac-12 signed a 12-year, $3 billion agreement with ESPN and Fox (Jensen et al., 2015).

- In 2013, the SEC created a 20-year partnership with ESPN to launch the SEC Network, adding to its existing ESPN and CBS deal for a total of $3.1 billion (Sandomir, 2013). In 2014, the SEC announced a $20.9 million payout per school (Solomon, 2014a). The cumulative conference rights are estimated to be worth $5.25 billion, and each school could receive up to $34 million per year if the popularity of the network continues to increase (Berkowitz, 2013).

- In 2011, the University of Texas created the Longhorn Network in a joint venture with ESPN in an agreement valued at $300 million over 20 years (Baumbach, 2014).

Only a small number of Division I athletic departments are self-sufficient (Brady, Berkowitz & Schnaars, 2015).  Based on a USA Today analysis (in conjunction with Indiana University's National Sports Journalism Center), 24 NCAA FBS schools were self-sustaining in the 2013-2014 academic year, meaning their athletic departments produced at a minimum as much money (not including student fees, university or government funding) as it spent (Brady et al., 2015).  On the other hand, the vast majority of athletic programs are dependent on subsidies such as student fees, institution appropriations, or state funding to meet their budgets (Knight Commission, 2010).  The per-athlete subsidies are considerable throughout Division I.  Median aids range from nearly $20,000 to $30,000 per athlete in each subdivision, surpassing the median total educational spending per university student (Knight Commission, 2012).  The largest per-athlete aids were in the smaller FCS and DI-NF programs, because they had less ability to secure large sources of income (Knight Commission, 2012).

The widening financial gap between the Power 5 conference schools and the Group of 5 FBS schools is problematic (Iles, 2014).  By 2015, the disparity of overall annual athletic revenues between the Power 5 conferences and the Group of 5 was $65 million on average per university (Lavigne, 2016).  Other FBS conference schools are unable to maintain the revenue pace since the Group of 5, FCS, and NF schools cannot match the lucrative media rights of the Power 5 schools, nor do they have the same level of access to lucrative bowl games or as many NCAA tournament spots, etc. (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013).  The average Division I athletic-department subsidy is $8.8 million annually.  The subsidies mostly involve student fees set aside for athletics (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013).  Even in the case of most of the Power 5 programs, student fees and

institutional support usually provide 4% to 14 % of all athletic incomes (Desrochers, 2013).  Louisiana State University (LSU), Nebraska, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Penn State, Purdue, and Texas reported receiving no subsidies in 2012 (Berkowitz, Upton, & Brady, 2013).  The top revenue-generating athletic department in the country was Texas, at $166 million, as noted in the 2014 USA Today College Sports Revenue Database (Schlereth, Scott, & Berman, 2014).

Another concern among university leadership is that athletic departments spend more per athlete than their institutions do to educate the average student (Knight Commission, 2010).  Between 2005-2012 academic spending grew at a median rate of 6% (after inflation) and athletic spending at 43%, as reported by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (Baumbach, 2014).  All three subdivisions spent similar amounts on academics, at $11,800 to $13,600 per FTE student, in 2010 (Knight Commission, 2012).  However, athletic spending increased at more than twice the pace of academic disbursements on a per-capita basis throughout all three Division I subdivisions.  At FBS and DI-NF institutions, per-athlete spending was upwards of $36,000.  Per-athlete spending at Power 5 conferences exceeded $100,000 in 2010.  Per-athlete allocations at non-FBS Division I schools grew at a slower pace but still significantly outpaced growth in academic spending (Knight Commission, 2012).  Meanwhile, professor compensation remained stagnant, and highly publicized reports of the ever-increasing coaches' salaries have become a sore point for many professors (Baumbach, 2014).

At the root of rising athletic costs is the creation of new or refurbished facilities, a mandate for more staff, increased scholarship commitments, and multimillion-dollar

coaching contracts, all with the mission to remain competitive with other institutions

(Kirwan & Turner, 2010). Salaries and benefits for athletic department staff consumed

approximately one-third of athletic budgets (Knight Commission, 2012).

Though the market for student-athletes forbids direct compensation, the market

for coaches is unregulated (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013). In 2014, Newsday reported that

coaches at the 108 FBS public universities will be paid an average of $1.75 million

annually, with the nation's 25 highest-paid football coaches being guaranteed at least

$3.85 million per year, not including perks, incentives, and benefits (Baumbach, 2014).

In 2015, the top five compensated NCAA men's basketball coaches were Mike

Krzyzewski, Duke, $9.7 million; Rick Pitino, Louisville, $5.8 million; John Calipari,

Kentucky, $5.5 million; Bill Self, Kansas, $5 million; and Billy Donovan, Florida, $3.9

million (Sherman, 2015). Worse yet are the payouts for coaches who are dismissed. For

instance, in 2012, due to contractual obligations, Auburn paid $11 million in buyouts to

its former coaches (Nocera, 2012).

There also has been an "amenities race" at many colleges and universities, with

new or refurbished football stadiums often exceeding $100 million (Knight Commission,

n.d.a.), which include upgrades such as luxury seating or premium consumer amenities.

This "amenities race" is also true in the case of basketball arenas, as well as state-of-the-

art practice facilities, strength training, and tutoring facilities, most of which are paid for

via fundraising efforts or from selling bonds. Repaying the bonds can represent a

substantial percentage of the annual budget for many athletics departments (Knight

Commission, n.d.). Some economists note that these projects are not senseless

expenditures, but simply through a chain of causation (demand to revenue to expenditure), athletic departments are meeting consumer demand (Goff, 2014).

Financial discrepancies are not just between the big schools and small schools, but also within schools' revenue and non-revenue programs, as identified in a study by Cooper and Weight (2011). The researchers established that athletic administrators emphasized the revenue-generating sports (football and men's basketball) and retained customary educational values in their non-revenue sports (Cooper & Weight, 2011).

The victims of athletic cost cutbacks are normally the non-revenue-producing sports. In fact, 227 intercollegiate athletic teams were discontinued between 2007 and 2009, most of which were non-revenue based (Watson, 2009). Many athletic administrators have been reluctant to consider dropping football in fear of the impact not having the sport could have on the school's image and undergraduate enrollment (Jones, 2014). However, in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis, three long-standing football programs (Hofstra, 69 years; Northeastern, 74 years; and Western Washington, 107 years) were suspended (Olson, 2010). Jones (2014) conducted a study on the effects on student enrollment at three universities East Tennessee State, St. Mary's College (CA), and Sienna (NY), each of which dropped football in 2004. The author's findings failed to support the idea that suspending the football programs at these three institutions had a negative effect on student enrollment (Jones, 2014).

By contrast, Pope and Pope (2008) conducted a study and wherein the results supported the idea that athletics is a driver of student enrollment. Important conclusions were: (a) football and basketball success triggers an upward surge in the number of applications to a university. Approximations vary from 2% to 8% for the top 20 football

schools and the top 16 basketball schools each year; (b) private schools realize upswings in application rates following successful sports seasons that are 2-4 times larger than public schools; (c) the added applications collected comprise more students with high SAT scores, thus providing the schools with the potential for advanced admission outcomes, and (d) schools leverage the additional applications to improve both the number and the quality of incoming students (Pope & Pope, 2008).

In 1990, Murray Sperber, an Indiana University professor and an author of various college sports books, predicted a day would come when just 30 to 40 colleges, ultimately, would be able to participate in big-time college football because of rising costs (Svare, 2012).  In contrast, others believe the negative forecast for college football is misleading.  Dosh (2013) argues that more universities should embrace big-time college football as an asset to promoting and elevating the status of the university.  The author noted eight positive effects from football: (a) advertising effect—the type of publicity generated from major sporting events is unequaled; (b) increased applications and enrollment—known as the "Flutie Effect"—the phenomenon of increasing the exposure and status of a university through a successful sports team; (c) increased retention and graduation rates—when more applications are received students with higher credentials are admitted, allowing the university to be more selective; (d) increased ranking—specifically in *U.S. News and World Report*—when two years after a championship, a school's rankings rose 6.87%; (e) increased donations and state appropriations—to both the athletic department and the university; (f) increased licensing and branding; (g) giving back—additional contributions athletic departments make to the

university; and (h) degree completion programs—put in place by some schools to assist student-athletes who lose their athletic scholarships to complete their education.

In conclusion, many university officials believe athletic participation and, especially success, lead to increased visibility and results in a positive effect in reaching their stakeholders (alumni, donors, politicians, students, etc.), as well as increased enrollment and revenues (Desrochers, 2013), although the theoretical evidence is mixed (Getz, Siegfried & Australia, 2010).

**Leadership Theory**

Belzer (2015a) advocated with the increased expenditures to meet college sports' increased popularity, there is a growing need for professional leaders to effectively supervise these complex and multidimensional business operations. Modern college athletics directors have a wide range of experiences and skills across a number of different platforms specific to the industry. Additionally, the Athletic Director must demonstrate the ability to be forward-thinking and capable of adjusting to an ever-changing and unpredictable business environment. The context of the needs of the moment may dictate how a university selects someone to lead an athletic department, whether a fundraiser is needed to lead a capital campaign or someone is needed who can project integrity in light of a program suffering from academic scandal. Further, someone may be needed who fits within the leadership style of the school (Belzer, 2015a).

Although there is no one consensus definition (Bryman, 2013), a widely held belief is that leaders have an impact on organizational performance (Dubrin, 2015). Organizations pursue leaders whom they hope will bring special abilities and positively

impact their operation (Northouse, 2015). Countless leadership theories and styles have been suggested throughout history. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has narrowed the leadership styles to the following: Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire; Contingency Theory; Path-Goal; Situational; Transactional, Transformational, Leader-Member Exchange; and Values-Based (Authentic, Ethical).

**Autocratic Leadership.** Autocratic Leadership places total control of the decision-making process in the hands of one person, with no serious participation from his or her followers (Lewin et al., 1939). The autocratic leader controls all facets of the given task and, as such, takes control of the team and closely scrutinizes a project from start to finish (Dubrin, 2015). Autocratic leaders do not often solicit or value the expertise or opinions of their followers, nor are they concerned with their subordinates' attitudes toward a decision (Dubrin, 2015).

Autocratic leaders are defined as task-oriented due to the emphasis they place on getting tasks accomplished (Dubrin, 2015). This leadership style requires team members to be loyal, and motivation is provided through strict protocols. Punishment occurs for not following procedures or meeting objectives (Giltinane, 2013). In an Autocratic Leadership setting, followers are not expected to question the leader (Lewin et al., 1939). Autocratic leaders believe that left unsupervised, followers would not be productive (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Autocratic followers may feel less involved, identified, and responsible than followers who are part of Democratic Leadership teams (Van Oostrum & Rabbie, 1995). Less common, and sometimes unpopular with followers, Autocratic Leadership remains one of the most prevalent leadership styles; however, Autocratic Leadership still works well in specific applications, particularly when

dangerous circumstances exists, the margin for error is slim, or if the followers are inexperienced (Gill, 2014). The military, as well as in certain types of manufacturing or construction, is considered a good fit for an Autocratic Leadership style (Gill, 2014). Followers who are self-uncertain or have low self-esteem have been shown to be more supportive of an autocratic leader (Rast, Hogg, & Giessner, 2013; Schoel, Bluemke, & Stahlberg, 2011). Luthar (1996) reported a difference in views of autocratic leaders based on gender. Male participants assessed male autocratic managers higher than female autocratic managers, but female participants, by a wider margin, scored female autocratic managers far superior to their male counterparts, referring to autocratic male managers as inferior leaders (Luthar, 1996). Drawbacks of Autocratic Leadership are that it stifles creativity (Gill, 2014) and, when taken to the extreme, invites potential abuse and creates a climate of fear (Salin & Hoel, 2011).

**Democratic Leadership.** Democratic Leadership, also known as participative leadership, is based on mutual respect between the leader and his or her followers Democratic Leadership works well for leaders who value flexibility. In this process, significant responsibility is placed on both the leader and followers (Lewin et al., 1939). The leader offers guidance and encourages member involvement but also participates in the discussion and decision making (Rustin & Armstrong, 2012). Democratic leaders believe team members are capable of making educated decisions (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Democratic Leadership is an approach based on teamwork, wherein the leader includes a group of individuals in the decision-making process (Dubrin, 2015). Ideas are freely exchanged among the team members to determine the best end result, both in strategically what should be done and how the task should be executed (Bhatti, Maitlo,

Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012; Rustin & Armstrong, 2012).  Democratic leaders are

not intimidated by ideas suggested by the followers and instead believe the quality of the

result improves with a group effort (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).  The group leader

decides who participates in the process, facilitates the conversation, synthesizes the

discussion points, and, in cooperation with the group, determines a plan of action

(Woods, 2004).  To ensure success, the democratic leader must communicate the plan to

the team members and keep them informed about matters affecting their role (Dubrin,

2015).  In some cases, democratic leaders confer the final decision to the group but, many

times, maintain the final authority to make decisions (Dubrin, 2015).

Researchers have asserted Democratic Leadership is one of the most effective

leadership styles (Cherry, n.d.).  According to researchers, Democratic Leadership

increases productivity, creates an atmosphere of cooperation, and increases group morale

(Foster, 2002; Rustin & Armstrong, 2012).  It is a style for leaders who wish to foster

personal growth among team members, recognize team achievements, and lend support

in advancing team members in their careers (Giltinane, 2013).  Democratic Leadership

can be ideal in fast-paced and constantly changing environments; in this type of

environment, having a team review every option available for consideration in a timely

manner is critical (Leadership-toolbox, n.d., para. 2).  Democratic Leadership works well

in environments where teams are highly motivated or highly skilled and wherein the

leader can leverage the individuals' strengths (Rustin & Armstrong, 2012).  Team

members are more likely to commit themselves to the task at hand when they feel valued

(Rustin & Armstrong, 2012).  Groups operating under Democratic Leadership tend to be

more satisfied than groups subjected to Autocratic Leadership (Foels, Driskell, Mullen, &

Salas, 2000).  Team members also feel valued when a democratic leader outlines a vision

for the organization and how the team members are essential in achieving organizational

goals (Giltinane, 2013).  Drawbacks include time consumption when the group cannot

come to consensus, that leaders can become overly dependent on outside experts, and

they may rely on input from team members who are not well informed (Gill, 2014).

**Laissez-Faire Leadership.**  Also known as free-reign leadership, Laissez-Faire

Leadership, as defined by Lewin (et al., 1939), turns the full-decision making powers

over to group members.  The direct opposite of Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire

Leadership is described as a "hands-off" style, wherein the leader makes available the

necessary tools and resources but followers are expected to solve the task with very little

guidance from the leader (Lewin et al., 1939; Rustin & Armstrong, 2012).  The laissez-

faire style does not demand any policies or procedures (Goodnight, 2004; Hodgkinson,

2009).  Laissez-faire leaders believe group members shine when they are allowed to find

their own methods to solve problems or complete tasks (Hodgkinson, 2009).

People who are self-starters, who excel at individualized tasks, and who do not

require ongoing feedback from other team members often prefer working under laissez-

faire managers (Gill, 2014).  The laissez-faire style allows experts the latitude to perform

more optimally than they might have in a more structured environment and challenges

them to take personal responsibility for their achievements and failures (Gill, 2014).

Laissez-Faire Leadership may be effective with highly skilled, highly motivated group

members who need very little guidance to complete the task but is ineffective with

followers who are insecure without regular direction (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

Researchers generally have discovered Laissez-Faire Leadership style can lead to a lack

of accountability and cohesiveness and, as such, is typically the least productive for group members (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

**Contingency Theory.**  Contingency Theory is based on two factors: (a) leadership style and (b) situational control. The Fiedler (1967) model suggests there is no one best leadership style.  Instead, a leader's effectiveness is based on the situation (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967).  Leader styles are either relationship-motivated or task-motivated.  Fiedler and Chemers (1967) reasoned that task and relations motivations are established personal traits not simply open to change.  The situation is dictated by the level of control exercised by the leader (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967).  Leaders who are relationship-motivated thrive in situations of moderate control.  Task-motivated leaders flourish in situations of both high and low control (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967). Leadership effectiveness is contingent on leaders working in situations that match their style, are grounded in positive leader-follower relations, provide tasks with clear goals and procedures, and require the ability of the leader to implement a system of rewards and penalties (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967).

The Fiedler Contingency Model is applied in three steps.  Step 1: Identify your leadership style; Step 2: Identify your situation; Step 3: Determine the most effective leadership style.  Fundamental to Contingency Theory is the concept of the situation, characterized by three factors: (a) leader-member relations, (b) task structure, and (c) position power.  Leader-member relations considers the quality of the group dynamic, including trust, loyalty, and confidence the followers have for their leader.  Task structure refers to the nature of the complexity of the task and how clearly those tasks, goals, and procedures are defined for the follower.  Position power is the authority given to the

leader over the group members and the leader's ability to influence the team through reward or punishment (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967). To identify the most appropriate leader-match, Fiedler (1967) developed the least preferred coworker (LPC) scale, asking the leader to rate the person (on an 8-point scale, with 8 as most positive, and 1 as least positive) with whom they worked least well in completing a project. If the LPC is described relatively favorably, the leader is considered relationship-motivated. If the LPC is described unfavorably, the leader is considered task-motivated (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967; Rice, 1981).

**Path-Goal Theory.** Path-Goal Theory was initiated by Martin Evans (1970) and was further developed by Robert House (1971) as an extension of Contingency Theory. Path-Goal Theory stipulates the leader's process to achieve a high output and a positive follower morale in a given situation (Evans, 1970; House, 1971). In Path-Goal Theory, the leader considers the characteristics of the group members and adjusts his or her leader behavior to motivate the followers effectively and explain the specific path to achieve the group goals (Evans, 1970; House, 1971).

In Path-Goal Theory, the leader chooses one of four leadership styles—directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented—that best fits the contingency factors of their followers. Selecting the best leadership style in Path-Goal Theory is dependent upon the characteristics of the team members and the nature of the work they perform. The directive style (task-oriented) is more formally organized and sets specific guidelines on what tasks need completed and how to complete them. The directive style works well when the task is ambiguous or complicated (Evans, 1970; House, 1971). Supportive leaders (relationship-oriented) are typically pleasant and approachable and

treat their subordinates as equals.  Supportive leaders show interest in their followers'

well-being.  The participative leader style works well with highly motivated team

members and when the leader actively listens to the subordinate's ideas and often works

the suggestions into the plan.  The achievement-oriented style sets high expectations for

the team, emphasizing excellent performance.  This style works well with team members

who strive for a sense of accomplishment.  Identifying the best match between the leader

and the followers is important.  Team members construe the leader's behavior based on

the degree of structure they believe they need.  The follower can be demotivated if the

task is overly structured.  The follower motivations are affected by the structure they feel

they need, the perceptions of their own abilities, and their level of desire of control over

their task (Evans, 1970; House, 1971; Malik, S., Hassan, & Aziz, 2011)

**Situational Leadership**. The Situational Leadership model is a leadership style

established by Hersey and Blanchard (1969).  They suggested there is no single best

leadership style to fit every situation.  Effectiveness also is subject to the readiness level

of the followers.  Thus, situational leaders adapt their leadership style according to the

circumstances presented and to the development level of the followers to whom they are

providing guidance (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).  Situational Leadership is a model, as

opposed to a theory, because the authors do not try to expand on upon why things

happen, but instead they offer a useful process that can be repeated (Hersey, Blanchard,

& Johnson, 1996; Graeff, 1997).  Nicholls (1985) identified three defects with Hersey

and Blanchard's (1977) Situational Leadership Theory including consistency, continuity,

and conformity.

Readiness is defined as the extent to which an individual has the ability (job maturity) and willingness or confidence (psychological maturity) to accomplish a specific task. Ability is the education, experience, and skill the follower brings to a specific project. Willingness is the confidence, commitment, and motivation needed by the individual to undertake a specific task (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) also outlined four categories of maturity: (M1) low (unwilling, unable, or insecure), (M2) moderate (unable, but willing or confident), (M3) moderate-to-high (able, but unwilling or insecure), and (M4) high readiness (able, willing, or confident).

In adapting to the level of their followers, situational leaders utilize four leadership styles: (S1) directing, (S2) coaching, (S3) supporting, and (S4) delegating. The directing style, also known as *telling* (high-task, low-relationship), is effective when followers lack ability and motivation. The coaching style, also known as *selling* (high-task, high-relationship), is a persuasive and guiding dialogue. Though the leader remains directive, they seek buy-in to the process. The coaching style works in cases when the individual has adequate motivation but low ability. The supporting style, or *participating* (low-task, high-relationship), is shared dialogue best suited when team members have adequate ability but low motivation. The delegating style (low-task, low-relationship) is effective when the team members are very high in ability and motivation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

Situational Leadership has similarities to Contingency Theory. The principle difference is the situational model primarily focuses on adapting the leadership style to the follower behavior, whereas Contingency Theory takes a broader view in considering

factors about a leader's capability, as well as various situational factors (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

  **Transactional Leadership.** Transactional Leadership, also known as managerial leadership, is often used in business and with athletic teams and relies on followers' compliance through a system of rewards and punishments (Bass, 2003).  The power of transactional leaders is established by the formal authority to control and organize followers, with a focus on planning efforts for short-term tasks (Bass & Riggio, 2006 as cited in Zhu, Sosik, Riggio, & Yang, 2012).  Four basic assumptions to Transactional Leadership provide the path to being a successful model: (a) followers perform best when there is a clear chain of command, (b) rewards and punishment are indeed a motivator, (c) followers must obey the instructions of the leader, and (d) followers must be monitored regularly to ensure they execute the given task (Bass, 2003).  Transactional leaders typically conform to established procedures more so than seeking to improve or modify the processes of the organization (Spahr, 2015).  Transactional Leadership permits followers to satisfy their own self-interest (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

  Transactional leaders practice either: (a) management-by-exception or (b) contingent reward (Waldman, Bass, & Einstein, 1987).  Management-by-exception can be active or passive (Bass, 2003; Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996).  It is active when a leader monitors and corrects follower actions (Bass, 2003; Bass et al., 1996).  A passive approach happens when the leader interjects him or herself to take corrective action only after something has gone wrong (Bass, 2003).  Management-by-exception is less appealing to followers since the motivation is simply to avoid punishment (Waldman et al., 1987; Bass & Riggio, 2006).  On the other hand, contingent reward can be either

positive or negative (Bass, et al., 1996; Waldman et al., 1987).  Contingent reward is, in a sense, a contractual agreement wherein the leader agrees to provide the followers with rewards and recognitions based on the follower's ability to achieve goals and complete tasks (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 1996; Bass & Riggio, 2006).  Thus, with fair appraisals, the followers should be reasonably satisfied with the system (Waldman et al., 1987).

**Transformational Leadership.**  Transformational Leadership was proposed by Burns (1978) and expanded upon by Bass (1985).  The transformational leader asks followers to put aside their self-interest and reset expectations for the good of the group (Burns, 1978).  Transformational leaders strive to achieve remarkable results by creating a shared vision and inspiring and mobilizing followers to execute the vision (Bass & Riggio, 2006).  Transformational leaders maximize the team's ability to bring about major change within an organization by identifying the key issues, working to change the system, and providing followers' the autonomy to make decisions and execute the specific tasks.  By building an excellent rapport with followers, transformational leaders create a positive and genuine environment, raising the morale of the group. Transformational leaders are admired and held in high esteem by their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).  The leader's behavior impresses the followers and, thus, the followers strive to emulate the qualities they admire (McCleskey, 2014).

Four factors make up Transformational Leadership: (a) inspirational motivation–the leader sets high standards and provides purpose and meaning to the followers by articulating an attractive vision; (b) intellectual stimulation–the leader challenges assumptions and encourages followers to become more innovative and creative and to think independently; (c) individualized consideration–the leader attends to the needs of

the followers or acts as a mentor to develop the follower's leadership aptitude; and (d)

idealized influence–the leader serves as a role model for ethical behavior to make up the

best-fitting model (Avolio, & Bass, 1995; Bass, 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Leader-Member Exchange.** Leader-Member Exchange theory concentrates on

dyadic (two-way) relationships between leaders and each individual member of the work

group (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997).  Due to restrictions of time and resources, the

leader reserves high-quality exchange relationships for a limited number of team

members (Wayne & Ferris, 1990).  The substance of an exchange from high quality to

low quality is the basis for determining the subordinate's eventual level of

responsibilities, decision influence, and access to resources (Deluga, 1998; Graen & Uhl-

Bien, 1995).  Low-quality relationships are more transactional in nature and less

personal, whereas high-quality relationships involve mutual trust and respect (Graen,

Hui, & Taylor, 2006).

The Leader Member Exchange is comprised of (a) role taking, (b) role making,

and (c) routinization (Mindtools, n.d.).  Role taking takes place when the member first

joins the team, when his or her skills and abilities are assessed by the leader and the team

members begin to work on projects and begin to prove their value and trustworthiness.

Often the team members are given an implied assurance of a benefit of power in return

for their dedication and loyalty (Liden & Maslyn, 1998).  Liden and Maslyn (1998)

introduced three additional dimensions: (a) affect, a bond based on affection more than

professional values; (b) loyalty, a consistent faithfulness and demonstrations of public

support; and (c) contribution to the exchange, the level of input toward specific goals.

Role making is when the leader divides the team (often subconsciously) into two groups:

(a) the in-group and (b) the out-group (Liden et al., 1997). The in-group is made up of individuals the leader most trusts. The in-group team members are thought to be more analogous to their supervisors than out-group members (Basu & Green, 1997; Graen & Cashman, 1975 as cited in Jing & Baiyin, 2015). Similarities are expressly presented in terms of personalities, values, and work ethic. Conversely, it may restrain critical thinking team members from identifying issues and providing unbiased decisions (Basu & Green, 1997). The in-group, or inner circle, receives the bulk of the leader's attention and are rewarded with challenging and stimulating work and chances for training and career advancement. Individuals find themselves in the out-group if the leader evaluates them as unmotivated, inept, or disloyal. The leader is less accessible to out-group members and the individuals have little influence in receiving assignments typically considered controlled and mundane. Opportunities for advancement are limited within the out-group. In routinization, the last phase, a fixed pattern develops between the leader and the followers. The in-group work to continue their strong relationship with the leader by demonstrating through trust, respect, and persistence and are rewarded with support, advice, and opportunities (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Conversely, the out-group grows frustrated with their role in comparison to their peers and a jealousy surfaces with individuals in the in-group (Bolino & Turnley, 2009). The out-group begins to distrust or dislike the leader and often look to start over by changing departments or organizations (Liden et al., 1997).

**Authentic Leadership.** Authentic Leadership underscores building the leader's legitimacy by creating honest relationships with his or her followers (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Brown &

Treviño, 2006). Relationships with team members are built with ethical underpinnings (Cianci, Hannah, Roberts, & Tsakumis, 2014). Authentic leaders are typically self-aware individuals who are straightforward, positive, and encourage openness (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). A leader's trustworthiness—that the leader's actions must match his or her words—and an ethical foundation are essential to developing a positive relationship with followers (Gardner et al., 2005). Trust is sustainable only if the leader possesses the skills and know-how to command the authority of their followers (Gardner et al., 2005). Largely authentic leaders are optimistic people who endorse openness (Ryan & Deci, 2003). The leader promotes an environment in which followers are less prone to make unethical decisions when tempted, whereas followers of neutral or less authentic leaders were more apt to cross ethical lines (Cianci et al., 2014). Authentic leaders serve as role models by taking a genuine interest in the followers' growth (Avolio et al., 2004). An authentic leader is undeterred by social or situational forces that attempt to pull them to compromise their core values (Gardner et al., 2005). Authentic leaders can be participative or authoritarian (Avolio et al., 2004).

Authentic leaders are self-aware (Gardner et al., 2005). Explicit elements of an authentic leader's self (values, identity, emotions, and beliefs) are indispensable to the development of authentic leaders and their followers. The leader-follower rapport is built on transparency and trust. Authentic leaders own their personal experiences and are conscious of how their emotions affect themselves and their followers (Gardner et al., 2005).

Authentic leaders also emphasize follower development. Trigger events are dramatic happenings, both positive and negative, that challenge the leader's abilities and value system. Trigger events may arise from internal or external sources (Gardner et al., 2005).

Trigger events requiring inventive or unconventional solutions can facilitate the leader's personal development. Authentic leaders continuously work to serve as a positive role model for followers. The leader's authentic behavior inspires optimism, enthusiasm, and confidence in their followers and builds resilience within the team. As followers partake in a transparent decision-making process and observe the leader's commitment to integrity and core ethical values, a trust is built laying the foundation for an ethical culture. As the authentic leader perpetuates the self-concept as a positive role model, he or she incorporates the role of leader into his or her personal identity (Gardner et al., 2005).

**Ethical Leadership.** Ethical Leadership is closely aligned in many ways with Authentic Leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005). Relationships between the leader and followers are built on trust, honesty, fair-mindedness, and a respect for their worth. The theory makes ethics a clear priority in all leadership decisions, as well as the process of influencing followers to exhibit the right behavior through specific principles, values, and philosophies, to align with the leader's or organization's beliefs (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005). There is no breach between an ethical leader's actions and his or her words (Moreno, 2010).

Ethical leaders build an ethical culture through hiring and training employees who fit with the organization's fundamental values (Brown & Treviño, 2006). This culture

includes a respect for the dignity and rights of others, as well as the allowing of others to have the room to be themselves with creative wishes and desires. Ethical leaders make ethics a consistent part of their agendas (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leadership also positively effects an individual's intrinsic motivation (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). Ethical leadership also may be a predictor in positively forecasting an individual's innovativeness (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). It is important to set the standards of Ethical Leadership from the top of the organization and hold everyone accountable to the model by measuring and rewarding ethical conduct while respecting each other's differences (Brown & Treviño, 2006). In doing so, Ethical Leadership can have a big impact on followers' attitudes and behaviors and can create a culture in which the organization can flourish (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Yidong & Xinxin, 2013).

**Previous Literature: Examining Athletic Directors and Leadership**

There also is existing literature regarding the Athletic Director role and leadership. Literature includes research on leader behavior, organizational behavior, and perceptions of Athletic Director leadership behavior by their colleagues. The following are several research studies focusing on these characteristics.

**Athletic Director leader-behavior as a predictor of intercollegiate athletic organizational effectiveness.** Branch (1990) examined the perceptions of the leadership behavior of intercollegiate Athletic Directors as self-perceived and as viewed by other upper-level administrators within the department of athletics. The purpose was to gain empirical evidence from which to promote a better understanding of collegiate athletic administrator leadership behavior as it relates to the effectiveness of the athletic organization. Branch (1990) sought to determine the relative contributions of

"consideration" and "initiating structure" as fundamental leadership behavior constructs. Four variables were used to determine athletic department organizational effectiveness: (a) consideration as perceived by the AD; (b) initiating structure as perceived by the AD; (c) consideration as perceived by subordinates; and (d) initiating structure as perceived by subordinates. A population of 105 Division I-A Athletic Directors was issued questionnaires to provide a self-perception of his or her leadership behavior. To provide an alternative viewpoint, an upper-level administrator—either an Associate Athletic Director or Assistant Athletic Director—was randomly selected from each program to evaluate perceptions of the AD leadership behavior. Three questionnaires were issued to collect the data: first, the Perceived Athletic Organizational Effective Index; and the second and third surveys signified versions of the LBDQ-Form XII, consisting of 100 questions and embodying 12 dimensions of leadership behavior.

Branch's (1990) findings indicated ADs perceived their behavior more favorably than their subordinates. Associate/Assistant ADs may look at their ADs with more cynicism, as their own upward mobility is controlled by those Athletic Directors. The author noted of six independent variables, and only initiating structure—as perceived by the Athletic Directors themselves—significantly predicted athletic organizational effectiveness. Findings also indicated that effective athletic organizations have leaders who are more predisposed to goal and task accomplishment than to developing good interpersonal relationships with their subordinates, but Branch (1990) further suggested that organizations striking a balance between getting things done and developing their people are the healthiest and most effective. Organizations accomplishing both are most effective.

**Perceived Transformational Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Citizenship Behavior.** Kent and Chelladurai (2001) tested the following propositions: (a) the perceived Leader-Member Exchange quality (LMX) between second-level managers (e.g. associate, assistant ADs) and subordinates would be associated with perceived Transformational Leadership behaviors (TL) of the Athletic Director; and (b) the subordinates' Organization Commitment (OC) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) would be correlated with both perceived TL and LMX.

The researchers determined that two of the three dimensions of TL—charismatic leadership and individualized consideration—were significantly correlated with LMX. Positive links existed between perceived TL and perceived manger-level LMX, indicative of the cascading effect of TL. The authors also determined a lack of a relationship between perceived intellectual stimulation and LMX, implying it could be because LMX is more related to the interpersonal, rather than cognitive, aspects. The author determined there was no correlation between TL and OCB. However, LMX correlated with both aspects of OCB, a finding consistent with previous research (Kent & Chelladurai, 2001).

**A multi-frame perspective of leadership and Organizational Climate in intercollegiate athletics.** Scott (1999) examined Athletic Director leadership and its influence on the Organizational Climate in 21 broadly successful intercollegiate athletic departments. The author drew upon data from the top-five finalist in NCAA Division I, II, and III, as well as the NAIA, for the 1995-96 Sears Directors' Cup, which is an award recognizing achievements in a variety of men's and women's sports. Scott (1999) also researched head coaches' viewpoints on their perceptions of the AD's effect on leadership and climate.

Organizational Climate is the recurring patterns of behavior, shared attitudes, and feelings that portray life in an organization (Scott, 1999). The researcher sought to establish a predictor of Athletic Director effectiveness as a leader, as congruent with Bolman and Deal's (1991) four-frame model of leadership: (a) structural; (b) human resource; (c) political; and (d) symbolic. Interestingly, 100% of responding ADs indicated the human resource frame as often true of their leadership behavior. Coaches perceived the structural frame was most descriptive of AD leader behavior. The human resource frame was the only frame in which ADs and head coaches differed significantly. According to Scott (1999), effective athletic administrators were more predisposed to goal and task accomplishments than good interpersonal relationships. If goal attainment is the primary indicator of leadership effectiveness, then the structural frame would be most important. If it is job satisfaction, then the human resources frame is most vital. If the political frame is of the highest need, then the AD is judged by his or her ability to acquire scarce resources. Effective leaders often operate from more than one frame.

**Perceptions of leader behaviors of Athletic Directors.** Watkins and Rikard (1991) investigated the differences between the leader behaviors of Directors of Athletics as described by the Athletic Directors themselves and as viewed by their intercollegiate sport coaches, Deans, and University Presidents. The researchers measured three Athletic Director behaviors: (a) emphasizing performance, (b) structuring reward contingencies, and (c) monitoring operations. They did this by surveying administrators and coaches at eight colleges in the Division III Middle Atlantic Athletic Conference. Perceptions held by Presidents and Deans of the leader behaviors of Athletic Directors were similar to the self-perceptions of Athletic Directors. However, there was a strong

tendency for sport coaches to view the leader behavior of their Athletic Directors

differently from the views held by the Athletic Directors, Deans, and Presidents.

Coaches disagreed with administrators on at least two, and sometimes all three, of the

categories.  Watkins and Rikard (1991) recommended the Athletic Directors provide

written criteria stating their specific expectations of coaches' short-term and long-term

performance expectations.  The authors noted regular follow up to determine if

expectations were being met.  Additionally, rewarding the coaches for achieving desired

outcomes with a performance-based rewards structure may clarify the perceptions that

sport coaches have of the leader behaviors of directors.

**An assessment of the leadership skills of Athletic Directors.**  Barnhill (1998),

in a study of Division II Athletic Directors, suggested that a gap existed in the

educational level of Athletic Directors.  Barnhill (1998) also noted that administrators in

both athletics and higher education needed better educations on each other's discipline.

The author mentioned that the role of Athletic Director had turned more toward a

business executive and, as such, a void in preparation for the role existed.

**Leadership styles and characteristics of Athletic Directors.**  Christian (2000)

noted that Athletic Directors' principal forms of leadership—influence and motivation—

helped nurture an all-inclusive environment.  Athletic Directors cited delegation as being

critical to promoting a successful personal relationship and was essential to creating an

environment for coaching success.  The Athletic Directors surveyed noted that a team's

success is based on the abilities of the coach more than the AD's aptitude to administer

employees.  In the Christian (2010) research, Athletic Directors did not adopt a single

leadership strategy considered magical for universal success, but the author did note the importance of hiring good employees and allowing them the space to do their jobs well.

**Leadership and followership in NCAA Division II Athletic Directors.** Geist (2001) measured Division II Athletic Directors' leadership and followership capabilities using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bernard Bass (Bass & Avolio, 1985). Additionally, the researcher utilized the Personal Styles Questionnaire developed by Robert Kelley (1992, as cited in Geist, 2001). The Personal Styles Questionnaire helps identify what kind of follower a person is and determines a person's positive attributes as a follower. The instrument also identifies follower skills needing improvement by focusing on the dimensions of Active Engagement and Independent Thinking (Kelley, 1992 as cited in Geist, 2001). Geist (2001) discovered that middle managers and Athletic Directors have significant dissimilarities in their viewpoints of the Athletic Director's Transformational Leadership capabilities. Athletic Directors rate themselves higher in transformational skills than do middle managers. However, middle managers rate Athletic Directors as transformational leaders more than as transactional leaders. Geist (2001) also suggested Transformational and Transactional Leadership were important influences in the area of active engagement and independent thinking, key measurements of followership. All things being considered, Transformational Leadership was deemed the strongest influencer, due to the combined factors of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, also known as charisma (Geist, 2001).

**Measures of organizational effectiveness in NCAA Division I athletic departments.** Cunningham (2002) suggested leaders of any organization or business must be effective strategists who successfully achieve their goals and respond to their

stakeholders' needs.  The author reviewed Miles and Snow's (1978) typology of strategic

types—prospectors, defenders, analyzers, and reactors—to identify strategies

implemented by intercollegiate athletics and to examine the specific relationship between

strategy and organizational outcomes, namely: (a) athletic achievement, (b) student-

athlete graduation rates, and (c) compliance with Title IX.  The defender is efficient,

stable, grounded and easily the most conservative and predictable of the strategic types.

The defender works to hold onto its market share, with incremental growth being attained

by cementing its already stable market.  The prospector looks to exploit new

opportunities; the prospector is the polar opposite of the defender.  The analyzer is less

risk adverse in working to find new market opportunities, while keeping a firm hold of its

traditional base.  Reactors' context-structure-strategy alignment is inconsistent and

unstable; reactors are unsettled, because it did not match strategy and structure.  The

majority of the departments (55.8%) followed an analyzer strategy, signifying the search

for common ground amid the prospector and defender (Cunningham, 2002).  Prospectors

had the highest graduation rates and athletic achievement but were only moderately

compliant with Title IX.  Prospectors' achievements are consistent with previous

literature.  In business, prospector firms are typically more profitable and have larger

market shares and stronger market orientation than other others.  Athletic departments

willing to exploit new marketing opportunities are more successful with regards to

athletic achievement than their counterparts.  Prospectors and defenders enjoyed higher

graduation rates; analyzers had significantly lower graduate rates than other departments.

The author speculated that analyzers may be focusing their energies on the on-field

performance, rather than educating their student-athletes.  Defenders were the most

compliant with Title IX but had the lowest athletic accomplishment and modest

graduation rates.  Cunningham (2002) speculates that defenders would have the most

ethical behavior, whereas prospector organizations would generate the most revenue.

**The impact of leadership on organizational culture.**  Keiper (2002)

investigated Division III Athletic Directors' and coaches' viewpoints with regards to

effect of the Athletic Director's leadership on organizational culture.  To get there,

Keiper (2002) evaluated Athletic Directors' leadership behaviors by considering the

views of both Athletic Directors and the coaches.  Keiper (2002) also considered the

coaches' perceptions of ethos.  The investigator utilized the Leadership Practices

Inventory (LPI), developed by Posner and Kouzes (1988).  The researchers also utilized

OCTAPACE Profile (openness, confrontation, trust, authenticity, proaction, autonomy,

collaboration, and experimentation), created by Pareek (1994, as cited in Keiper, 2002),

to discover views of the organizational culture at NCAA Division III colleges and

universities.

A secondary purpose of the research was to inspect relationships between

leadership conduct and ethos (Keiper, 2002).  To do so, the researcher drew a comparison

to subcategories of the LPI—challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling

others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart—and the OCTAPACE

Profile.  The exercise was significant in that the LPI subcategories meaningfully

forecasted all of the OCTAPACE subcategories.  The research results were noteworthy

because the relationship between Inspiring a Shared Vision and Authenticity was

significantly negative.  The author indicated that coaches will perhaps struggle in finding

a common vision with the Athletic Director on the subject of the mission of the athletic

department.  Modeling the Way showed a solid association with the OCTAPACE

subcategories of proaction, authenticity, and trust, perhaps suggesting how important it is

for Athletic Directors to be a good role model.  Overall, Keiper's (2002) posited that

Athletic Directors and coaches certainly influence an athletic department's culture and

ethos.

**Transformational and Transactional Leadership of Athletic Directors.**  In a

transformational and Transactional Leadership study of Division II Athletic Directors,

Kim (2010) researched the effect of the Athletic Director's behaviors on attitudes and

behaviors of coaches.  Coaches evaluated their Athletic Director's leadership abilities

utilizing five variables: (a) organizational commitment, (b) job satisfaction, (c)

organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), (d) turnover intention, and (e) job

performance.  It was determined that Transactional Leadership, specifically contingent

rewards, has a positive effect on coaches' organizational behaviors.  Furthermore, an

Athletic Director's Transformational Leadership style had a greater overarching positive

effect on coaches' behaviors than Transactional Leadership (Kim, 2010).

**NCAA Athletic Directors' self-perspective of Transformational and**

**Transactional Leadership.**  Manning (2012) examined Athletic Directors' self-

perceptions as transformational or transactional by reviewing three components related to

their effect on the eight dimensions of Transformational/Transactional Leadership: (a)

category of AD; (b) age; and (c) gender.  Neither age nor gender factored into the self-

perceptions of the leadership style as it related to Transformational and Transactional

Leadership.  However, Manning (2012) discovered that Division I Athletic Directors

demonstrated the leadership styles of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation

and, as such, set themselves apart from Athletic Directors at the Division II and Division III levels. An Athletic Director's ability to intellectually stimulate is described as their ability to interact with their followers in such a way as to keep their team focused on tasks, evaluating issues through interactive questions, and solving problems. Inspirational motivation is defined as the Athletic Director's capacity to deliver a framework and importance toward a departmental vision (Manning, 2012).

**Intercollegiate Athletic Director Profile**

The role of the Athletic Director at the Division I level continues to evolve (Smith, 2014a). In recent years, Athletic Directors have become an important part of the university hierarchy and more Athletic Directors' employment contracts have included an academic rank, such as Vice President and Director of Athletics (e.g. Chandler, 2011; Prendergast, 2015; "Stansbury named OSU Athletic Director Vice President," 2015). For an intercollegiate athletic department to succeed, the Athletic Director must possess the business knowledge to supervise intercollegiate athletic programs (Belzer, 2015a).

As an important component of a university, athletic departments are expected to complement the larger mission of the institution (Wong, Deubert, & Hayek, 2015). A school's athletic program is fundamentally aligned with school branding, image, and status and often promotes increases in enrollment and raises the university's profile (Emma, 2015). To succeed in positively promoting the university mission, Athletic Directors need to understand the importance of their role and the scrutiny associated with it (Wong et al., 2015). In many cases, Athletic Directors have little exposure to the inner workings of the governance at a university (Chandler, 2011). However, in a dual role of

Vice President and Athletic Director, the AD allows for a direct alignment with the other departments within the university and its mission (Chandler, 2011).

The specific responsibilities of the Athletic Director differ by the institution they represent.  In each case, the Athletic Director is ultimately responsible for managing hundreds of student-athletes, coaches, and staff, while, at the same time, overseeing a multimillion dollar budget operation (Stickney, 2015).  Athletic Directors' responsibilities at a Division I level institution are likely to be different than duties at a Division II or Division III institution, due, in part, to the considerable differences in the number of teams and student-athletes.  Program size and scope vary dramatically across the three divisions (Fitzgerald, Sagaria, & Nelson, 1994).  Although, at times, career paths crossover between levels (Division I, II, or III), the prevailing tendency is for Athletic Directors to develop a career in the division level similar to the institution in which they hold an Athletic Director position (Fitzgerald et al., 1994).

**Profile.**  According to research conducted by Fitzgerald et al. (1994), through the early 1990s, the progression to the intercollegiate Athletic Director position typically followed a sequence of five steps (college athlete, high school coach, college coach, assistant or Associate Athletic Director, and Athletic Director).  In effect, Fitzgerald et al. (1994) concluded that of all NCAA Athletic Directors, 80% had been student-athletes, 30% had been high school coaches, 65% were former college coaches, 39.5% had been an assistant Athletic Director or Associate Athletic Director, and although not frequently touching every category, 94.5% of the Athletic Directors had followed this path in some fashion (Fitzgerald et al., 1994).

Industry professionals have cited a trend away from hiring ex-coaches, particularly the ex-football coach, and toward hiring candidates who have business expertise (Hardin et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2015).  The trajectory toward the business executive began to change in the 1970s, once university administrators asked Athletic Directors to have their departments become more fiscally self-sufficient and to take more responsibility for generating revenue (Thomas, 2010).  Athletic Directors at NCAA Division I athletic programs are viewed as CEOs who are highly visible, influential specialists who serve as key revenue generators, contract negotiators, and are directly responsible for multimillion-dollar budgets (Hardin et al., 2013; New, 2014; Thomas, 2010).  Many consider the role of an NCAA Division I intercollegiate Athletic Director as prestigious (Wong et al., 2015).

As of 2014, former head coaches represent 20% of Division I Athletic Directors (Wong, 2014).  Another prominent route to the Athletic Director chair included progressing through the ranks as Assistant and Associate Athletic Directors (Wong, 2014).  Additionally, there is a trend of hiring business executives from outside intercollegiate athletics; in fact, in 2014, nine Athletic Directors who led institutions within the 65 institutions making up the Power 5 conferences were executives from outside intercollegiate athletics (New, 2014).  Some were hired as previous administrators from another area of the university or as executives from professional sports or related agencies (Wong, 2014).  Compensation also is increasing, as nine Division I Athletic Directors made more than $1 million in 2013 (Wong et al., 2015).  Notably, 26% of ex-athletes also were head coaches (Wong et al., 2015).  In fact, the

stakes for selecting the right candidate for the job has, of late, led to a trend in the utilization of search firms in hiring Division I Athletic Directors (Lutz, 2012).

The profile of an NCAA Division I Athletic Director, as reported in Wong (2014), is as follows:

- Age: The average age of a Division I Athletic Director was 52 years old. The average age of those Athletic Directors at their hiring date was 49 years old.

- Gender: Of 351 Division I Athletic Directors, 318 were men (90.6%) and 33 (9.4%) were women.

- Race: 14% of Division I Athletic Directors were African-American and less than 1% were Asian-American. There has been an upward trend of hiring minorities for the position, with 21% of Athletic Directors hired from 2010 to 2014 constituting racial minorities.

- Education: A total of 280 of 351, or 80%, of Division I Athletic Directors have a master's degree. Again, an upward trend indicates that 90% of Athletic Directors hired between 2009 and 2014 have graduate degrees. Also, a total of 45 of 351, or 13%, of Division I Athletic Directors have earned an MBA, with 21 (6%) having a J.D., and 39 (11%) having a PhD or EdD. Division I Athletic Directors compared favorably to their major-league sports counterparts when it came to education, with fewer general managers of the NFL (44%), NBA (27%), and MLB (27%) holding advanced degrees, compared to 80% of Division I college Athletic Directors.

- Experience, as reported in Wong et al. (2015):

- Collegiate Athletes Track: A total of 57% of FBS Division I Athletic Directors were a former student-athlete (down from 88% in 1989-90), with 47% of those student-athletes being football players. Of the ex-athletes, 86% had some business experience.

- Collegiate Coaching Track: In total, 20% of Division I ADs were head coaches at some point and 27% were assistant coaches.

- Business Track: Overall, 89.3% had some kind of business experience, with 83% having had experience within the athletic department.

- Academia: Only 9% of all Division I Athletic Directors were members of academia.

- Previous ADs: Previous experience as an AD was notable, with 39% of Athletic Directors having previous experience in that role.

- Tenure: Athletic Directors' tenure averaged 6.796 years.

Though White men still dominate the Division I Athletic Director role, the presence of women and minorities in that role is growing. In 1972, after the passage of Title IX, female athletic administrators oversaw more than 90% of women's athletic programs (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002; Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). After the demise of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), in favor of the NCAA as the lead single entity, in the early 1980s, the effect was that the women who presided over women's athletics were pushed out and replaced by men who oversaw the newly merged athletic departments representing both men's and women's sports (Wilson, 2013).

Initially, female administrators struggled to regain their place as Athletic

Directors (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002). By 1999, women held almost 39%

of the 19,124 athletics-administration jobs at NCAA institutions (Suggs, 2000). In 2000,

women held 17% of Athletic Director positions at all NCAA levels (Acosta & Carpenter,

2002). Placing women in entry-level administrative positions and as assistant and

associate Athletic Directors may create a conduit for securing even more qualified

candidates for future Division I Athletic Director positions (Whisenant et al., 2002).

**Role.** The modern-day NCAA Division I Athletic Director role is complex

(Hardin et al., 2013), requiring the skill set equivalent to managing a major corporation

(Belzer, 2015a). Athletic Directors are responsible for budgets in the tens of millions of

dollars and in the case of the Power 5 conferences, budgets often exceeding $100 million

annually (Belzer, 2015a). Within the budget, the Athletic Director must determine how

to distribute resources fairly, by sport-based need (Mahony, Hums, & Riemer, 2005).

However, need may be defined in many ways (Mahony, Hums, & Riemer, 2002). At the

Division I level, the Athletic Director role includes revenue generation, facility

construction and operation, student welfare, NCAA compliance, finance, human

resources, and management of 16 or more intercollegiate sports programs, as well as

being responsible for hiring coaches, trainers, equipment managers, etc. (Belzer, 2015a).

Specifically, areas of responsibility under the Athletic Director include marketing,

fundraising, eligibility, compliance, and academic advising (Fitzgerald et al., 1994).

Division I Athletic Directors also are often forced to cope with opinionated constituents

(Belzer, 2015a). Maintaining a grasp on athletic compliance issues and ensuring

student-athlete welfare is perhaps the single most important responsibility of an Athletic

Director (Wong et al., 2015).  It is the role of the Athletic Director and his or her staff to communicate clearly what is expected of the student-athlete (NCAA, n.d.e.).  Typically, details may be communicated in the form of a student handbook.  Details are then promoted through communications via a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), coaches, and the Athletic Director (NCAA, n.d.m.)  The Athletic Director and his or her staff are accountable for ensuring the athletic department, including its student-athletes, live up to the ideals of the university and, for purposes of institutional control consistency, is responsible for keeping the University President informed of all pertinent issues within the program (NCAA, n.d.g., para. 3).  Generating revenue is one of the key differences between Division I Athletic Directors and Athletic Directors at the Division II and Division III levels.  Job responsibilities at the Division I level include fundraising; negotiating or managing television contracts; marketing; sponsorship contracts; ticketing; etc. (Weiner & Suggs, 2009; Wong & Matt, n.d.).  A Division I Athletic Director will spend a considerable portion of his or her time fundraising (Brown, 2011).  In many respects, this function is the central role of the Athletic Director, in that he or she is responsible for motivating various constituents to support the program financially (Brown, 2011).  One of the Athletic Director's primary responsibilities is to work tirelessly on capital campaigns (Wong et al., 2015).  A structure in which university fundraisers report to athletics allows Athletic Directors to tie those efforts more directly to the athletic teams and, thus, take more ownership in the process and ultimately are more effective (Brown, 2011).

At the Division I level, particularly in the Power 5 conferences, a school's media rights have become a multimillion-dollar and, in some cases, a billion-dollar, proposition

(Belzer, 2015a; Jensen et al., 2015). Athletic Directors are at the center of evaluating and negotiating contracts. The Athletic Director is expected to ensure that the university remains committed to assisting with the broadcast partnership and assuring the partnership is successful. This includes participating in the development and creation of content, distributing the conference network broadcasts, and assisting in the distribution of the third-tier rights (Belzer, 2015a).

Sponsorships are another key revenue source for athletic departments, and Athletic Directors and universities continue to court corporate partnerships as a source of expanding their budgets (Weiberg & Berkowitz, 2009). Sponsorship elements include naming rights opportunities and signage within the school's arenas, ballparks, and stadiums; digital media rights; promotions; and advertising (Weiberg & Berkowitz, 2009). In most cases, schools at the Division I FBS level outsource their rights to third-party groups like Learfield and IMG College (IEG Sponsorship Report, 2013). Third-party deals guarantee the athletic department revenues up front without taking on the financial risk themselves (Smith, 2014b). Third-party groups like Learfield and IMG operate similarly to a professional sports model and open the door for schools to partnerships with national brands (IEG Sponsorship Report, 2013). Additionally, licensing agreements are an important source of branding and revenue for athletic departments (Dosh, 2015). Athletic Directors need to consider the categories of returns (cash guarantees, royalties, performance bonuses, and product) when negotiating a licensing agreement (Dosh, 2015).

Ticket sales are another key driver of revenue (McEvoy & Popp, 2012). In 2008-09, ticket sales represented 28% of the revenues generated at the FBS level (McEvoy &

Popp, 2012). With ticket sales being such an important source of revenue, a number of

Athletic Directors are turning to specialized, professional third-party groups to outsource

ticket operations (Green, 2014). Other programs are expanding their efforts internally

and ramping up outbound sales efforts in the style of a professional sports model

(McEvoy & Popp, 2012).

An Athletic Director is directly accountable for the oversight of each sport.

Success depends on how well he or she identifies, recruits, develops, and retains quality

administrative and coaching talent (Belzer, 2015a). Identifying quality coaches and

negotiating contracts are crucial to the Athletic Director role. An Athletic Director

understands that intricacies of contracts (offset clauses, loyalty bonus, etc.) can have

major budget implications (Wong et al., 2015). An Athletic Director also has the

unenviable task of terminating a coach's employment. Success in the role is also largely

dependent on the quality of the administrators who are qualified and coachable (NCAA,

n.d.l.).

Division I intercollegiate athletics faces more critical legal challenges than

anytime in NCAA history (Mullen, 2014). Current lawsuits (*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, *CAPA

v. Northwestern*, *Jenkins v. NCAA*, *Alston v. NCAA*, and *Arrington v. NCAA*) strike at the

very foundation of NCAA standards that have existed for decades (Mullen, 2014). The

results of cases involving player likeness rights, student-athletes being recognized as

employees, compensation restrictions, concussion cases, etc., could have a long-term

effect on intercollegiate athletics and the Athletic Director position. Additionally,

Athletic Directors need to understand the legal issues regarding conference realignment,

conference bylaws, contract negotiation, Equity Disclosures Act, Title IX, HIPPA, etc.

(Belzer, 2015a; Wong et al., 2015).  Also, Athletic Directors are confronted with and must manage situations in which student-athletes occasionally violate the law or break the college's student code of conduct (Wong et al., 2015).

The Athletic Director is accountable for creating and implementing the athletic department budget (NCAA, n.d.e.).  At all times, the Athletic Director needs to be mindful of the department's finances (NCAA, n.d.e.).  Financial issues include student-athletes grand-in-aids, endowments, adjusting scholarship monies, and NCAA financial aid regulations (NCAA, n.d.e.).  As income increases, particularly to Power 5 members, expenses also will increase and Athletic Directors need to know how to manage the millions of dollars being infused into their department (Belzer, 2015a).  Media-rights contracts with the Power 5 conferences has led to a financial disparity that is widening between NCAA Division I universities (Upton & Berkowitz, 2012).  Schools at the Group of 5, NF playing schools, and FCS schools will be addressing rising expenses like cost of attendance.  Furthermore, FCS schools are facing a potential reduction or loss of income in the form of large game guarantees from the Power 5 schools (Belzer, 2015a).  Institutions also will be emphasizing additional oversight and transparency of the athletic budget (Kirwan & Turner, 2010).

Building, operating, and maintaining facilities is another important responsibility of the Athletic Director (NCAA, n.d.d.).  The Athletic Director must establish a philosophy for facilities, both short-term scheduling and operations and long-term construction and maintenance, as well as consider revenue opportunities from campus and outside groups interested in renting the facilities (NCAA, n.d.d.).  Stadiums, arenas, and facilities have the potential to generate revenue as another consideration for the

Athletic Director (Wong et al., 2015). Additionally, Athletic Directors find themselves in the midst of the "arms race" to build new or refurbish older facilities to keep programs competitive, with most of the projects being in the multimillions of dollars (Goff, 2014, Knight Commission, n.d.a.).

      **Stress.** Stress can be a primary factor in contributing to poor health (American Psychological Society, n.d.). Athletic Directors in all three divisions almost always demonstrated evidence of job stress (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995; Horine, 1994; Kelley, 1994). Satisfying various stakeholders and intensifying professional demands in many cases led to an Athletic Director's increased occupational stress (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995). Researchers examining various vocations suggested the most significant job-related stress factor occurs when the demands of the job outweigh one's personal ability to meet the expectations required (French & Caplan, 1972; Lazarus, 1990). Time management is a key consideration, as an Athletic Director must be organized in order to do his or her job well (Hoch, 2009). It is up to each institution to determine how much time its Athletic Director should devote to fundraising and other key duties as a portion of his or her job (Sport Management Resources, n.d.). However, the total amount of time devoted to Athletic Director responsibilities was not a predictor of job satisfaction (Robinson, Peterson, Tedrick, & Carpenter, 2003). An Athletic Director's effectiveness may be significantly compromised by stress (Ryska, 2002). The approach Athletic Directors take to pursue their individual program goals impacts their stress levels (Ryska, 2002). Budgeting and firing topped the list of most stressful duties (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995). Personnel problems were another predominant issue for Athletic Directors (Quarterman, Dupree, & Willis, 2006).

**President's Role in Intercollegiate Athletics**

At NCAA Division I institutions, the Athletic Director, in almost all cases, reports to the University President.  The relationship between the Athletic Director and University President is integral to the success of the program.  The following reviews the University President's interaction with intercollegiate athletics.

**Role.**  According to the NCAA constitution, University Presidents have "ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program" (Knight Commission, 1991).  "Institutional control" was established by the NCAA to unquestionably place the responsibility for the integrity of the intercollegiate athletic department squarely with the University President (Duderstadt, 2009).  Undoubtedly, sports teams impact a university's image (Cowan, 2005).  Institutional control echoes concerns about potential threats sometimes associated with the high visibility of college sports.  The insatiable media coverage of intercollegiate athletics inevitably leads to potential issues and departmental missteps that can be of great consequence to the university reputation.  Accordingly, intercollegiate athletics demands the attention of the University President (Duderstadt, 2009).

However, establishing the athletics, buck-stops-here mantra of the University President must be better defined by university governing boards (Wolverton & Fuller, 2012).  Wolverton and Fuller (2012) discovered that no specific language regarding athletic responsibilities was outlined in any of the contacts of University Presidents at the top 25 FBS programs.  Interestingly, the sole references to athletics included perks such as season tickets.

At many, if not most, universities, the Athletic Director directly reports to the President (Duderstadt, 2009). In consultation with the President, Athletic Directors are responsible for the day-to-day operations, integrity, and fiscal operations of the athletic department. Any revenues generated by athletics, generally or by specific sports teams, go toward financing their operations. Though a University President has many high-level personnel appointments such as Vice Presidents and Deans, hiring an Athletic Director can be one of the most difficult hires to conduct, due in large part to weigh both the internal and external interests in the athletic program (Duderstadt, 2009).

In the ever-changing environment of intercollegiate athletics, University Presidents search for Athletic Directors who have a wide variety of skills (leadership, fiscal management, personnel relations, public relations) and comprehensive management experience, as well as an appreciation for the educational mission (Duderstadt, 2009). Additionally, numerous Presidents seek Athletic Directors who actively work to integrate athletics into other elements of the university, whereas some believe it is critically important to search for Athletic Directors who are experienced educators and who can reestablish the proper alignment with the educational mission (Duderstadt, 2009). As another form of checks and balances, Faculty Athletic Representatives (FARs), are appointed by the University President to serve as a liaison between the institution and the athletics department. FARs also represent the university in affairs at the NCAA and conference levels. Each university defines the FAR's role at an individual institution (Farawebsite, n.d., para. 1). Within the various sports the coach is responsible for the control and integrity of his or her program (Duderstadt, 2009).

The clearly established chain of command (coaches to Athletic Director, Athletic Director to Presidents), to some extent, allows for Presidents to employ control on athletic departments when needed.  However, ambitious Athletic Directors and high-profile coaches can accumulate ample power to disregard presidential authority or leverage powerful alumni, trustees, or media to position their agendas (Duderstadt, 2009).  Some believe it to be an ethical issue when many football and basketball coaches' salaries surpass the compensation of a University President (Lumpkin, 2008).  Worse yet, the University President's most difficult relationship can be with his or her own governing board, particularly with individuals whose interest in the program inappropriately drive athletic-based decisions that align with the trustee's personal agenda (Duderstadt, 2009).

**University mission.**  Some argue that the values and goals of academics and athletics are totally different and believe that in reality, athletics are detached from the rest of the university (Duderstadt, 2009).  Others researchers note studies should be conducted to analyze how or if athletics complement the university mission (Cowan, 2005).  Although managing the various interests can be challenging, it is up to the University President, in consultation with his or her primary constituents, to establish the mission of an athletic department (Cowan, 2005).

Part of the university's mission is to educate student-athletes to graduate with an in-depth knowledge in their designated area of study (Campbell, 2015).  One of the challenges of the educational message is the inconsistent nature of the academic mission in relation to the quasi-professional sports model associated with college sports (Duderstadt, 2009).  Some believe the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics

undermines the academic values of a university, distorts priorities, destabilizes

leadership, and separates the purity of higher education from other organizations (Cowan,

2005; Duderstadt, 2009).  A 2002 internal review of athletics at Tulane University

revealed that administrators believed athletics had an adverse effect on the school's

image, but also determined this example to be the case of Division I athletic programs

overall (Cowan, 2005).  In a 2012 Inside Higher Education survey, 68.8% of University

Presidents believed recent athletic scandals had hurt the reputation of higher education at

large (Green, 2012).  Additionally, 48.2% viewed scandals as inevitable (Green, 2012).

On the contrary, others believe intercollegiate athletics contributes to the diversity of an

institution, plays a key role in fundraising, creates awareness for the school, and can

positively affect the students, alumni, faculty and staff, the community and the entire

affiliated university population (Duderstadt, 2009).

     **Real power.**  In some ways, due to circumstances beyond their control,

University Presidents lack the authority needed to govern their own athletic departments

(Wolverton & Fuller, 2012).  In comparison to the clearly defined power structure of a

corporation, University Presidents, at times, work within decentralized organizational

structures and operate with vague missions, making it more difficult to manage their

athletic programs (Hoffman, 2013).  Frequent turnover of the President's position often

leaves a university aimless.  The length of a University President's term may also have an

impact on his or her influence at the institution and, thus, his or her ability to implement

institutional control over athletics (Hoffman, 2013).  The tenure of University Presidents,

averaging 8.5 years, is relatively short (Bernasconi, 2013).  Having the time to build

legitimacy is critical to the President's ability to function successfully within the structure of college athletics (Hoffman, 2013).

The two key revenue-generating sports, football and men's basketball, have been the drivers of the changes in intercollegiate sports and academic reform (Oriard, 2012). Critics believe the real power within intercollegiate athletics is driven by the Power 5 conferences (Campbell, 2015). Television also is a driving force, as evidenced by the Big Ten Network televising more events than any professional league. Some believe athletic conferences run less like a group of academic institutions and more along the lines of a professional sports league (Duderstadt, 2009).

In essence, athletic conferences are status clubs (Hoffman, 2013). How does this view translate to a university's profile? Oriard (2009) discovered that 29 of 35 schools in the *U.S. News & World Report* ranking were FBS member schools and all but one of those schools were in a Power 5 conference. Moreover, member schools of the American Association of Universities (AAU) are "heavily weighted toward big-time football schools" (Oriard, 2009, p. 241).

**External factors.** "We've turned college sports into a religion in the United States, and that pressure, coupled with an insatiable appetite of commercial interests," are "beyond a President's ability to control," said William C. Friday (2011), head of the University of North Carolina educational system (1956 to 1986) and co-founding President of the Knight Commission on Athletics (Suggs, 2003, p. 34). Apparently, University Presidents agree. A Knight Commission (2009) report surveying FBS University Presidents revealed that three-quarters of the Presidents believed their ability to drive change was limited (Wolverton & Fuller, 2012). A 2012 Inside Higher Ed

survey (Lederman, Kiley, & Jaschik, 2012) echoed the results of the Knight Commission that, collectively, University Presidents are not optimistic about real reform (Green, 2012).  Of the 1,002 University Presidents participating in the survey, only 29.6% believed recent NCAA proposals for reform would "achieve meaningful success." Seventy-five percent "agree/strongly agree" colleges and universities "spend way too much money" on intercollegiate athletics (Green, 2012).

A University President who actively works to govern his or her athletic department may be met with resistance from various external constituents (Hoffman, 2013).  University Presidents are politically bound to alumni, boards, and other supporters (Sander, 2009).  University Presidents seen as interfering with athletics may find themselves in a problematic position with boosters (Wolverton & Fuller, 2012). Instead of keeping a watchful eye on athletics, many boosters who are emotionally tied to the program want Presidents to be promoters or cheerleaders for athletics (Suggs, 2003).

Because one of the key roles of a University President is to secure new revenues, it becomes difficult to not allow for some level of commercialism in athletics, particularly considering declining state and federal support (Hoffman, 2013).  As such, commercialism can be in direct conflict with reform (Hoffman, 2013).  University Presidents have expressed concerns regarding several issues, including the widening gap between the wealthiest athletic programs and trying to maintain pace; the sustainability of athletic revenue such as ticket sales, media-rights contracts, and fundraising; and any emerging friction between athletics and academics (Sander, 2009).

To determine the difference between NCAA Division I Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director

of Intercollegiate Athletics this researcher chose the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) as the instrument to measure the data. The RLSS was developed by Zhang, Jensen, and Mann (1997). The following is a review of the RLSS.

**Revised Leadership Scale for Sport**

After nearly four decades, the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) devised by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) remains one of the most universally applied instruments in measuring leadership behavior in coaches (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013; Horn 2002 as cited in Weiss, Ferrer-Caja, & Horn, 2002). The LSS originated as a 5-factor solution (Training and Instruction, Democratic Behavior, Autocratic Behavior, Social Support, and Positive Feedback). It includes 40 items outlining the vital attributes of coaching behavior (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

Zhang et al. (1997) introduced the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) expecting an improved instrument for assessing sport leaderships (Pilus & Saadan, 2009). The researchers attempted to build off of the LSS by adding two new factors to measure coaches' behaviors relating to group cohesion and the contemplation of situational aspects (Van Gastel, 2010).

**Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML).** Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) devised the LSS to conclude whether specific leadership theories could be applied to sports coaching (Moen et al, 2014). The LSS is a modification of the authors 1978 Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML). The MML stated that a leader's (i.e. coach's) success or effectiveness is reliant upon his or her correspondence to the preferences of his or her members (i.e. athletes), in addition to representative environmental conditions (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

The MML (Chelladurai, 1980; Chelladurai & Carron, 1978) is an amalgamation of Contingency Theory (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967), Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971, 1996; House & Dessler, 1974), and Adaptive-Reactive Theory (Osborn & Hunt, 1975). Contingency Theory maintains that the leader must adjust his or her management approach depending on the circumstances (Miner, 2015). Effectiveness depends on the leader's style and situational favorableness (Chelladurai, 1984). Path-Goal Theory asserts that to realize desired organizational outcomes, subordinates must be motivated to perform certain tasks in order to achieve the wanted results (Mehta & Anderson, 2015). As needed, the leader provides guidance and support to the followers. How effectively the follower will perform and his or her level of satisfaction are based upon the congruence between the follower's preference for a leader's behavior and the leader's actual behavior (Chelladurai, 1984). Adaptive-Reactive Theory (Osborn & Hunt, 1975) conceived leader behavior as a dichotomy comprising of adaptive behavior and reactive behavior. The researchers explained adaptive behavior as the degree leaders acclimate themselves to the requisite expectations of the organization. Osborn and Hunt (1975) defined reactive behavior by how the leader's behavior adjusts to the preferences of his or her followers (Greenwell et al., 2014). It also is assumed that the underlings react principally to the leader's reactive behavior (Chelladurai, 1984).

The MML provided an early framework for studying athletic coaching leadership. The MML model is based on three interrelated leadership behavior characteristics: (a) actual leader behavior; (b) leader behavior preferred by subordinates; and (c) required (as outlined by the organization) behavior (Chelladurai, 1984). Chelladurai and Carron (1978) noted that the initial origins of the three types (actual, preferred, and required) of

the leader's behaviors contained three distinct categories: the characteristics of the situation, of the coach and of the athletes (Wałach-Biśta, 2014). The MML model is centered on the idea that a coach's consistency impacts the athletes' performances and satisfaction (Wałach-Biśta, 2014). Actual behavior originates from the coach's ability, experience, and personality. Preferred behavior reflects the interests of the athletes. Required behavior is driven by the limitations and demands of the circumstances (Taylor & Wilson, 2005). If these three factors are harmonious, the result is expected to be a positive performance and athlete satisfaction (Moen et al., 2014).

**Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS).** Chelladurai & Saleh (1980) noted the absolute requirement of suitable leadership instruments before clarity and cogency can be brought to any theory. Prior to 1980, there was not a parallel instrument that accounted for or adapted to the unique characteristics and environmental setting of sports when assessing coaching behaviors (Wałach-Biśta, 2014). Thus, Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) Leadership Scale for Sport (LLS) was developed as an instrument to quantify leadership traits in sports coaching (Moen et al., 2014). Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) developed the 40-item LSS to assess leadership behavior and evaluate the hypothesized relationships within the MML (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013). The LSS was established to measure five coaching behaviors from both the athletes' (perceived and preferred) perspectives and the coaches' (perceived) perspectives (Taylor & Wilson, 2005).

Five subscales formulate the LSS instrument. Two quantify the coach's decision-making techniques (Autocratic and Democratic), two measure the coach's motivational methods (Positive Feedback and Social Support), and one reviews the coach's instructional (Instruction and Training) behavior (Moen et al., 2014). Each of the five

subscales of the LSS is considered to represent a dimension of leadership behavior:

Democratic, Autocratic, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Positive Feedback

(Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) suggest the Democratic

Behavior subscale (nine items) and Autocratic Behavior subscale (five items) are factors

reflecting the decision style of the coach (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  Democratic

behavior assesses the extent to which the coach allows the athletes to participate in

decision making and goal setting (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  Autocratic Behavior

reflects an authoritarian decision-making style and in terms of their relationship also

includes the closeness between coach and player (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  Training

and Instruction (13 items) represents the direct tasks of the coach, such as assisting

athletes to develop skills and learning the tactics of the sport (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).

Social Support Behavior (eight items) represents the coach's ability to satisfy the

interpersonal needs of the athletes, either directly or indirectly, through creating a

supportive atmosphere among members (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  Positive Feedback

Behavior (five items), originally named "rewarding behavior," represents the coach's

ability to recognize and express appreciation of members' efforts and complement

performance (Fletcher & Roberts, 2013).  According to Chelladurai and Doherty (1993),

the Autocratic and Democratic Behaviors represent the decision styles coaches most use

(Taylor & Wilson, 2005).

In building the questionnaire (the athlete's perceived, athlete's preferred, and

coach's perceived), a corresponding phase leads into each item (Van Gastel, 2010).  For

example, in the athlete's perceived version, the phrase may begin with "My coach,"

followed by the item.  In the athlete's preferred version, the phrase might begin "I prefer

my coach to," followed by the item, though in the case of the coach, the phrase may begin "I" or "In coaching," followed by the item (Van Gastel, 2010). Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) used a Likert 5-point scale to measure the responses measured as follows: "Always" (100% of the time), "often" (75% of the time), "occasionally" (50% of the time), "seldom" (25% of the time), and "never" (0% of the time) (Van Gastel, 2010).

**Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS).** Zhang et al. (1997) developed the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) as a scale to examine six coaching behavior styles: (a) Autocratic, (b) Democratic, (c) Positive Feedback, (d) Training and Instruction, (e) Social Support and (f) Situational Consideration Behavior (Pilus & Saadan, 2009). Zhang et al. (1997) revised the LSS by modifying and revising the three versions (athlete preference, athlete perception, and coach self-evaluation). The RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997) also retained similar preceding phrases and the same 5-point Likert response scale from the LSS. Two new factors were initially introduced, "Situational Consideration Behavior" and "Group Maintenance Behavior" (Van Gastel, 2010). "Situational Consideration Behavior" takes into account a coach's behavioral reaction to contemplating the situational dynamics (such as the time, individual, environment, team, and game); "setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals; differentiating coaching methods at different stages; and assigning an athlete to the right game position" (Zhang et al., 1997, p. 109). The authors also recommended "Group Maintenance Behavior" to take into consideration the coaches' behavior in concentrating on group cohesion. The designation included the relationship between the athletes as teammates, structuring and coordinating the athletes' activities, and improving the coach-athlete relationship (Van Gastel, 2010).

A 5-stage process was established to revise the LSS: (a) a preliminary modification and revision by adding factors and items; (b) a linguistic check of the initial revised scale; (c) a test of content validity of the initially revised scale; (d) an investigation of the construct validity and internal consistency reliability of the initially revised scale; and (e) the proposed final revision of the scale (Zhang et al., 1997). This same five-stage process was used to guide the development of a new instrument for Athletic Director's and Presidents' perspectives, as well as the initial quantitative examinations.

Coaches were interviewed in various sports, and, as such, 240 new items were created and added to the original 40 LSS items (Zhang et al., 1997). This list was reduced to 120 items after three linguistic specialists and 17 coaching leadership experts tested the items. Ultimately, 60 items (23 from the original LSS scale) were included in the final RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997). In the end, due to the uncertainties of the actuality of such a factor, the "Group Maintenance Behavior" was removed from the final RLSS model (Zhang et al., 1997).

Although the RLSS is considered suitable for assessing leadership, Zhang et al. (1997) admitted that it is not a "perfect measurement instrument with respect to measurement standards" (Zhang et al, 1997, p. 114). While content validity was heightened for Autocratic Behavior, "the three versions of the factor had low alpha coefficients," (Zhang et al., 1997, p. 118). However, the authors claim the RLSS improved the measurement characteristics of the LSS in several ways, including: (a) coaches produced the items; therefore, they are more sport specific; (b) the study was conducted in the U.S., rather than Canada (LSS); (c) the large samples improved the

generalization and the application of the scale; (d) coaching self-assessment measurement properties were verified and enhanced; and (e) constructs of the scale were especially upgraded (Van Gastel, 2010).

The RLSS includes six behavioral factors: (a) Autocratic, (b) Democratic, (c) Positive Feedback, (d) Training and Instruction, (e) Social Support, and (f) Situational Consideration Behavior. Autocratic and Democratic behaviors discuss the leaders' decision styles. Positive Feedback, Situational Behavior, Social Support, and Training and Instruction denote the substance of the behavior (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978; Zhang et al., 1997). Moreover, the RLSS was designed to assess coaches' and athletes' leadership preferences. The RLSS served as an initial point of departure from previous literature to develop a new instrument to measure similar constructs in Presidents and Athletic Directors.

*Autocratic behavior (8 items).* Autocratic Behavior stresses the coach's authority over and distance from his or her athletes. Students are expected to be compliant with the coach's instructions (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

*Democratic behavior (11 items).* Democratic Behavior is the degree to which the coach allows his or her athletes to participate in decision making in setting team goals and the method to accomplish such goals (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

*Positive feedback (12 items).* It is important that coaches compliment their athletes and demonstrate appreciation to the athletes' individual contributions, win or lose (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

*Situational behavior (9 items).* The coach considers specific situational factors (time, individual environment, team, and game) in establishing individual athlete goals,

his or her correctly assigned position within the game, and in illustrating approaches to achieve the goals, as well as changing up coaching approaches at different times (Zhang et al., 1997).

*Social support (8 items).*  Social Support denotes the level of a coach's involvement in fulfilling the athlete's personal needs, either directly or by establishing an atmosphere in which the athletes can do so collectively (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

*Training and instruction (10 items).*  The coach's mission is to improve the athlete's performance level.  This undertaking is done through drawing the most out of the athlete's physical potential, the athlete's skill development, and the athlete's utilization of the techniques and tactics of the sport (Chelladurai & Carron, 1978).

The purpose of this study was to determine the difference between NCAA Division I University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with regards to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors.

**Applying the RLSS.**  The RLSS has been implemented by many researchers. For example, Beam (2001) observed the varying attitudes of NCAA Division I and II student-athletes and their favored coaching leadership behavior based on gender, competition level, task dependence, and task variability.  Lam, Chen, Zhang, Robinson, and Ziegler (2007) examined coaching leadership styles as preferred and perceived by NCAA basketball players.  Burdette (2008) studied student-athletes and coaches of NCAA Division-I baseball, men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, softball, and volleyball for preferred coaching behaviors.  Koka (2008) utilized a

modified RLSS, specific to the physical education context, to study seventh and twelfth grade physical education students; to review the associations between students' psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness; and to explore various types of perceived teaching behaviors.

Yashiro (2008) translated the RLSS into the Japanese language. Andrew (2009) studied the effect of leadership behavior on the satisfaction of student-athlete intercollegiate tennis players. Nazarudin, Fauzee, Jamalis, Geok, and Din (2009) investigated the satisfaction of the Malaysian University basketball team based on the coach's leadership style. Lam, Cunningham, Cheung, Pearson, and Bae (2009) investigated the preferred and perceived coaching behaviors among male and female athletes. Henson (2010) inspected female intercollegiate student-athletes' preferences in coaching styles, as well as the preferred gender of their coaches. Schouten (2010) surveyed the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities for the leadership behaviors of coaches, with specific insight into the Democratic and Positive Feedback Leadership Behaviors amid CCCU male and female coaches. Witte (2011) compared NCAA Division III student-athletes coaching leadership preferences at Midwest institutions. Sullivan, Paquette, Holt, and Bloom (2012) looked at how coaching backgrounds and the levels of coaching education were linked to coaching efficacy and, consequently, how coaching efficacy was correlated to perceived youth sports leadership behaviors.

LaForge, Sullivan, and Bloom (2012) reviewed youth sports coaches in Canada and their behaviors based on coaching backgrounds and varying certification levels. Malete, Sullivan, & La Forge (2013) investigated Botswana (UK) coaches for the connection between coaching efficiency, experience, and perceived coaching. Chia,

Pyun, and Kwon (2015) sought to evaluate the congruence between perceived and preferred leadership conducts on leadership satisfaction among college student-athletes in Singapore, and Sharma (2015) investigated coaching-style preferences among male and female badminton players.  Clearly, the RLSS has been used by a variety of researchers and served as an initial guide for the development of an instrument measuring Presidents' and Athletic Directors' perspectives on the Athletic Directors' leadership style.

In conclusion, Chapter II outlined the state and focus of intercollegiate athletics, provided a general overview of recognized leadership theories, reviewed literature that has previously studied the Athletic Director leadership traits and styles, outlined the career profile and role of an intercollegiate Athletic Director, discussed the President's role in intercollegiate athletics, and reviewed the specific makeup of the RLSS.  In Chapter III, the researcher outlines the methodology applied to this research study.

**CHAPTER III**

**Methodology**

As the researcher ascertained in the literature review, the current NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA landscape is rapidly evolving, triggered by conference realignments, an influx of millions of dollars to Power 5 conferences via the creation of conference television networks, and the NCAA's modification of the rules in the face of litigation (Burns, 2016; Dent, 2012). With the high stakes, understanding the role of NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA Athletic Directors has never been more important. Identifying the right leader for an intercollegiate Athletic Director's position is critical to the overall mission, as well as the cost/benefit success of a university or college (Hutchinson & Bennett, 2012; Nite et al., 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to a) examine leadership behaviors of effective Athletic Directors and b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with regards to unexamined constructs, as well as Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors.

The researcher examined the desired leadership traits and styles of NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA intercollegiate Athletic Directors by conducting interviews of Athletic Directors, University Presidents, NCAA Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches utilizing the six leadership traits outlined in the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (Zhang et al., 1997) as a guide for probing questions about Athletic Directors' leadership styles. The RLSS is an instrument specifically

designed to measure research on sports-specific leadership behavior and, therefore, serves as a strong starting point for the development of a new instrument for use with Presidents and Athletic Directors.  As noted in the literature review, the RLSS is a modified design of Chelladurai and Saleh's (1980) Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS).  The RLSS comprises 60 items and includes six leadership behavior measurements (Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors).  An instrument for use with Presidents and Athletic Directors may contain these elements and may be of a structure and length similar to the RLSS. Participants were asked to complete basic demographic information (age, race, gender, education, and the number of years in their current role) to support future analyses and validation efforts.

The results of this research could have several important implications.  First, the fact that the research will serve as a starting point for the development of a new instrument for examining Athletic Directors' leadership styles and Presidents' expectations of Athletic Directors is a significant contribution to sport management scholarship.  Furthermore, University Presidents could alter their hiring practices based on the information provided by the Athletic Directors.  Athletic Directors and aspiring Athletic Directors could benefit by having a better understanding of the University President's viewpoint and alter their business approaches based on this insight.  This chapter is presented in the following sections: (a) Research Questions (b) Research Design, (c) Selection of Participants; (d) Instrumentation, (e) Procedures, and (f) Summary of Methodology.

**Research Question**

What are the characteristic behaviors of effective Athletic Directors as perceived by Athletic Directors, Presidents, Athletic Administrators, Head Coaches, and NCAA Conference Commissioners?

**Research Design**

This research is a qualitative study. Zhang et al.'s (1997) RLSS was chosen as the theoretical framework for the research because it is, perhaps, the best representation of a prior study on the topic of leadership in sports settings. Moreover, Zhang et al.'s (1997) work results in a valid and reliable instrument in examining leadership in the field of sports research. The RLSS guided the development of a new instrument to study leadership behaviors and skills required for the Athletic Director position, as viewed by Athletic Directors and University Presidents, as opposed to the RLSS, which measures the leadership behaviors and skills required for coaches, as viewed by coaches and student-athletes.

**Instrumentation**

The researcher designed a new instrument for examining Presidents' and Athletic Directors' leadership preferences for Athletic Directors. The development of this new instrument was guided by Zhang et al.'s (1997) Revised Leadership Scale for Sports. The RLSS is an instrument specifically designed to measure research on sports-specific leadership behavior. In addition to the interview questions, a form was included to obtain demographic information from the participants, including age, sex, race, years of experience in an intercollegiate setting, and years of experience in their current role.

**Selection of Participants**

The researcher conducted interviews of Athletic Directors, Presidents, NCAA Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches. Participants were purposively selected to represent Athletic Directors and Presidents from NCAA Division I, II, and III and NAIA athletics. In addition to these eight participants, two NCAA Commissioners, two Athletic Administrators, and two Head Coaches were also interviewed.

**Data Collection Methods**

Participants were first asked to describe the leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors. In so doing, Athletic Directors were guided to discuss their role as an effective Athletic Director. Presidents were guided to discuss their preferences for Athletic Directors' leadership styles. NCAA Commissioners were asked to provide a holistic assessment of effective Athletic Directors' leadership traits. Athletic Administrators and Head Coaches were asked their preferences on effective Athletic Directors' leadership traits. An interview script—complete with probing questions developed using the RLSS as a guide—was developed to guide these interviews and is available in Appendix A. Active note-taking and post-interview notation were used as there was a concern that participants would likely have been opposed to recording.

Following each interview, notes and content were transcribed into text that served as the basis for coding through classic content-analysis methods. The text for each interview, as well as the developed instrument, was member-checked with participants. Each interview text was coded into themes, taking care to identify associated traits for each theme. These associated traits served as the stems for questions on a new

instrument to be used with University Presidents and Athletic Directors. The researcher developed these stems drawing upon interviews, the RLSS, and the aforementioned scholarship.

**Procedures**

Several steps needed to be taken to initiate the research. The researcher obtained permission from Dr. Jianhui (James) Zhang to allow the RLSS to serve as an initial guide for the development of the new instrument. Approval for this study was sought through the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board after receiving consent from the dissertation committee (Document 1, Appendix A). The researcher referenced the Higher Ed Directory, which includes names, email addresses, and physical addresses for University Presidents and intercollegiate Athletic Directors. The researcher created a recruitment email (Document 2, Appendix A) to secure participants and ask those who accept to sign a statement of informed consent (Document 3, Appendix A).

**Summary of Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to a) examine leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors and b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with regards to unexamined constructs, as well as Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors. This qualitative study utilized the RLSS as a guide in the development of a new instrument to study leadership traits and skills required for the Athletic Director position. A purposive sampling design was implemented. University Presidents' and Athletic Directors'

NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA institutions were approached to participate. A new instrument will be prepared with the guidance of prior literature and interviews of Presidents, Athletic Directors, and NCAA Commissioners. The development of this new instrument will support the accurate measurement of leadership topics related to University Presidents' preferences and Athletic Directors' self-perceptions on the Athletic Director position.

**CHAPTER IV**

**Results**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to (a) examine the leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors and (b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, with particular regard to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors, which are concepts drawn from prior research. To address the research question "What are the characteristic traits of effective NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA Athletic Directors as perceived by Athletic Directors, Presidents, Conference Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches?", two types of analysis were implemented: (a) a classical content analysis and (b) a constant comparison analysis.

Explored in this study were various senior intercollegiate administrators' preferences of the leadership skills and traits required for the Athletic Director role within intercollegiate athletics in the United States. Findings deduced from the individual interviews of the 14 participants are presented in this chapter. The themes that emerged from this study served as the primary findings in answering the research question and will serve in the development of a new instrument. That instrument will measure the University Presidents' preferences for specific leadership traits in the Athletic Director role and the Athletic Directors' self-perceptions of the traits needed for the role. The findings relative to the perceptions of senior intercollegiate administrators are presented

and analyzed in this chapter. Eight major themes emerged from the Research Question. They are: (a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary. The chapter is organized into eight sections as follows: (a) selection of participants, (b) data analysis process, (c) coding process, (d) identification of themes, (e) evidence to support findings, (f) connection to prior literature, (g) connection to the theoretical framework, and (h) summary of the chapter.

**Participants**

A purposive sample was used to select the participants, with fourteen selected to participate. The researcher selected experienced senior intercollegiate administrators with the following characteristics: ten of the participants were senior administrators who regularly interact with the Athletic Director position and are best positioned to evaluate the leadership traits required for the AD role, and four of the participants were standing intercollegiate Athletic Directors who provided their insights as the person charged with the lead role of an intercollegiate athletic department. The researcher was professionally acquainted with several of the participants and had no previous relationship with others. A total of 16 prospective individuals were contacted to obtain the 14 participants required for the study. Two NAIA Presidents declined to participate. The study used a qualitative research process based primarily on semi-structured interviews with the 14 intercollegiate senior administrators. Only one participant (the NAIA University President) was not active in his or her role at the time of the interview. However, that individual had retired from the role two months prior to the interview. The in-depth interviews were conducted and ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes in length.

Participants were selected to provide a representation of all levels of collegiate athletics amongst 4-year institutions (NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA) and also to represent the United States equally by geographic region to provide voices that represented a nationwide sampling. Consideration was also given to the demographics of participants (gender, race, etc.) to provide a representative sample reflective of the demographic makeup of Athletic Directors in recent research (Wong, 2014). Participants were selected having considered the following criteria; (a) University Presidents, (*n*=4), with one participant each from NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA, (b) Athletic Directors, (*n*=4), with one participant each from NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA, (c) two Conference Commissioners from NCAA Division I, (d) two Head Coaches from NCAA Division I athletic departments, and (e) two Senior Athletic Administrators from NCAA Division I athletic departments. The research participants were also strategically selected to represent cross sections of the United States. The 14 participants represented nine regions of the United States, defined via the Higher Education Director, as follows: (a) Middle Atlantic, (b) East Central, (c) Southeast, (d) Midwest, (e) Heartland, (f) Southwest, (g) Rocky Mountain, (h) Pacific Coast, and (i) Pacific Northwest. A total of 14 conferences were represented including, (a) American Athletic Conference (NCAA Division I, FBS), (b) Atlantic Coast Conference (NCAA Division I, Power 5), (c) Big Ten Conference (NCAA Division I, Power 5), (d) Cascade Collegiate Conference (NAIA), (e) Conference Carolinas (NCAA Division II), (f) Conference USA (NCAA Division I, FBS), (g) Gulf Coast Athletic Conference (NAIA), (h) Missouri Valley Conference (NCAA Division I Mid-Major for all sports except football whereby there is a separate conference for NCAA Division I FCS Football,), (i) Mountain West

Conference (NCAA Division I, FBS), (j) North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAA

Division III), (k) Northeast Athletic Conference (NCAA Division I, FCS), (l) Old

Dominion Athletic Conference (NCAA Division III), (m) Pac-12 Conference (Division I,

Power 5), and (n) the Sunshine State Conference (NCAA Division II).  Of the NCAA

Division I Conferences, three are from the Power 5, three are from the Football Bowl

Subdivision (FBS), and two are from the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).

Participants were from diverse backgrounds.  Participant ages ranged from 31-67

($M$=50.9, $SD$=.77). Years of experience working in the collegiate environment ranged

from 8-43 years ($M$=22.1, $SD$=.63), with 1-28 years at their current institution and in their

current role ($M$=8.1, $SD$=.63).  There were 11 males and three females; 10 of the

individuals were White, three were Black, and one was Hispanic.  Participants

represented five public universities, six private universities, and one non-profit

independent university.  The two conference commissioners represented in this sample

oversaw entities that include both public and private institutions.  The participants hold a

list of impressive achievements, including a winner of the Rising Star Award by the

National Association for Athletics Compliance (NAAC); a four-year member of the

NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Selection Committee; an NCAA Power 5 head coach

with seven NCAA Sweet 16 and two Elite Eight tournament appearances; a former

winner of the Charles Morris Award as the NAIA's National Athletic Administrator of

the Year; an individual identified in the book "The Entrepreneurial College President" as

one of 17 most entrepreneurial presidents in American higher education; an individual

recognized as the South Carolina Career Woman of the Year by the South Carolina

Business and Professionals Woman's Foundation; an individual named one of the

nation's Top 100 Most Influential Hispanics by Hispanic Business Magazine; an Air Force Bronze Star recipient, Harvard MBA, and a Rhoades Scholar from Oxford; and a winner of the James J. Corbett Memorial Award (presented annually by NACDA as the highest administrative honor in intercollegiate athletics). The participant's position, division, geographic region (see Table B1, Appendix B), public or private university, age, gender, race, years in the intercollegiate environment, years at current institution, and the years in current role are outlined in Table B2 (Appendix B).

**Interview Process**

This was a qualitative research study using a classic content analysis (Berelson, 1952). The role of the researcher was to determine which pieces of content to present that were considered most relevant to the study. The researcher's role as a senior athletic administrator at an NCAA Division I (FCS) intercollegiate athletic institution provided unique insight to understanding the context of each participant's remarks.
The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview protocol (Krueger & Casey, 2000). All prospective interviewees were offered the opportunity to decline participation. As previously noted, two NAIA Presidents declined. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality. To safeguard confidentiality, participants were referred to strictly by their title and region of the country. This was done with the objective of eliminating any possible connection to the participant.

All interviews were conducted via phone, and were conducted over a 5-week time period. The first interview was conducted the afternoon of Wednesday, June 22, 2016, and the final interview was completed the morning of Friday, July 29, 2016. Interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 90 minutes. At the outset of the call, a brief two to

three minute overview of the research and the process was presented to the interviewee.

The researcher began each interview with an open-ended question "What are the

leadership traits and traits of an effective Athletic Director?" In an inductive style,

several follow-up questions built off of the participant's initial answer until the researcher

felt the subject was exhausted. Then, the researcher presented, in a deductive style, one

question designed to represent each of the six RLSS constructs. The researcher asked

follow-up questions to the initial RLSS construct questions when appropriate.

All interviews were transcribed with hand-written notes without use of qualitative

software. There were no recording devices utilized, as per the suggestion of the

researcher's dissertation co-chairs. Each of the hand-written transcriptions was converted

into a type-written format and shared with the participant to be member checked

(Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2008). Eleven of the participants reviewed the typed

Word-file version of their transcribed interview and returned the file with minor

corrections. Three of the participants signed off on the versions as originally transcribed.

The questions used in the research are listed in Table B3 (Appendix B).

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher applied two types of analysis to this research: (a) a classical

content analysis and (b) a constant comparison analysis. First, a classical content

analysis was used to examine the interviews to identify meanings within key words or

paragraphs. The researcher took both an inductive and deductive approach to the

interviews and analysis. The initial question "What are the leadership traits of an

effective Athletic Director?" was an open-ended question, and thus, an inductive

approach was used; its purpose was to collect a listing of traits required for the Athletic

Director role and subsequently implement a series of follow-up questions to explore the in-depth details of each behavior mentioned in the initial response. Conversely, a deductive approach was used through which the researcher implemented a series of structured questions, with each one intended to be representative of each of the six RLSS constructs to confirm the construct validity for the current research.

The researcher applied two steps to the constant comparison analysis. First, in the inductive approach stage, the researcher applied a holistic coding method (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) by reviewing the initial key responses in a broader context, devoid of any follow-up questions and responses. Of the 14 participants, 58 initial descriptions identifying types of traits associated with the Athletic Director role were discovered. The researcher recorded each of the traits onto an Excel spreadsheet to initially summarize segments of the data. The researcher then reorganized the data to be viewed alphabetically using the sort filter in Excel software. This process made it easier for the researcher to remove duplicates. With this process, the initial 58 descriptions were reduced to 38 codes.

Following the initial coding, the researcher began to make inductive generalizations. Categories were created to reduce redundancy of the codes. Then, the researcher implemented pattern coding as a second cycle method to group the codes into a smaller number of categories until a level of saturation was reached. The researcher then created a list of preliminary themes, which helped to organize the themes and create clarity among findings. Subthemes were bundled after more interpretation and deliberation. Further reduction of the categories allowed for the emergence of the central themes. As a result, eight themes emerged to describe the leadership traits required for

the Athletic Director position: (a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary.

Secondly, the researcher reviewed the complete transcribed interview and utilized a descriptive process to carefully code the data line by line. Using an open coding process, the meaning of each complete thought or chunks of data, whether it be a single line or multiple sentences, was reviewed and assigned a code word meant to capture the overall meaning intended (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2016). The researcher again utilized descriptive processes to code the data line by line. The research question alone produced 465 coded notes from the 14 participants. The researcher then reorganized the data to be viewed alphabetically using the sort filter in the Excel software. This process made it easier for the researcher to remove duplicates. Removing the duplicates reduced the total to 340 unique coded words. The codes were then placed on the Excel spreadsheet and the researcher implemented a second cycle method aligning with the eight themes presented in the holistic coding: (a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary.

Next, a constant comparison analysis was conducted on the data. Constant comparison analysis systematically condenses data into codes and then develops themes from the codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), in constant comparison analysis the researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind, but instead begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data (p. 12). The five main mechanisms of constant comparison analysis are: (a) to build theory, not test it; (b) to give researchers analytic tools for analyzing data; (c) to assist researchers in understanding multiple meanings

from the data; (d) to give researchers a systematic process as well as a creative process for analyzing data; and (e) to help researchers identify, create, and see the relationships among parts of the data when constructing a theme (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). There are three primary stages of constant comparative analysis: (a) open coding, (b) axial coding, and (c) selective coding. Open coding is "like working on a puzzle" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 223) wherein the analyst chunks the data into smaller parts, and then "codes" each section. Axial coding is when the researchers groups the codes into similar collections, while selective coding is the "process of integrating and refining the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 143).

In an additional step, a similar process was applied to the six RLSS construct questions. The descriptive code words broke down as follows: Autocratic (58), Democratic (36), Positive Feedback (25), Situational Behavior (37), Social Support Behavior (48), and Training and Instruction (25). The researcher used this information to compare the words associated with the eight themes to those included in the description of the RLSS constructs to determine commonality. Additionally, the researcher reviewed the participants' answers to the open-ended research question against the answers provided to the questions designed to represent the RLSS to search for similarities in the narrative. Each exercise was put in place to conclude if each of the RLSS constructs were applicable to be included in the development of a new instrument to measure University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' leadership behavior preferences for the Athletic Director role.

Finally, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the narrative provided by the interviewees and compared it with the information discussed in the current literature.

The purpose of this comparison was to determine how closely the researcher's central themes were supported by the narrative of the literature review. The researcher selected the participant's quotes that were deemed to most clearly communicate their point and most pertinent to the research. Data deemed not pertinent to the discussion of the themes was excluded. As a result, it was determined that the central themes of the leadership traits required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director position—(a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary—were consistent within the field of intercollegiate athletics administration. Once the central themes were established, the researcher selected excerpts from the interviewees to match the generalizations in writing the research narrative. The researcher carefully chose the interviewee quotes based on the richness of the participant's response, as well as how well an interviewee's description represented the definition of each theme. The individual themes and operational definitions are outlined in Table B4 (Appendix B). Emergent themes and subthemes determined through the initial responses to the research question are outlined in Table B5 (Appendix B).

The narrative gathered from the participants from the research question is further clarified in each theme. The researcher reviewed each of the responses carefully in creating the definition. The following is an encapsulation of each of the themes in detail.

**Communicator.** In many cases, Athletic Directors are chosen for their communication skills as much as their achievements, according to the research participants. An Athletic Director communicates with a diverse group of constituents. He or she must know his or her audience, be an active listener, and be able to

communicate passionately and confidently, yet modestly, to inspire various audiences to action.

*Communication.* Clear communication is the golden thread that ties together all facets of a project, a mission, or a team. An NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region, noted an Athletic Director must be able to adapt based on the constituency to which they are communicating:

> Athletic Directors have to deal with so many constituencies and issues. Be
> it fundraising, policy, student-athletes, faculty, etc., the AD has to have the
> ability to communicate effectively with those constituencies. They need to
> communicate effectively both via written and spoken media. As
> President, I don't have all day, so I would expect the Athletic Director to
> draw me to the things that are most important. They need to be effective
> and efficient in their conversations with student-athletes, coaches, parents,
> donors/alumni, etc. You don't have to be the greatest public speaker in
> the world, but you have to be pretty good. They communicate with all
> kinds of audiences – student-athletes, coaches, community leaders, etc.
> They 'code switch' as a matter of necessity. (University President, Middle
> Atlantic/Northeast Region).

An NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region, expressed the importance of an inside-out approach to messaging:

> I have a note on my desk that I live by: 'The most effective
> communication strategy in higher education is the ability to communicate
> internal to external.' I picked this up from Gordon Gee, now president of

West Virginia University.  If you are effective internally, it will drive your

strategy externally.  For instance, if strong, reasoned plans are discussed in

a coaches' meeting, then there is a good chance good solid information

will be communicated outwardly by your coaches, and not gossip.

(NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, noted the importance

of how you present things is equally important as what you say.

I prefer to be direct, but empathetic.  I try to take the time to know my

staff and watch the coaches and present information I think will help.  It is

important they hear it (feedback).  I love to say yes, but the job requires

me to say no.  I try to present in a way that the staff feels support.  (To

know if they are hearing the message) I will see and track if they change

and circle back to that coach to check in.  For instance, a coach might

want to change leadership (within the team) by changing from a captain to

a leadership council.  I hear their thoughts out and suggest they can do this

or can't do that.  We meet later and see what was the outcome.  Most of

the no's are financially related.  The important communication happens in

the corrective stuff.  For example, we have a rule on the use of rental cars

vs. mileage.  We figured out if you drive more than 100 miles it is more

efficient and economical to use a rental car than your own vehicle.  We

recently had a coach who was not fitting within the guidelines and we had

to talk about it.  We communicate that we must be budget conscious.  In

that situation, $300 is too much.  I set the parameters to quell behaviors."

(NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region)

*Listens.*  Nearly every participant noted in one form or another that being a great communicator and also a great listener is critical to the Athletic Director role.  An Athletic Director who is self-aware welcomes dissenting opinions as an opportunity to consider improved strategies.  As staffs become increasingly diverse, multigenerational leaders who listen are able to build trust and loyalty among their employees.  Thanking a staff member for his or her contribution or listening, in general, is important in validating the staff member's value.  An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, had a method for determining if someone was truly listening:

> I've worked with some leaders who listened and others who did not.  How
> I can tell is if the person repeats my information back to me, their body
> language, and if they ask questions. If they don't ask a question, I assume
> they are not listening.  By listening, it validates my work.  It makes me
> feel that I am being taken seriously. I have had my say. I can read it best
> through body language and eye contact." (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior
> Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

**Driven.**  According to the participants, effective Athletic Directors are serious, dedicated, committed to excellence and hold themselves, as well as others, accountable to the end goal.  Generating revenue and being accountable for multimillion-dollar budgets are a tremendous responsibility.  Being a self-starter who is highly motivated, or driven,

is imperative to the Athletic Director role. The leadership behavior traits within the theme driven include *committed*, *dedicated*, *disciplined*, and *proactive*.

 ***Committed.*** Striving for excellence is an important part of the Athletic Director role. The participants noted that without a commitment to excellence, no department could achieve the results they hope to attain. An NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region, said:

> Having a commitment to excellence. Working as well and proficiently as
>
> possible. Each coach/administrator brings their own style to it, but I look
>
> for ways to do it well. For example, our end-of-year awards program is
>
> excellent. It's a dinner. We hand out awards and treat everyone the same.
>
> Everyone dresses up. We take photos and do it at a high level. It doesn't
>
> have to cost a lot of money to do it with meaning. How do we pull
>
> together instead of holding separate events? We do it as one. Cross
>
> Country has its own special independent event. Other teams ask 'why
>
> don't we have that?' It's important we do it the right way." (NCAA
>
> Division II University President, East Central Region)

 ***Dedicated.*** Being internally driven or highly motivated is a prerequisite for the role of an intercollegiate Athletic Director, as noted by the research participants. Being dedicated to the job, the university, the student-athletes, and the stakeholders is a prerequisite for the intercollegiate Athletic Director role. "It is important the AD demonstrates dedication and commitment to the enterprise via actions and deeds," noted an NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region.

*Disciplined.* As athletic department operations are evolving and becoming more complex, a formal structure or process becomes vital to creating successful outcomes. Execution through an operational discipline is integral to the department's overall strategy. It can lead to improved internal communication and may establish a forum for resolving issues, thus, ultimately fostering a feeling of employee ownership in the primary mission. An NCAA University President (FCS), Middle Atlantic Region Northeast United States, described discipline as a method of getting things done.

> Discipline–not necessarily time discipline, but discipline of process and fairness. You want your AD to be flexible, but also be disciplined enough to go through a process. Discipline to work with the budget and review numbers. Disciplined enough to make sure paperwork is submitted on time. Another way to say it is attention to detail. (NCAA University President (FCS), Middle Atlantic Region Northeast United States)

*Proactive.* The participants described an effective Athletic Director as someone who is intrinsically motivated and highly confident in his or her own abilities. These individuals are calculated risk takers who enjoy setting a clear vision and direction and have the ability to actively implement plans. As described in the research, these are action-oriented individuals who relish challenges and work with a purpose. An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, said, "It is important that the AD is action oriented and not afraid to make decisions. He or she will be put in that position all the time." An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region, discussed the importance of revenue generation. "The AD must be active, with an external focus. Every athletic department is in need of revenues; the AD

must balance the internal needs of the department and the external outreach required to advance the program.  This balance is critical."

**Personable.**  Being perceived as personable and having positive relationship skills are seen by the interviewees as important traits in effective Athletic Directors. Validating a subordinate through encouragement, allowing for two-way communication, providing candid feedback, offering praise, and showing that the staff is valued are very real issues.  Being emotionally intelligent and demonstrating positive inner personal skills are a requirement for the Athletic Director role, according to the participants of this research.  The leadership behavior traits within the theme are *empathetic*, *positive*, *respectful*, *supportive*, and *team oriented*.

*Empathetic.*  Effective Athletic Directors realize that the department's bottom-line success is only reached through its people, and according to the participants, empathy is a powerful tool at their disposal.  Empathetic leaders spend more time listening than talking.  Allowing people the feeling of being heard and recognized only adds to the feeling of unity and contributes to a team atmosphere.  It is an Athletic Director's openness to understanding the emotions and feelings of his or her subordinates that is so important to his or her being viewed as personable.  An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region, described empathy as follows:

It is the understanding of what makes people tick.  The AD can outline a vision, but it is how they mobilize the staff to get it done that is essential. Emotional intelligence is a big piece of understanding of what motivates those people.  Having people skills and knowing how to form relationships is one of the most important skills an AD has to have.  Relationships are at

the center of everything we do.  I don't know if you have read the book

*Speed of Truth*, but it says everything moves quicker and more efficiently

if there is trust in the relationship.  Empathy and people skills are crucial.

(NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest

Region)

Also, because this is sports, an NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic

Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, feels it is important for Athletic Directors to

demonstrate emotion on the job to create an emotional connection with their staff,

coaches, and student-athletes:

You still have to be a kid a bit.  Some people make it all business.  There

has to be some feeling of emotion and love.  Showing disappointment is

okay.  Celebrating when you win is okay.  Student-athletes like to see that.

It's important to them.  The fans like to see that you are human.  It is cool.

The day that is gone it might be over. I am excited every time I am on the

field.  If you stop having that emotion I don't know how good of a leader

you can be.  It is important.  You have to love the battles, the negotiations,

the pomp and circumstance of the event, the team camaraderie, the band,

cheer, etc. Those that are too business, too detached, are missing it.  (CAA

Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central

Region)

*Positive.*  Projecting a positive attitude interjects a positive energy and sense of

encouragement to the Athletic Director's followers.  Enthusiasm is contagious and

critical to driving the growth of any organization.  An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head

Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region, said:

> Someone who is very positive.  I've been around enough situations to
>
> know that an Athletic Director can't go a day without dealing with a
>
> problem.  It is always something. They have to be able to stay above the
>
> fray with how you react.  With all the issues the position faces, a negative
>
> person will bring the whole thing down.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5)
>
> Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region,

discussed the importance of the Athletic Director providing positive feedback to his or

her staff:

> Positive reinforcement is really important when something significant
>
> happens.  I think it is always good to provide positive reinforcement for
>
> good outcomes and achievements.  The recognition factor from the person
>
> you report to is critical.  It stimulates the desire to achieve, grow, and
>
> improve.  Positive reinforcement with praise, sometimes publicly, other
>
> times just for internal consumption, fuels high achievement.  If you don't
>
> recognize and reward your people, it creates cracks in the foundation and
>
> resentment among staff.  Great leaders convey appreciation.  (NCAA
>
> Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region)

*Respectful.*  According to the participants, being respectful is at the heart of

building a team; it can be shown by delegating important assignments or by showing an

interest in of the viewpoints of others.  Employees can feel respect, or lack thereof, in the

tone of a person's voice, with the context of the words, and in nonverbal communication. An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, discussed the importance of respect:

> The concept of respect. Respect falls in the 'do unto others as you would have them do to you' mindset. Also, it is import to understand and accept the wisdom of those that came down this track before us. As individuals, we always can learn. (The author) John Maxwell said he reads, thinks, asks questions, and writes every day. We all should do that. That is important. We don't know it all and we have to continue to recognize that. If that attitude translates to staff, we will have more success.
>
> (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

A NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region, echoed those sentiments regarding respect:

> Respect is equally important. Treating parents and student-athletes with respect. Also, treating coaches with respect. Listen and let the person share their thoughts. We had some issues with men's lacrosse. Three players were suspended. The AD handled the communication with the parents and (suspended) student-athletes in a respectful situation. We didn't have the parents or players say anything negative about the process because they were treated with respect. They had the opportunity to tell their side and they felt like they were listened to. That's a big part of it. Respecting coaches and avoiding micromanaging demonstrates respect for the coach and their experience in the field and setting expectation of

playing with sportsmanship. By demonstrating respect, that mindset

translates to the team, parents, and students. (NCAA Division II

University President, East Central Region)

*Supportive.* The importance of a supportive environment is critical in growing an

athletic department and in attracting the best people, according to the participants of this

research. If coaches or staff members feel supported, they are emboldened to take on

new challenges and feel ownership in their work. Knowing they will not be a scapegoat

is an essential element, specifically in the dynamic relationship between a head coach and

an Athletic Director. An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball,

Midwest Region, discussed the value of emotional intelligence:

Having emotional intelligence is extremely important. In this day and age,

it is being lost due in part to things like technology. There can be a lack of

personal interaction. My brother is also a coach and he was in a situation

where his Athletic Director never communicated verbally. If he did

communicate, most of the time it was by text. He (my brother) did not

feel good about that type of relationship. An athletic director can show

support by attending matches or practices. He/she shows support by being

there. In the (conference), the Athletic Director is extremely busy, but our

AD attends the events and pops in our offices once a week. He is

incredibly proud to know all of the athletes on each team. He has it nailed

down. That doesn't get noticed by the public, but it is noticed by the

players and coaches. (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's

Volleyball, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region, deliberated on the importance of being supportive:

Someone who is supportive. (From a coach's view) Someone who is supportive of coaches and the coaches need to feel that support. They need to know that you believe in them and if you don't, you need to convey what the problems are. It is really important to be supportive. At our level we are all in the limelight more than ever. Administration can show support privately. Ask if I need anything. In the world of college athletics, every resource that is needed is available to the student-athlete, but that is not the case with the coaches. Coaches are under tremendous stress, but there is nobody (no specific resource) to lean on. I don't expect the Athletic Director to serve in that capacity, but a resource helps because every program is as successful as its head coach, and the Athletic Director is hired and fired at a rapid rate, based (in part) on the performance of their coaches. (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region)

*Team oriented.* According to the participants, facilitating communication and remaining open to suggestions and concerns may be among the most important factors in building a successful team. Encouraging debate while establishing the parameters of consensus-building sessions inspires creativity and successful outcomes. An NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region, discussed the team approach:

Someone who has a strong reputation in team building. The CEO I hired assembled a strong team around him that implemented the strategy and

vision for athletics. I look for an Athletic Director who is not pitting

coaches against each other, but instead building a team approach and

recognizing team members and the importance of their role in contributing

to the mission. (NCAA Division III University President, East Central

Region)

**Poised**. An intercollegiate Athletic Director role is highly stressful. Market

demands and competitive demands place the Athletic Director under scrutiny from a wide

range of constituents, including alumni, donors, corporate partners, faculty and staff,

public, and the media. An Athletic Director who has the ability to perform under stress in

a calm and predictable manner is imperative, according to the research participants. The

interviewees described poised Athletic Directors as level headed and logical. A strong

and mature presence is revealed in their approach and through their body language. They

speak with conviction, confidence, and authority, instilling confidence among their

followers and allowing people to feel secure in their environment. The leadership

behavioral traits within the theme are *calm demeanor*, *flexible*, and *logical*.

*Calm demeanor.* The research participants discussed the tremendous scrutiny that

comes from such a high-profile role and the importance of relying on core convictions to

guide the Athletic Director when making difficult choices. An NCAA Division I (Power

5), Pacific Coast Region, described it this way:

The AD role is not for the faint of heart. You are a target. It's the same if

you are a Fortune 500 CEO, President of the United States, or the top

person within a high-profile organization. You are subject to criticism.

You are always a target. It comes with the territory. At the Power 5 level

you can't appease all constituents.  Make decisions on your value system

and core convictions and live with those decisions.  Some leaders deviate

in a crisis.  That may be based on survival, or to get an edge, but

ultimately it doesn't work in their best interest.  There is a saying, if you

run with the wolves long enough you will start howling like them.  Be of

like mind in where your organization should go and commit to doing

things right. (NCAA Division I (Power 5), Pacific Coast Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region,

described the high-profile nature of intercollegiate athletic departments and the Athletic

Director leading to an examination from the public and media not associated with most

roles:

One difference from the AD position and other roles is the fishbowl

atmosphere of college athletics.  The AD has to deal with the media and

social media.  It is a very public endeavor.  People are passionate about

sports.  Therefore, you are scrutinized a great deal.  You can't hide.  Your

decisions are evaluated publicly.  It puts the position in a different

category than other leadership positions in the business world or higher

education. (For example) In the business world you do your job and those

that are close to the operation are paying attention, but the public is not.

(NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest

Region, described the challenges in managing the passions that come with public

scrutiny.  The participant noted an effective Athletic Director must demonstrate tolerance

and patience and stick to core principles:

> Tolerance and patience.  With all of the things involved in the job the
>
> Athletic Director needs tolerance and patience.  It is an area the Athletic
>
> Director is challenged with on a regular basis.  It's easy to get caught up in
>
> the message boards and how it effects how you handle your day-to-day.
>
> That is by being level headed and having a plan and sticking to it.  For
>
> some (fans, boosters) their whole motive is to be negative.  The AD will
>
> receive plenty of advice on who should be fired.  The AD should be driven
>
> by their principles when making their decisions.  (NCAA Division I
>
> (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region,

noted that working through unexpected challenges goes with the territory.  To be

effective an Athletic Director, one must be prepared and resourceful in dealing with

crisis-management challenges:

> Crisis management.  We face serious and unexpected issues and the
>
> consequences of actions.  ADs must be able to think on their feet and
>
> manage an issue that could be very damaging to the institution. They need
>
> to know who to turn to in a particular situation and be able to make
>
> decisions, the right decisions.  (NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference
>
> Commissioner, Heartland Region)

An NAIA University President, Pacific Northwest Region, said effective Athletic Directors exhibit calm demeanors in the face of crisis.  Leading by example by demonstrating poise builds confidence among the Athletic Director's followers:

> To me there are a number of standard leadership traits, but one of the most important behaviors is consistency and predictability.  Whether it is coaches, faculty, people in the community, the AD has to provide a feeling of comfort to those on how the AD will react.  Those that are predictable, and predictably calm.  The AD is often in the eye of the storm.  It's important that they maintain sort of a calm demeanor, be able to take charge, and be the adult in the room when underneath they might want to tell someone to take a long walk on a short pier.  It (calmness) gives people a sense of confidence in their AD and feeling that he or she knows what they are doing.  If they feel the AD has their back, coaches' feel that they can talk freely to the AD.  There is also the confidentiality issue.  An AD will have many people reporting to them and will find a lot of things out about your colleagues you don't necessarily want to know.  The effective ones keep that information to themselves. They (a staff member) may be doing things, but it does not affect the university, but it does effect the perceptions of that person. Can't be doing this.  It goes back to leading by example.  If the AD does not hold himself or herself to a high standard, it is hypocritical to hold others accountable for similar actions. (NAIA University President, Pacific Northwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, valued the importance of demonstrating a strong presence, yet a calm demeanor, in creating confidence among staff and constituents:

A strong presence is very important. They are confident and comfortable in who they are. If people are walking over to say hello, you have a presence. If you have to work your way into every conversation, you probably don't. It comes from a place of respect and confidence. Someone who physically walks into a room and draws eye contact. They are comfortable in a space where they are alone. They don't feel nervous under those circumstances. They make eye contact. Dressed well, walking with shoulders back. It is not about men/women, black/white, older or younger. I believe you can study it, work at it, and learn. If you are an FBS AD and walk in a room and are not noticed (by others), you have a problem. If you call for a toast and you can't get the room to quiet down, you have a problem. Someone with presence can be in the same situation and have all eyes turn in their direction. Some just have an easy, natural way of commanding the room instead of fighting for attention. It may help you determine how they will do with donors, recruits, etc. You get a feel for a person. (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

*Flexible.* Adaptability and being open to making adjustments is critical to a collaborative process often present in many universities. An NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region, noted:

It is interesting because I may have a different point of view than others.
It is similar to understanding the military commander's intent. If the
directive is that we want football to be more competitive in the next 3-5
years and we are focused on a turnaround, at first we need to raise the
revenues to build a stadium and next to build a new weight room, or
analyzing a move to another conference. You may find there currently is
no appetite for a new stadium, so you focus on the weight room. Also,
your program might be dealing with an NCAA rule change on social
media and recruiting. If you are flexible and don't look at is as a problem,
it is okay; you make adjustments and move on. In each case, you need to
always know what the long-term goal is and know that along the way you
may need to change your path in the maze to get there. Some
(ADs/administrators) can't do it. I call it 'focused' flexibility. They (AD)
always know where they are going. The University of Houston, under
Mack Rhoades, did a good job of getting the right coaches in place to start
a track record of success. There has to be a lot of nimbleness, but
understand that you are still working towards the long-term goal. It is the
same end game. It's the deeper part of what we are trying to achieve.
Steven Covey said you begin with the end in mind. I believe that.
(NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast
Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, also discussed the
importance of being flexible:

Having the ability to adapt and be flexible and accept change when things change on a dime. When philosophies are going in different directions, there can be a waterfall effect. The AD manages a variety of personal dynamics and must establish an atmosphere whereby the group can adapt when you add a new team member or coach, for instance. For me it is on a number of levels. (For instance) we have a new president coming in one week. I need to adapt to find out what he wants to see or not. I need to see how he operates and what the process is. If I learn how to adapt, I will put our department in the best position and our coaches and staff can work without institutional stress. What I mean by institutional stress is we are called upon for things outside athletics, such as appearing at alumni hosted events or cancelling a practice to send kids to an important campus event; if I know how others work, we can adapt before the stressor actually occurs. Other issues are being a small staff; it's hard to test everything in advance of an event. You can test something 10 days out and it is fine, but on the day of the event it doesn't work. There can be day-to-day transportation issues. Within a certain distance on shorter trips the coaches drive. Professionals drive longer distances. We've run into issues where a professor will not excuse a student-athlete on a class and I have to figure out how to we get that kid to the contest. I am blunted to some of it from my athletic training background. It can be a struggle, but we are expected to deal with it. It is part of the job. (NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region)

*Logical.*  The participants noted the importance of an Athletic Director who made

decisions based on solid rational and logical thinking.  An NAIA Athletic Director,

Southeast Region, said logical thinking was at the core of an effective Athletic Director:

Someone who likes to do things based on logic.  It's not about looking at

how we've always done it.  You work in higher education—I have worked

in higher education public institutions and some make broad-based

decisions based on history.  Sometimes it is because somebody doesn't

want to change how things have been done.  When I came in as AD, I said

let's evaluate everything.  Everything is 'on the table.'  If you had a good

idea five years ago and nothing happened, go ahead and bring it back up.

Is there a logical reason behind what we are doing?  For instance, our

previous AD seemingly didn't like to fly so the policy was that we drove

everywhere.  We took a look at our team travel to Dallas and found it

cheaper, or it was as reasonable, to fly as it was to drive it.  We saved

money and we saved 16 hours of time.  The first time we flew the business

office called and asked us why we were flying to Dallas?  Once I

explained it they were good.  We look at things like when we went from a

1,000-seat gym to a 4,000-seat facility, we were charging the same ticket

price.  We needed to adjust our thinking.  We have a men's basketball trip

to South Florida.  Instead of playing one game, play multiple games.  It

was over the Christmas break and instead of paying the additional days for

open housing we decided to take a trip and stay three days.  It will be a

great experience for the student-athletes and be great for recruiting; it is a

feel-good situation and was practical financially. It was a better

experience than being in the university housing rooms. Everything is

economies of scale. Our coach wanted a rebounding machine but didn't

have the budget to pay for it. I reviewed the travel and told the coach you

have the dollars in your budget if you reduce the expense of soft drinks.

You are spending a lot on soft drinks. This is the last year we will buy

soft drinks with meals. (NAIA Athletic Director, Southeast Region)

**Principled.** According to the participants of this research, principled Athletic

Directors are honest, truthful, and fair in every encounter; make decisions from the

courage of their convictions; and are worthy of the trust they receive. That trust

manifests in the loyalty given to and received from his or her staff and key constituents.

Principled Athletic Directors do not exercise power arbitrarily and are committed to a

sense of justice. The leadership behavior traits within the theme are *character*,

*courageous*, *honest*, *integrity*, *leading by example*, *loyal*, *trustworthy*, and *values*

*oriented*.

*Character.* According to the participants, it is an Athletic Director's qualities and

characteristics that will guide him or her to do the right thing and build trust with his or

her staff and constituents. An NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region,

discussed specific choices demonstrating character:

Character goes hand-in-hand with trust. Empowering your people to make

the right choices and decisions. It starts with recruiting the right student-

athletes that fit the institutional and athletic models. I trust coaches to their

word. Someone with character is not cutting corners or approaching the

job with a win-at-all-costs mentality.  We might skip over a talented 5-star

athlete and take a 4-star athlete with more character.  We make a

conscious choice in recruiting and hiring to ensure the best fit.  We've

done that with our recent coaching hires (rowing, lacrosse). It comes down

to style and character.  We want someone who will make the right choices

and represent (our university) on and off the field (of play).  A lot of

people can talk a good game, but we want those that can walk the talk.

We do a thorough evaluation of people.  In the case of our lacrosse coach,

we had the candidates spend time with every member of the athletic staff.

Everyone had at least a few minutes with the candidate.  I then followed

up with an email asking for their feedback.  That makes everyone feel

invested.  Everyone on staff had a voice about their interaction with the

candidate. Everyone feels valued and included.   (NCAA Division II

Athletic Director, Southeast Region)

*Courageous.*  Driven by their courage of convictions, principled Athletic Directors

will make decisions based on what they think is right, even when sometimes faced with

enormous pressure to do otherwise.  An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director,

Pacific Coast Region, described it this way:

The person should have courage.  There is an old saying that it is lonely at

the top.  The AD has to have the courage to serve a number of very broad

constituents across campus–student-athletes, coaches, staff, parents–and

also external constituents–season ticket holders, donors, alumni, the

NCAA, the conference office, and the media.  With social media you have

individuals (who represent fans) who'll have a take on your program that can influence a large number of individuals. Each of these groups wants something from you and you can't please them all. You have to have the courage to make decisions based on your core values and principles in spite of the desires of the constituents. (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

According to an NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region, courageous behavior can be demonstrated through candid conversations:

In how they interact with others. It is the ability to say what they mean and mean what they say, even when the consequences are not favorable. If they are talking with prospective student-athletes, or parents, or coaches, they cannot present that everything is a #1 priority. When speaking to the University President, they cannot promise there will be no violations or issues. It is not realistic. Transparency is important. They need to be careful not to overpromise and the under deliver. If they authorize the coach to make a decision and that decision does not work out, then an AD with integrity will take some responsibility (for the failure). The AD needs to be a motivator and at the same time hold people to account. The AD has to put points on the board (with successful performances). Higher education measurements at times are not all that well defined, but in the Athletic Director role it is. (NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region)

Finally, an NAIA University President, Pacific Northwest Region, noted the personal challenges that come with making tough decisions:

> ADs have to make tough decisions, as do coaches—who plays or not, who
> is extended a scholarship or not, who gets a second chance on a violation
> or not. The AD sometimes has to make tough decisions about the coaches
> themselves. That is tough to do. Whatever you do, whether it is removing
> coaches, or implementing punitive penalties in some form or fashion, it is
> tough. In an NAIA environment where you are in a small town, you might
> let someone go and run into them in the supermarket. (NAIA University
> President, Pacific Northwest Region)

*Honest.* According to the participants, an Athletic Director who is honest builds a foundation of trust that leads to a positive and long-lasting relationship. An NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region, described the importance of honesty and how to read individuals for honesty:

> Honesty is a big one. Honesty is so important. I have overseen three head
> coaches (who also served as my college's athletic directors), including a
> junior college situation, and two of them were great. They were honest
> with the student-athletes and parents, focusing on the issues with the
> student, not coaching issues. The other AD was inconsistent with what
> they communicated with their answers. (An NCAA Division II University
> President, East Central Region)

The Division II University President, East Central Region, used a specific process to test the honesty and trustworthiness of her Athletic Director candidates:

What I did (in the case of AD hires) was give the candidates three

scenarios and ask for a written response as part of the screening process.

The scenarios were designed to test to see if honesty and integrity was

there as part of the candidate's makeup. In one scenario, we asked how

the AD candidate would handle a situation in which the parent was

complaining. How would they sort it out? Of course, they have to be

careful in their communication with parents due to FERPA rules, so they

give them a simple version of the truth with description of the elements

that were okay to tell them. Another method is through reference

checking." (Division II University President, from East Central Region)

*Integrity.* Having integrity and being true to your word is the essence of building a

foundation of confidence and trust in any relationship. The interviewees in this research

placed a high degree of importance on integrity. An NCAA Division III University

President, East Central Region, straightforwardly said without strength of character you,

need not apply. "I would not hire someone with a questionable background because it

makes a statement about me as a leader. I would not want such an individual

representing us in that way." An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator,

Southwest Region, expanded on the value of integrity in an Athletic Director:

It is someone's general principles. It was the way I was raised. The

foundation of what we do. I can't be led by someone who does not have

integrity. If it isn't the case, you question the commitment to things like

student-athlete welfare, and it leads to potential violations. Without

integrity, problems are inevitable. We work within higher education and

are educators.  The student-athletes will learn their behavior from us.  You

learn as much in hallway conversations, or on the field, or on the road as

you do in class.  Not that class isn't important, but my best memories are

those from athletic experiences and the people who I observed.  In our

case, the AD and administrators are the teachers.  (NCAA Division I

(FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region)

*Leading by example.*  The participants expressed how an Athletic Director's

behavior influences his or her followers and the importance of leading by example.  An

NCAA Division I (FBS) Head Coach Baseball, Rocky Mountain Region Region, outlined

how his or her ADs behavior inspired the staff and made people want to follow:

If you are going to preach something to your staff–like core values–then

you need to lead by example.  First, being respectful of the people you

come in contact with.  The Athletic Director comes into contact with a lot

of people, certainly a lot more than we do as coaches.  It would be easy for

the AD to walk by the common person.  In our case, our AD always takes

the time to stop and talk and shake hands.  That is a big one (example of

showing respect).  Second, being directly involved in fulfilling the mission

of the university and athletic department.  We make a conscious effort to

do well in the classroom and on the field.  Those two things go hand-in-

hand. That commitment speaks to discipline, character, and time

management. This relates to all of the stuff you have to deal with on a day-

to-day basis (as a student-athlete). For example, if you had a quarterback

who couldn't get to class on time, how could you trust him with clock

management (in a football game situation)?  Just the idea of the AD

checking in from time to time to see how everything is going is important.

Our AD always follows up to ask how things are going in the classroom.

We have an email chain between our coaches, student-athletes, and

administrators to follow the academic progress, and our AD is in that

communication chain.  (NCAA Division I (FBS) Head Coach Baseball,

Rocky Mountain Region of the United States)

*Loyal.*  According to the participants, loyalty is a trait that is important to their

relationship with the Athletic Director.  An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference

Commissioner, East United States, said the loyalty factor was particularly important

between coaches and the Athletic Director:

Loyalty is important and valued.  If you show loyalty to your people and

to the university you get it back in return.  With coaches, it is

extraordinarily important.  It is a two-way loyalty to you and to the

institution. It (college athletics) is a business in a sense, but operated in an

educational setting.  The ability to balance the job in those settings is a

challenge.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East

Region)

An NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region, noted that loyalty is,

in some respect, created through the culture of the department:

We promote a family atmosphere.  We have a lot of coaches that have

young kids.  In the summer, there is not a day that goes by that someone

does not have a kid in the office. We support that. It is part of work-life

balance.  That is especially true in college athletics.  You find ways to

support your people and give them a chance to be around their kids.  It is

part of the deal.  We embrace that.  It is important that their personal time

and space is respected, but everyone understands that there is a time and a

place where that allowance is appropriate.  After a long road trip a coach

may come in late to spend extra time with their kids. That is really

important. They (the staff's/coach's family) are part of our family.  It

makes for a more loyal employee.  (NCAA Division II Athletic Director,

Southeast Region)

*Transparent.*  Transparency builds trust.  It's about an open and honest dialogue

and building a culture devoid of secrecy, which erodes trust.  A team that is in the loop is

better equipped to understand the overarching mission of an organization, according to

the participants.  Transparency produces engaged employees, allows for improved access

to relevant information, and helps solve problems faster.  An NCAA Division I (FBS)

Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, noted a transparent leadership

fosters trust between the leader and his or her followers, producing better results:

Yes, transparency.  It is important not to have secrets.  I like the AD to

make a decision and explain why and the details.  There is no reason to

hide it.  People appreciate it (transparency).  If a staff member is asking

for funding, but doesn't understand why they aren't getting it, the AD can

ask where in the budget would you like to take the money from?

Understanding the whys behind the decision is important.  (NCAA

Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central

Region)

*Trustworthy.* People like to work with leaders they can trust, the participants said.

The participants in this research saw trust as an attribute that served as a cornerstone to

building respect and loyalty between the Athletic Director and his or her followers. An

NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region, noted that that

emerges in the Athletic Director behavior:

It is how you conduct yourself on a day-to-day basis. It is your treatment

of people. Leaders that are consistent build trust. People become

uncomfortable with inconsistent behavior. It shows up in how they react

to different situations. Delegate (responsibilities to the staff) and let them

do their jobs. Show patience and understanding. (It is demonstrated) In

how you react in a crisis. Are you consistent in those terms? Does the

president and chancellor see that during bad times that you have it

together? Are you capable of dealing with stress and crisis situations? Do

you have the personality to respond positively? (NCAA Division I (Power

5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

The NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region, also

noted that trust extends to the trust the Athletic Director places in the employee:

It is a broad list because of the nature of the job. Successful ADs have to

trust their people and have the trust of their people to be effective. It is a

two-way street. That is true with your internal staff and coaches or

external to university personnel, donors and boosters, and, to some degree,

the media.  It is important to build a reputation whereby people trust you.

If you do you are way ahead of the game. Some who are new to the job or

the community have to begin to develop that trust from day one.  It is a

two-way street.  As the AD, you can't do all the responsibilities yourself.

You have to delegate effectively and trust your people. The best way to

start is by hiring trustworthy people with capabilities, character, and

loyalty and give them the rope to do their job effectively.  If you do, you

will build great morale, people will be comfortable in the atmosphere, and

you have the chance to build a team.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5)

Conference Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region, expanded on the value

of the trusted relationship between the Athletic Director and coaches:

Trust is obviously earned over time.  All of our coaches when they first

start out have a clean slate.  We assume we can trust them.  We are

fortunate to have numerous long-term coaches and employees.  Two

coaches have been here 20-plus years, and four of our staff have been at

our university for 30-plus years.  My youngest tenured coach is entering

their 10th year.  One of the reasons we have a trusted relationship is that I

trust them to do their job.  They trust me to go to bat for them if they need

additional money for their budget or if we need to upgrade a facility.  In

the last several years, every single one of our facilities has had new

upgrades.  We don't stand still and are constantly trying to improve.  The

status quo is never a good thing at (our university).  It goes back to the

trusted relationship. Having a mutually supportive relationship. That is a great model for work and life. Support your employees and you can grow together. (NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region)

The NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region, also noted:

For me it all starts with two words—trust and character. We put a lot of emphasis on that at (our university). If my leadership philosophy had to boil down to one word it would be trust. We place a lot of emphasis on trust in our hires; whether it is hiring coaches, trainers, sports information, or marketing people, we put a lot of time in the search process to get the right people. We have a saying "high trust, low maintenance." We want people we can trust and then we empower them with the right tools–be it additional assistants or budget–and then get out of their way and let them do their work. I stay in touch and see what they need and look to support them, personally and professionally. (NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region)

*Values oriented.* People do not follow leaders who are viewed as inauthentic, according to the participants. At one point or another all individuals establish his or her own value system. Followers will rally their energy around a common set of core values. An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, believed if individuals feel the freedom to be authentic it leads to an improved individual performance and organizational commitment:

We are all products of our environment. Throughout our lives, we grow intellectually and philosophically. You mature into a value system. It is

acquired along the way. Having a value system that you fundamentally

incorporate in the way you run a program is important to those that look

to you for leadership. The ability to care for others and value people.

One of our greatest needs is to be valued. It's important to find a way to

convey to individuals that you care. It shows you value the organization

and the university. I am a product of (my university). I tell people that

(my university) changed my life and that resonates as empirical evidence

in a way that is seen as legitimate. There are lots of ways to demonstrate

value–by praising staff, financial incentives, or a thank you that is

genuine. It is a motivator. It is important to recognize one's value.

(NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region,

expressed the importance of the Athletic Director living by a set of core values:

Establishing a set of values on how to operate in an educational

environment. The student-athletes in your program are the most important

asset that an AD has. The most important job an AD has is hiring coaches

who are competent and extending the value system established by your

program. That behavior shows up in how your student-athletes are treated.

That is, by hiring coaches that believe in the academic mission and have

the integrity and character to serve as role models for higher education and

are excellent representatives of the university. (NCAA Division I (Power

5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

**Self-Aware.** A number of the participants pointed to self-awareness as a key attribute of an Athletic Director. Acknowledging shortcomings is the most difficult step toward self-awareness. However, whether you admit your weaknesses, over time, it will become apparent. Effective Athletic Directors build their senior management teams to fill those gaps. Acknowledgement earns credibility with their followers, establishes a culture in which employees' value self-awareness, and serves as a model for the entire organization. The leadership behavior traits within the theme are *curiosity*, *presence*, and *self-awareness*.

*Curiosity.* According to the participants in this research, being an inquisitive leader leads to a culture of innovation. Curiosity projects a progressive mindset. It also allows the Athletic Director to get to know what the employees are really thinking, allows the leader to have greater insight, and promotes creative thinking throughout the department. An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region, notes curiosity is a path to innovation:

> Curiosity is a big one, being curious in the sense of moving the department
>
> ahead. Not always looking at how they have we've done things or how
>
> other members in the conference does things. Be willing to ask why can't
>
> we do this? It is a way to innovation. We could strive to be like Texas,
>
> but won't get there. You have to be creative in your approaches, and
>
> curiosity is the best way to get there. (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior
>
> Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region)

*Presence.* An intangible quality existing in many effective Athletic Directors is presence, according to the participants. An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior

Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, believes presence is demonstrated in being

comfortable in your skin and the ability to command a room:

> They must have a presence. When they walk in the room they must have a
> presence. A strong presence is very important. They are confident and
> comfortable in who they are. If people are walking over to say hello, you
> have a presence; if you have to work your way into every conversation,
> you probably don't. It comes from a place of respect and confidence.
> Someone who physically walks into a room and draws eye contact. They
> are comfortable in a space where they are alone. They don't feel nervous
> under those circumstances. They make eye contact. Dressed well,
> walking with shoulders back. It not about men/women, black/white, older
> or younger. I believe you can study it, work at it, and learn. If you are an
> FBS AD and walk in a room and are not noticed (by others), you have a
> problem. If you call for a toast and you can't get the room to quiet down,
> you have a problem. Someone with presence can be in the same situation
> and have all eyes turn in their direction. Some just have an easy natural
> way of commanding the room instead of fighting for attention. It may
> help you determine how they will do with donors, recruits, etc. You get a
> feel for a person. (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Administrator/SWA,
> East Central Region)

**Self-Awareness**. Followers value leaders who recognize and take responsibility

for their shortcomings and benefit when those leaders create a model in which learning

and innovation are prized, according to the participants. An NCAA Division I (FBS)

Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region, remarked on the importance of self-awareness:

> First and foremost, self-awareness.  As the AD, you have to know who
> you are and how people react to you.  You also have to be aware of your
> strengths and weaknesses.  In essence, that affects everything you do,
> whether it is hiring or firing or executing plans.  It is the foundation of it
> all.  Understanding who you are and your perceived strengths and
> weaknesses by others.  Understand if I am a good fundraiser, but not good
> with numbers or hiring coaches, then I can work to shore up my
> shortcomings so the department can be successful.  You can't hire people
> that are all like you.  You need diversity, and I mean diversity in a lot of
> ways.  Knowing what you are about.  Being conscious of the perception or
> general reaction to how you are coming off when you speak.  If you are
> stone faced, are you perceived as mad or not?  (NCAA Division I (FBS)
> Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, noted the importance of an Athletic Director acknowledging his or her blind spots and leaning on trusted advisors to fill the gaps:

> Plan well, not based on you own capabilities but on the willingness and
> confidence in the people who are working with you.  Hire people with
> same value system, beliefs in the enterprise.  You want people with
> different skills sets.  You are not always going to be agreeable, but that is
> a good thing.  I always have one trusted person to point out my blind

spots.  Recognition that blind spots exist is an important thing.  It is

important to have an individual that will help point those things out to you.

It's healthy for an organization.  It allows people who work with you to

appreciate that style of leadership.  I empower my folks to do their jobs

and get back what I expect based on shared values.  (NCAA Division I

(Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, noted an Athletic

Director needs to be aware of the effect of his or her behavior on others:

It's important for the athletic director to have self-discipline, build

teamwork, and have self-awareness in how your behavior affects others.

I'd like to be right and effective, but I'd prefer to be effective more than

being right.  Be able to react under change and manage stress.  Understand

your role on campus.  Being aware of it (commitment to campus) and

what perceptions (of athletics) exist on campus and how it affects the

relationship with campus as a whole.  In our staff reviews, we rate our

staff, in part, based on their ability to connect and specific activities as part

of our evaluations.  Campus expects athletics to reach out to them, more

so than the other way around.  Find more personal ways to do so, such as a

guest coach program that develops that one-on-one relationship with

someone from campus.  (NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest

Region)

**Skilled.**  For Athletic Directors to command the respect of their followers and

constituents and to truly lead, they must be the voice of authority for the department.  To

be the authority, an Athletic Director must have the accompanying expertise that goes

with the role.  The leadership behavior traits within the theme are *experienced*, *expertise*,

*manager acumen*, *mentor, motivator*, and *problem solver*.

    ***Experienced.***  Demonstrating a proven track record of success within

intercollegiate athletics gives confidence to those who are in position to make an Athletic

Director selection, according to several of the participants in this research.  Whenever

there is a turnover in the Athletic Director role, it is common that the expectation is for

the incoming AD to hit the ground running without a lot of handholding.  An NCAA

Division III University President, East Central Region, said having experience in leading

a staff, problem solving, etc., are imperative to the role:

    I look for someone who has a successful record of leadership in athletics

    and higher education.  I look for someone with a proven track record of

    success, honesty and integrity, strong communication skills, and the ability

    to work with people.  One of the Athletic Directors I hired when I was

    president of a Division II institution came from a business background. He

    was a former college athlete and a CEO of an electronics firm, had a

    proven track record in facility planning and advancement (fundraising),

    and met our criteria.  He was in his 50s, had retired young and sold his

    business when I met him while serving on management groups in NCAA

    Division II, so we recruited him. He had a good business sense and we

    were in a growth mode as a university, particularly in regard to facility

    development.  Under his leadership, we had a 75-80 percent overhaul of

    our athletic facilities–arena, tennis, soccer, baseball and softball. He

turned out to be a valuable resource.  (NCAA Division III University

President, East Central Region)

An NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region, suggested a

proven track record is a prerequisite to hiring an Athletic Director:

With regard to Athletic Directors or anyone else, the best way to predict

the future is to look at past success.  I want someone who has success

written all over them, but nobody with violations or of questionable

character. The Division II AD hire I mentioned was an All-American

athlete with a reputation for honesty and integrity.  At Division III, most

of my AD hires emerged as successful coaches (who made the transition

to the AD role) who also had a high level of integrity.  In my last

presidency, I hired a former SID into the role.  In my current position, I

inherited a former retired coach-turned athletic administrator.  She had a

strong reputation with the stakeholders, student-athletes, coaches, campus

administrators, and others.  I take calculated risks but operate under the

premise that the best way to predict the future is by looking at the past

record of success.  I would take a risk at a lower-level position, but in a

senior-level position, I need a proven commodity.  I look for someone who

can bring energy and vision to the area and involve me as needed.  Real

risk takers will be disappointed because the past is a predictor of the

future.  (NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region)

*Expertise.*  According to the participants, having the job expertise coming into an

Athletic Director role is paramount.  Whether it generating revenue, having a grasp on the

financials, being a strong communicator, having the ability to motivate others, analyzing

issues and being a problem solver, or building relationships, the Athletic Director must

have a wide skill set to be effective in the role.  An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic

Director, Pacific Coast Region, broke down the specific skill set needed:

> It is important you have the skills to be a good leader—the ability to plan,
>
> the ability to build a staff, the ability to organize, the ability to direct the
>
> department, the ability to report, the ability to budget.  These skills go
>
> hand-in-hand with your ability to lead.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5)
>
> Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

> An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region, echoed

the importance of thoroughly understanding the business side of the operation:

> The AD has to be able to relate to the business side of the operation,
>
> especially at our level.  In the Power 5, there is a lot of emphasis and
>
> pressure associated with the financial side.  The AD must be able to
>
> understand and manage the financial (picture).  (NCAA Division I (Power
>
> 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

> An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region, said an

Athletic Director with a sports background is beneficial:

> If the AD has a sense of the sports world, it is an asset.  Coaches trust ADs
>
> that either played or coached or spent a long time getting to the chair.  Or,
>
> if they specifically trained for the AD role.  Some without sports
>
> backgrounds are successful, but having an understanding of the sports
>
> world is seen as an asset. Of course, the person has to have the skills to do

the AD job.  Having an inherent knowledge of what coaches and athletes

go through is a huge plus.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference

Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, said having the

expertise to work within the collegiate culture is imperative:

You need to have a foundation of content knowledge.  It is important to

understand your purpose and the target groups we work with within the

higher education structure.  There are different expectations and different

outcomes from Division I to Division III.  You need to be aware of what

you need to achieve and who you serve.  (NCAA Division III Athletic

Director, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, noted that an athletic

administrator, and particularly the Athletic Director, is a teacher at heart:

The value of sport is in education, but to those outside the university, they

see it as entertainment.  For us, sports develop life skills, self-motivation,

teamwork, dedication, self-discipline, etc. I do believe coaches are

teachers and they teach the X's and O's.  (NCAA Division III Athletic

Director, Midwest Region)

*Manager acumen.*  Having an execution mindset or a manager's acumen was noted

by several of the interviewees as an important trait of an effective Athletic Director.  An

understanding of basic financial reports, how decisions impact the budget, the utilization

of cash flow, and a big-picture understanding of the business are just a few of the

management skills required for the role.  An NCAA Division I (FCS) University

President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region, said the ability to link strategy to execution,

assigning the appropriate staff to specific roles, and holding people accountable were

essential to successful outcomes:

> In Division I, you need to have a manager's acumen.  The day-to-day
>
> responsibilities of the AD include everything from real estate broker to
>
> sales and marketing, legal, to facilities management.  Thus, the AD needs
>
> to know how to read a balance sheet, know how debt works, and build a
>
> budget.  We are working on a new $50 million arena/practice facility.
>
> Working on the corporate partnerships is a big deal.  The Athletic Director
>
> does not just set the vision but executes the X's and O's of the job,
>
> including hiring and firing the right people, working through a
>
> construction punch list, etc.  Leadership and vision are associated if you
>
> are doing things the right way.  (NCAA Division I (FCS) University
>
> President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region)

An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region,

discussed the importance of an Athletic Director delegating authority to his or her trusted

staff:

> He or she has to be a visionary, with a balance of management
>
> capabilities.  The AD has to be able to manage people, to delegate the
>
> responsibilities and step away.  They shouldn't be too strong in oversight
>
> but should clearly be in firm control of the department.  The staff needs
>
> the freedom to make decisions, right or wrong, and it is up to the AD to
>
> mentor the staff.  In the modern age of college athletics, the AD has to

manage the department and delegate to trusted subordinates.  I really think

that every athletic department is unique.  They face different challenges

and different pressures.   Institutions are situated in different markets, with

different facilities, donors, staffs and resources.  These differences can

dictate how you meet those challenges.  You have to manage the staff

efficiently, without waste and within the resources you have at your

disposal.   The AD can't manage every area but has to be part of the

mentoring and delegation of responsibilities to the direct reports to ensure

there is effective management in each respective area.  It is a team and the

AD is the head coach, and their direct reports are the assistant coaches or

offensive and defensive coordinators.  It comes down to building trust and

the kind of relationship to trust the individual will carry things out, that

they will get it done in the best interest of the department and the

university with public perception in mind.  (NCAA Division I (Mid

Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region)

*Mentor.*  Many of the participants pointed to the importance of mentoring as part

of the Athletic Director's responsibilities.  Mentoring helps develop the employee

holistically for their future.  An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference

Commissioner, Heartland Region, stated a strong culture of mentoring can also benefit

the department in preparing the department's future leaders, as well as attracting and

retaining high-level talent:

Successful leaders need to be good mentors.  When an AD first takes the

job, they need to assess the experience and capabilities of the staff, and

then they must challenge individuals. They need to challenge coaches.

The AD needs to provide resources as best he/she can, challenge

individuals, recruit administrative/support staff, and hire good coaches.

The AD needs to assess the talents and grow those talents within the

responsibilities they have. For instance, the ticket director could broaden

their experience by being assigned additional event management

opportunities or even by having primary oversight of a sport. It is

important to encourage your personnel to develop broader skills, if

possible. The key for administrators, from going from good to great, is in

allowing those people to explore other opportunities, even those that are

outside their current employer. There are those (ADs) that discourage

outside interviews, but I don't think that inspires their people to reach

higher. The AD has an obligation to be open to allowing staff to explore

outside job opportunities. The staff must have the trust to be able to go to

the AD and talk about it. Those ADs that are effective allow their people

to branch out. (NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner,

Heartland Region)

*Motivator.* Being someone who inspires others to perform at a high level is an

ability needed in the Athletic Director position, according to the participants. An NCAA

Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region, sees positive

relationship skills as a very effective tool in energizing and motivating employees: "The

ability to read people in a way that the AD can motivate their behavior."

***Problem solver.*** Effective Athletic Directors, at their core, are exceptional problem

solvers. An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, notes

that any decision associated with the athletic department is ultimately their responsibility:

> The buck stops with the AD.  He or she is responsible for every aspect of
>
> the department.  That being said, in many respects having a collaboration
>
> with each constituent base is what makes sense.  I work with my senior
>
> staff on the bigger issues–strategic planning, crisis management, strategies
>
> for the future.  There are factors in how I collaborate.  Some decisions are
>
> group decisions.  There are some decisions when I ask for
>
> recommendations, and some decisions are just on me.  It varies to
>
> circumstances.  Sometimes it is a factor.  If a decision that needs to be
>
> made in a timely basis, and I don't have the time.  In the end, the AD is
>
> the person that is responsible.  All decisions reflect on the AD whether the
>
> AD makes the decision or not.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic
>
> Director, Pacific Coast Region)

***Political acumen.***  In a sense, everything is political within an intercollegiate

culture, and an effective Athletic Director must understand the political/cultural context

and how his or her decision would impact the various constituents affected.  An NCAA

Division II University President, East Central Region, spoke to the impact of the Athletic

Director's words and importance of being conscious of his or her verbal exchange in a

given situation:

> It is also important to have a political acumen.  The AD is dealing with
>
> high-end donors and alumni.  It is important to be strategic and diplomatic.

The AD must have the political acumen to know not to say certain things

to certain people.  We are a rural school.  There is nothing around.

Therefore, the students develop a closely knit relationship.  That

relationship carries into their alumni life. We have very close-knit alumni.

I am dealing with a 1968 alumni who is a pain in the neck.  He has an

email chain of 50 or so of his classmates.  The alumnus believes he knows

the truth and history of our university.  The AD needs to understand how

these types of connections operate.  We had another situation where two

important alumni disagreed on the importance of building a club for

donors (complete with beer, wine, etc.).  It was built primarily on the

donation of one alumni, but the other does not like the idea of the club and

he's vocal.  The AD only spent his time with the donating alumni.  It's

important that the AD is aware of these dynamics. (NCAA Division II

University President, East Central Region)

**Visionary.**  Nearly all participants suggested an Athletic Director must have

vision to be effective.  Vision provides direction and purpose to the team.  Vision is the

roadmap to a specific end goal.  With vision the team is able to work through setbacks

and obstacles as they keep the big picture in mind.  The leadership behavior traits within

the theme are *collaborative*, *foresight*, *intelligent*, *strategic*, and *vision*.

*Collaborative.*  Effective Athletic Directors leverage the power of a collective team

to produce positive outcomes.  Collaboration is critical to success in an intercollegiate

culture.  An NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region, noted a

genuine collaboration builds team spirit and makes the department more dynamic:

It's important to have an administrative philosophy and an understanding

of how people work best together. The AD is dealing with highly

competitive people and it is a challenge to get people to work well

together towards an outcome that you want. (NCAA Division II

University President, East Central Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region,

concurred with the idea of the Athletic Director ultimately directing the collaboration

toward a favorable outcome:

The AD also has to know how to work with different kinds of people.

Very few ADs have singular authority, so you are constantly working with

groups–both internal to the university and external to the university–and

you have to be able to listen to people and, at times, lead people, maybe

not necessarily where they want to go. (NCAA Division I (Power 5)

Conference Commissioner, East Region)

*Foresight.* Intercollegiate athletics is ever-evolving, thus as the participants noted,

there is a need for Athletic Directors who possess critical thinking skills. Critically

examining every aspect of an operation to determine how to make the best use of limited

resources is vital in staying competitive. An NCAA Division I (FCS) University

President, Middle Atlantic/Northeast Region, believes a forward-thinking mindset and

the ability to react quickly allows an athletic department to take advantage of

opportunities or deal with potentially negative events:

It's about having the ability to create a shared understanding of where the

organization wants to go over a given time period. If all you are doing is

putting out fires, then all you are going to get is hot feet. It is up to the

Athletic Director to motivate and encourage people to go the extra mile

and participate in that shared vision. Standing still is equivalent to moving

backward. (NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle

Atlantic/Northeast Region)

*Intelligent.* Athletic Directors must be highly intelligent, be able to grasp in-depth

information on a variety of subjects, be able to connect with people, be able to work well

within social situations, and be of high character, according to the interviewees. An

NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, described the

intellectual capacity needed for the role:

You also have to have the chops, if you will, the intellectual horsepower,

to effectively work with various bases of large constituencies, starting

with those on campus, from the administration to faculty, to the various

staff entities on campus, such as those in charge of facilities, admissions,

registration, student affairs, the university police, etc. In a position of

responsibility like an AD, you must be mindful of who you are and how

you represent the university. It is very, very important. That's assuming

that the AD has the skill set and intellectual horsepower to do the job.

Being a successful leader in the style of a Coach (John) Wooden—

preparation, working smart, never being outworked, sweating the small

stuff, and attention to detail. Having the ability to be prepared to meet the

challenges and opportunities your organization will face and the manner of

how you handle it. It's in hiring colleagues because of a similar value

system, work ethic, and commitment. Through those values, and strategic

planning, you will be able to move an organization forward, deal with

crises that occur, and work to avoid potential crises. An AD works in a

fishbowl environment. You have to be vigilant and prepared.

Recognition is important. You need to clearly understand the environment

in which we work and what does and what does not work (best practices).

The landscape of intercollegiate athletics is changing like the sands of the

Sahara. We see it in technology, social media, or the distribution of

information in a way we've never seen before. It is in recognizing the

dynamic nature of our business. Being cognizant of campus strategies, as

well as policies and procedures. Our regents are interested in what we do.

We need to understand what we do and the implications of how it relates

to the university. To be cognizant of the changing concept of amateurism,

student-athlete bill of rights, or unionization as potential changes are

dramatic. You also have to be aware of social changes and the rules that

govern what we do. (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director,

Pacific Coast Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central

Region, concurred:

Someone who is highly intellectual. They must be at a high level in order

to deal with a lot of moving parts. As many as a division of the Pentagon.

It is impossible for any leader to know all of the divisions (of athletics),

but you need someone who has the intellect to grasp concepts, from drug

testing to media buys.  (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic

Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central

Region, discussed the shifting responsibilities of an Athletic Director and the necessary

cognitive skills:

You have to break down the job into the constituents you serve: donors,

coaches, student-athletes, higher education, politicians, parents, fans, etc.

In a way, you have to be like a chameleon and shift your perspectives and

priorities constantly to what the specific audience you are addressing

wants to hear about.  Your memory must be outstanding.  Today,

everything is recorded and any contradictions will be pointed out and with

it credibility lost.  Having the ability to read and comprehend new studies,

proposals, and understand what is in front of you.  FLSA as a current

example.  Reading comprehension is very important. The ability to take

that information and explain and communicate verbally.  Someone with

cognitive problem-solving skills and a quick thinking pattern.  Pistons

need to fire at a rapid rate.  The ability to be quick witted with the media

and take jabs when needed.  Some people have that gift.  (NCAA Division

I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

*Strategic.*  Taking vision to implementation is imperative to success, according to

the participants.  A strong strategic leader clearly articulates the vision and ensures that

the team in place is competent and comfortable in his or her understanding of how to

execute the vision.  An NAIA University President, Pacific Northwest Region, described

the importance of linking strategy to execution: "Another important function, but less so, is to have a structure and vision and strategy for the program."

*Vision.*  Effective Athletic Directors constantly push their department when they have the ability to communicate a compelling vision, according to the participants.  The ability to articulate a powerful vision inspires action toward real results.  A clear vision will attract the right strategies and energies the team needs to make things happen.  An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region, noted an execution of a vision must become an integral component of the department's culture and align with the university mission:

> In order to maximize efficiency, the AD must have to have the vision of
> where they want the department to go.  The vision is the easy part.  The
> harder part is how to get there.  The vision must be long-term—there has
> to be a plan in mind because you can't take it day-to-day.  Behaviors have
> to match the goals you have in mind or you will tread water.  Those that
> operate day-to-day without a long-term approach will find that mediocrity
> will be the norm.  (NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference
> Commissioner, Heartland Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, noted the AD's vision needs to align with the values of the university:

> For the AD role you have to have various dimensions of leadership, in a
> general sense.  You need to establish a value system that is true to who
> you are.  You need to be able to deliver a vision that is fundamentally
> representative of your department, a vision that is consistent with the

mission of the university. Our institution is known for research, teaching

and community service. Therefore, we work to attempt to reflect that

mission with academic integrity through research and through our external

relations by means of community service and the fan experience.

Leadership has to exist throughout the organization. Birds of a feather

flock together. If you have an alignment of vision and expect great things,

you have a chance to succeed, even when you do not have the resources.

(At a previous institution) we rallied behind core convictions in our

pursuit of excellence. I transformed that mindset to (my current

institution). (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast

Region)

An NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference Commissioner, Heartland Region,

discussed how managing perceptions by outside constituents is important to

implementing a vision:

The AD has to be conscious of the public perception of the department

and how that effects the perception of the performance of the AD and his

or her team. The AD has to be aware of opinions that exist: is the

department doing everything it can to raise the public profile? Is the staff

doing this by winning with class and character? The external focus of the

AD will dictate how he or she is perceived and set the tone for the

department. In my time in our conference, I have worked with 51 ADs.

In one current situation, there is an AD that is dealing with an aging fan

base that is crying for a return to the 'glory days.' They have not totally

deserted the program, but it is critical for this AD to get the fans and

students involved, and to keep their season ticket holders in place. They

are currently going through a reseating (basketball), and there is pressure

to sell in a community where they are mending fences.  He has to build

loyalties and return previous supporters to the fold. The pressures are high

and the results are needed now.  The AD has to get out and articulate the

vision and engage the public and use the media to deliver the message.

The AD needs to make sure everyone on the 'team' is in alliance from a

philosophical standpoint.  (NCAA Division I (Mid Major) Conference

Commissioner, Heartland Region)

An NCAA Division III Athletic Director, Midwest Region, echoed the sentiment

of managing perceptions:

Having the ability to be part of campus and integrate the department with

campus.  At times we have to work against the myth that athletics is a silo.

How do we align with the overall institution?  We must be active in that

effort or it is easy to become a silo."

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region,

noted the challenges of getting all constituents, internally and externally, to share

a consistent vision.

Coaches are a category unto themselves.  There are faculty people who

wish athletics wasn't there because they don't believe in athletics.  There

are other faculty people who are overzealous in their enthusiasm for

athletics.  Boosters have a similar kind of range.  There are those that are

not interested in the academic mission and want to win at any cost. Those

are the extremes, but you have to deal with those people. There are the

issues that come with student-athletes associated with the behavior of 18-

22 year olds. The media is important, (as are) other ADs in your league or

nationally. Agents you have to deal with and so much of that has changed.

It runs the gamut, different people with different perspectives. I once had

a board member at one of our institutions say to me, 'academics keeps

getting in in the way of athletics, and they don't know what is important.'

I couldn't believe it. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. (NCAA

Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

The Athletic Director must have a strong hand in shaping the department's values,

as viewed by the participants of this research. Values are the foundation of the

department's culture. An NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast Region, noted

an Athletic Director must ensure there is a cultural alignment with the mission of the

department and the university, as well as that the right team is in place to carry out the

vision:

We make it up close and personal. I want them to know how much I care

about them professionally and as a person. That creates a great workplace

environment. We enjoy the time we spend together. Although I am the

Athletic Director, my chair is no more important than theirs. I'd also say

that open and transparent communication is critical. I try to take any

knowledge or information from our (presidential) cabinet meetings and

appropriately share that with staff. In our case everybody markets,

everybody sells, and everybody communicates.  That is part of what

makes us successful.  (NCAA Division II Athletic Director, Southeast

Region)

**Research Themes and the Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS)**

As noted, the researcher also created a series of questions designed to represent

each of the six RLSS Factors, (a) Autocratic Behavior, (b) Democratic Behavior, (c)

Positive Feedback Behavior, (d) Situational Consideration Behavior, (e) Social Support,

and (f) Training and Instruction.  While this process did not encapsulate all aspects of

these individual factors, it did provide an insight into the current-day value of each.  The

following is a sampling of the participants' responses as they relate to each of the RLSS

Factors.

**Autocratic Behavior (AB)**.  The question posed to the participants to represent

the RLSS Factor of Autocratic Behavior (AB) was "How important is it that the AD keep

a professional distance from his or her staff, coaches, etc., in order to maintain authority

over them?  To what degree should that be maintained?"  An NCAA Division I (Power 5)

Commissioner, East Region, suggested that the lines of delineation between the leader

and staff have blurred to a degree:

> You certainly have to have a balance.  It is hard to be best friends when
>
> their job status is in your hands.  There does need to be some delineation,
>
> but at the same time their needs to be a sense of family and team with your
>
> administrators and coaches and their families.  You look for social
>
> opportunities with your staff.  You also listen to their input about the work
>
> environment and things that may make their lives and workday better and

more effective.  Listening and informal relationships are important to the team approach.  Some of it just has to do with style.  It is important for the AD or leader to keep their ego in check.  They must be perceived as strong, but an individual that craves media attention or takes all the credit for success (is problematic).  There must be a certain balance of humility along with strength of leadership.  That is the best combination.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest Region, expressed caution about an Athletic Director having too close of a personal relationship with a staff member but also expressed the need to build a positive professional relationship:

To a certain degree, but it depends on the individual and the situation.  The AD needs to be able to step back and be objective.  If they are friends, are they looking at that coach through rose-colored glasses?  If it is a tough decision (whether to keep or fire a coach), they may be too close to the person, whereas an outsider may look at a coach's record through a black-and-white lens and say it is an easy decision to fire someone. Wins and losses can't be the only consideration.  There are a lot of factors; it can't be 100% emotional.  There has to be a middle ground, performance relative to the appropriate value.  The AD can't be too standoffish.  You can't form a relationship after something bad happens.  If there is a complaint on those that come into the position with business backgrounds, it is that they do not understand how much of a people business it is.

Without the relationships you may not have a lot of people in your corner

when things go wrong. It is important in communicating a vision to show

how the plan is beneficial. People will not stick with you if they are

beaten down; it hard to get them to comply. The AD will find themselves

lonely in the times of trouble. Motivating people without having formed

the relationships is hard, even if you are their boss. It is important that

you have the relationships where you can properly evaluate a program.

(NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator, Southwest

Region)

An NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region, prefers for a

social distance to exist between the Athletic Director and staff:

I was influenced by a book, *The Power of the Presidency*, by Jim Fisher,

published in 1984. He talks about the social distance concept. If

professional relationships build into friendships, there is the risk that they

have the potential to lead to problems keeping social distance and, thus,

difficulty in holding people accountable. Others begin to have the view

that certain people only succeed because of the friendship. I agree with

Fisher. The most effective model to have is to maintain social distance

from your direct reports. It is okay to interact in social settings (lunch,

events, etc.), but keep a business relationship. One example of how an

issue emerges is with coaches. If a coach is in trouble with an NCAA

violation, one of the common themes reported by the NCAA is that the

coach had too close of a relationship with the Athletic Director to be able

to flag problems along the way. (NCAA Division III University President, East Central Region)

**Democratic Behavior (DB)**. The question posed to the participants was "Should an AD employ a collaborative process with it comes to making decisions on behalf of the department?" An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region, noted it is important to use a collaborative approach, but not in all circumstances:

Most of the time, yes, or at least as much as you can. I find it useful to get

other opinions. In certain cases, you may want a smaller circle, depending

on the sensitivity of the subject matter. There are no negatives to that.

Some issues are dramatic or obvious that the staff wants an immediate and

strong decision. It is up to the AD to decide the times when a

collaborative process is needed and when it is not. When you are working

on a college campus, collaboration is a positive thing. People want their

opinion valued and that is important in itself. Having different views

offered serves two purposes: first, it builds relationships within the team,

and second, it is beneficial in arriving at a decision. You and the team own

it. Still it is the AD's decision, but it is our decision when it works.

(NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region, notes how the collaborative process assists with the buy-in of the decision:

Sometimes, yes. It depends on the issue. For example, if (facility)

upgrades are needed, you do need to have a time to visit with coaches to

determine what it is that do we need. What are the priorities? Have

coaches visit together to set (that).  If we decide to put in new field turf, it needs to be explained how it helps the program.  That way it is a learning exercise for all of the coaches.  On the other hand, some decisions just need to be made (by the AD).  There's no time or the conversation is a no-win.  I prefer as close to consensus on decisions as possible.  Personally, I appreciate people weighing in, but it's my decision. I own it and will deal with the fallout.  (NCAA Division II University President, East Central Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, noted the importance of the Athletic Director in relying on his or her senior staff to provide solid information in the decision-making process:

You want to gather a lot of opinions to help you make the decision.  You need to be able to trust your people.  (At our level) the AD is far removed from the day-to-day, boots-on-the-ground operation. For instance, the game operations director reports to the Assistant AD, who reports to an Associate AD, who reports to the AD.  The AD must be able to trust and rely on those five senior administrators.  They have to have an ear to the ground and feed the important information to the AD. The AD has to hire the right team. One bad decision means 20% of the information and decisions coming your way may be tainted.  Doing the job and getting quality feedback from your people is imperative.  AD relies on what their team is telling them.  With bad information, the AD can make bad

decisions. (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

**Positive Feedback Behavior (PF)**. The question posed to the participants was "Should an AD enthusiastically and visibly applaud staff members, coaches, etc., in front of their peers to recognize a job well done?" An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region, noted that power of positive feedback permeates throughout the operation, and specifically to coaches:

> Yes, I think so. There are people who think college coaches don't need encouraged and that is just crazy! College coaches value being recognized, but be sure to applaud them all (as the opportunity presents itself). Don't single out a few programs. It's like teaching—praise everybody at the right time, in the right way. It makes coaches feel good. I am all about positive reinforcement. (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region, discussed the value of public praise:

> 100%, yes, it is imperative. Public praise is underrated and people miss out on it. It means something to them. Shows you pay attention and notice what they are doing. In a monthly meeting we have an "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (ABTCD)" award. Staff members have an opportunity to nominate their colleagues to recognize them publicly; it might be someone from ticketing who handled a sensitive customer-service complaint. It values the idea that it is important how you represent

yourself when no one is watching.  If we have a big student-athlete

moment or achievement we recognize them in this meeting.  (If) A coach

is elected to their high school hall of fame we honor it.  We show you that

it means a lot. Awards are for academics and athletics. We had a coach the

night after they received a recognition post on Facebook what a privilege

it was to work for such a great group.  (NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior

Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

**Situational Consideration Behavior (SC)**.  The question posed to the

participants was "How much should the AD consider historical performance, level of

resources, time factors, personnel, etc., when setting goals and objectives of the

department or of the individual team members?"  An NCAA Division I (FBS) Head

Coach Baseball, Rocky Mountain Region, noted that everything matters:

I think all of that has to be a factor. I really do. Not necessarily that any

goals and standards should be lowered, but you have to have that in mind,

be it budgets, personnel, etc.  Certainly it has to be taken into

consideration, but not by lowering standards.  I have been to the College

World Series twice.  That is the standard we want to play at.  We want to

be playing at the end of June every year.  That is the goal. There are

certain avenues to get there.  It is what you are striving for.  To reach your

goal, avenues for some programs are less traveled, or for others success

takes a little longer.  Our goal is always on the forefront of our mind.  It is

important to consider the factors while still holding our sports teams to a

standard.  There are a lot of factors.  In basketball, there are one-and-done

players.  Baseball also has a lot of early departures.  You have to have
desirable and realistic goals.  I looked at us (37 wins, the longest winning
streak in the nation and first-ever appearance to play for our conference
championship), we didn't reach our desired goal, but considering the
circumstances what we accomplished was pretty good.  We started the
season 4-11 and ended 37-24.  Within a few weeks of each other my dad
died, a player died, and our pitching coaches' mother died.  It was a lot to
handle. I think you have to take all the factors into account.  (NCAA
Division I (FBS) Head Coach Baseball, Rocky Mountain Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region, agreed
that reviewing the specifics of a situation is important in setting objectives:

All of those things.  We utilize the previous year as a baseline, consider
the anticipated resources, review nuances to the schedule, and plan to deal
with unforeseen circumstances or unfunded mandates. Everyone in college
athletics is dealing with the FSLA mandate and its impact on the budget.
We face the need for improved security measures; that was never done
before.  Unfunded mandates are something you have to address, along
with the needs of the department.  It goes back to preparation and
anticipation in order to be ready for that.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5)
Athletic Director, Pacific Coast Region)

An NCAA Division I (FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic Region
Northeast United States, noted extra consideration for a coach who has had success in the
past:

You have to look at the body of work.  Two things are important.  First,

you want to be building the program. Hopefully your AD is not a one-hit

wonder.  Goals build on each other.  For some you are only as good as last

year.  You put goodwill on the balance sheet.  That should come into play.

It applies the same with an AD to a coach.  Yes, strive to build programs,

not just to have successful seasons.  Coaches earn goodwill with their past

successful performances.   (NCAA Division I (FCS) University President,

Middle Atlantic Region Northeast United States)

**Social Support Behavior (SS)**.  The question posed to the participants was

"Should an AD be open to assisting staff members, coaches, etc., with personal or

professional issues outside of the work environment, and if so, to what degree?"  An

NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region, noted

the importance of an Athletic Director reaching out and showing support in an

appropriate way, as well as being proactive in doing so:

The Athletic Director should show support and try to help however

appropriate, but not venture outside of their wheelhouse. They shouldn't

offer help or advice on areas that they are not authorized or qualified.  The

Athletic Director should let coaches know how they can help and let them

know that he or she is there for them. (For example) My brother was one

of the most successful high school coaches in any sport in the state. He

moved on to another program and was feeling a lot of anxiety.  A good

AD would have said take some time and think about it; give it thought

before you resign.  That didn't happen. He was dealing with anxiety and

stress and took it all on himself.  The AD was stunned, but said okay
(allowing him to resign).  A good athletic director would try to find them
(coaches/staff) help.  They would show support.  They would
communicate (to the coach) that we know your sacrifices and whatever
you need to do to get in a better state of mind before you make this
decision, do it.  (NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's
Volleyball, Midwest Region)

An NCAA Division I (FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central
Region, shared an important experience where the Athletic Director demonstrated
positive support:

You have to acknowledge personal issues, but don't get too much so in
trying to solve (every problem).  The AD is not their best friend or
counselor.  Showing compassion is important.  Personally, my mother
passed away 2 years ago and for 2-3 months I was not at the level I should
be at.  I was struggling.  Our AD stepped forward and said he could tell.
He empathized with my personal loss.  He asked, how can I help you
manage?  He allowed me time to struggle with it.  Then he provided the
tools to perform and manage it.  If you start failing at your job, as well as
struggling in your personal life, it will become a downward spiral.  Be
compassionate.  Those that are unreasonable or too business, that have no
compassion, lead to creating an environment where people don't care
about each other–not fun, turns into low productivity.  (NCAA Division I
(FBS) Senior Athletic Administrator/SWA, East Central Region)

An NAIA University President, Pacific Northwest Region, noted the importance

of being supportive, particularly with younger staff and coaches:

> Yes, but be very careful not to get too involved. Provide some advice, be
>
> sure to keep confidences, and make sure the person knows they can trust
>
> that you will keep their confidence. Be their shoulder periodically. At the
>
> NAIA, we tend to hire head coaches where it may be their first gig. With
>
> that, you are inevitably going to run into snags. It is important that the AD
>
> know enough about those kind of things (patterns of snags), whether it is
>
> (a young coach not understanding how to handle) student-athlete behavior;
>
> or parent behavior; or the stress and strains in their lives, such as a student
>
> loan being a weight (on the young coach). The AD can help a young coach
>
> by allowing the coach to talk out their own situation. (NAIA University
>
> President, Pacific Northwest Region)

**Training and Instruction Behavior (TI)**. The question posed to the participants

was "What leadership role, if any, should the AD play in the training and development of

his or her staff members, coaches, etc.?" An NCAA Division I (FCS) University

President, Middle Atlantic Region Northeast Region, spoke about the importance of

developing future leaders:

> The AD should play a huge role. In my opinion, you have to develop your
>
> senior leadership. Human capital is the most important thing you have to
>
> build. In the military captains develop lieutenants. At General Electric,
>
> VPs develop assistant VPs. There is technical training meant for
>
> sharpening skills. Then there is training to encourage growth to expand a

leader's capacity.  Huge role/my AD is a psychiatrist.  (NCAA Division I

(FCS) University President, Middle Atlantic Region Northeast United

States)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East United States,

discussed that while training is important, there is an expectation that senior

administrators are prepared for their roles when they step into the job:

Demands are higher in some respects at a Power 5-level school.  There is a

higher expectation of maturity expected in a particular area.  You can't

arrive with training wheels on if you are hired as an Associate AD.

Mentoring might be more expected at lower levels (of the staff).  Even

with great expertise and experience, even the senior staff may not have the

breadth of experience and that can be the focus of the mentoring process.

You can see how you can broaden their experiences so they can take the

next step.  It is all part of building a team.  I always wanted to build a

program that people wanted to work in, a program where they know they

will be learning, a program that is respected (by others in the industry).

(NCAA Division I (Power 5) Conference Commissioner, East Region)

An NCAA Division I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest

Region, noted that resources might come in different forms, depending on the level of the

institution:

It's different at the different levels of college and the experience level of

the coach/staff.  The AD always has a role.  At the (Power 5 level) there is

encouragement and resources for coaches.  NAIA coaches might be

younger and might need training on game skills strategy and at a Power 5

school your coach may need resources that help deal with stress and

anxiety. Either way, the Athletic Director needs to encourage further

development, but being better may mean different things at different

levels. (That being said) It's hard anymore to have all of the resources

you need. We (intercollegiate athletics) used to have more resources

(Power 5 being the current exception). We don't have the dollars we used

to have. It's hard to do all of the training you'd like; yet you do what you

can. The Athletic Director's role is to encourage the staff to find ways to

develop themselves. Great coaches know that they need to continue to

improve and develop. They know they need to continue to learn. Great

coaches understand that the best. It (college athletics) is all about

education, but that gets lost with the public. Intercollegiate sports is about

education. It is a means to help student-athletes develop and learn to

prepare themselves to be successful when they graduate. (NCAA Division

I (Power 5) Head Coach Women's Volleyball, Midwest Region)

After reviewing the narratives, the researcher next evaluated the interaction

between the Research Themes and the RLSS Factors. The RLSS Factors are outlined in

Table B6 (Appendix B). As it is the code words that inform where the themes fall on the

six RLSS dimensions, the researcher compared the code words that constructed each

theme—(a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-

aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary—against each RLSS Factor—(a) Autocratic

Behavior, (b) Democratic Behavior, (c) Positive Feedback Behavior, (d) Situational

Consideration Behaviors, (e) Social Support Behavior, and (f) Training & Instruction Behavior.  In doing so, the researcher searched for areas of congruence, as well as distinct areas of differences.  The results of this interaction are displayed in Table B7 (Appendix B).  The following is a theme-by-theme review of the interaction with the six RLSS Factors.

**Driven**.  The theme driven did not exhibit any interaction with the RLSS Factors of Autocratic Behavior (AB), Democratic Behavior (DB), or Positive Feedback (PF).  Some congruence exists between the theme driven and Situational Consideration Behavior (SC) in relationship to the code words proactive and purpose.  The theme driven overlapped with Social Support (SS) and Training and Instruction (TI).

**Personable**.  The theme personable did not exhibit any interaction with the RLSS Factor of Autocratic Behavior (AB).  There was congruence with Democratic Behavior (DB) with relationship to the code words respectful and team oriented.  There was a strong congruence with Positive Feedback (PF) with relationship to the code words empathetic, positive, respectful, and supportive.  The theme personable overlapped with Social Support (SS).  There was some congruence with Training and Instruction (TI) with relationship to the code words supportive and team oriented.  There was also interaction with Training and Instruction Behavior (TI).

**Poised**.  The theme poised did not exhibit any interaction with the RLSS Factors of Autocratic Behavior (AB), Situational Consideration Behavior (SC), Social Support (SS), or Training and Instruction (TI).  There was a small interaction with Democratic Behavior (DB) with relationship to the code word flexible.  Also, the theme poised overlapped with Positive Feedback (PF).

**Principled**.  The theme principled exhibited interaction in each of the RLSS

Factors, although congruence was more prevalent in some factors than others.  The most

significant area was in Democratic Behavior (DB), where there was an overlap between

the theme and the RLSS Factor.  There also was a moderate interaction between the

theme and Social Support Behavior (SS) with respect to the code words lead by example,

loyal, and values oriented.  There was interaction with Autocratic Behavior (AB) with the

relationship to the code word accountable.  With regards to Positive Feedback Behavior

(PF) the theme principled intersected with the code words lead by example and values

oriented.  There was also a slight interaction with Situational Consideration Behavior

(SC) with relationship to the code word accountable.  Finally, there were two interactions

with Training and Instruction Behavior (TI) with the relationship to the words

accountable and lead by example.

**Self-Aware**.  The theme self-aware overlapped with the RLSS Factors of

Democratic Behavior (DB), Situational Consideration Behavior (SC), and Social Support

(SS).  There a slight interaction with Autocratic Behavior (AB) with the relationship to

the code word presence.  There was a modest congruence with Positive Feedback with

the relationship to the code words presence and self-awareness.  The theme self-aware

did not exhibit any interaction with the RLSS Factor of Training and Instruction (TI).

**Skilled**. The theme skilled overlapped with Situational Consideration Behavior

(SC) and had very strong interaction with Social Support (SS) with relationship to the

code words communicator, expertise, manager acumen, mentor, motivator, political

acumen, and problem solver.  There also was strong interaction with Positive Feedback

(PF) with relationship to the code words communicator, expertise, manager acumen,

mentor, motivator, and problem solver; Training and Instruction (TI) with relationship to

code words communicator, expertise, mentor, motivator, and problem solver; and

Democratic (DB) with relationship to the code words communicator, manager acumen,

motivator, political acumen, and problem solver.  There was modest interaction with

Autocratic Behavior (AB) with relationship to the code words communicator, manager

acumen, and motivator.

**Visionary**.  The theme visionary overlapped with three RLSS Factors:

Situational Consideration Behavior (SC), Social Support (SS), and Training and

Instruction (TI).  There also was a strong congruence with Democratic Behavior (DB)

with the relationship to code words collaborative, foresight, strategic, and vision, and a

modest interaction with Positive Feedback (PF) with interaction to code words

collaborative, strategic, and vision.

Reviewing the interaction between the eight themes and the six RLSS Factors, the

process demonstrated a moderate to strong relationship between the themes and most of

the RLSS Factors.  The one exception was the relationship between the themes and

Autocratic Behavior (AB), where the congruence was minimal.

**Conclusion of Chapter IV**

In Chapter IV, the researcher reviewed (a) selection of participants, (b) data

analysis process, (c) coding process, (d) identification of themes, (e) evidence to support

findings, (f) connection to prior literature, (g) connection to the theoretical framework,

and (h) summary of the chapter.  As a result, the researcher outlined findings to address

the research question, "What are the characteristic traits of effective NCAA Division I, II,

III, and NAIA Athletic Directors as perceived by Athletic Directors, Presidents,

Conference Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches?" A total of 14

participants, with extensive experience in intercollegiate athletics, were recruited to

provide expert insight of the traits required for the Athletic Director role.  The researcher

applied a classical content analysis to address the research question.  First, the researcher

applied a holistic coding method in reviewing the participants' initial descriptions to

identify types of traits associated with the Athletic Director role.  Second, the researcher

used a descriptive open-coding process to carefully code the data line-by-line to capture

the overall meaning intended.  Next, a constant comparison analysis was conducted on

the data to systematically condense data into codes, then develop themes from the codes.

As a result, with the insights from the various participants, the following themes emerged

as the leadership traits required for the intercollegiate athletic director position, (a)

communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g)

skilled, and (h) visionary.

Next the researcher reviewed the interaction between the emergent themes and the

six RLSS Factors, (a) Autocratic Behavior, (b) Democratic Behavior, (c) Positive

Feedback Behavior, (d) Situational Consideration Behavior, (e) Social Support Behavior,

and (f) Training & Instruction.  As a result, there was a moderate to strong relationship

between the themes and each of the RLSS Factors, except in the case of Autocratic

Behavior, where the correspondence was minimal.  The findings suggested that the RLSS

could be modified to create an instrument to measure the characteristic traits of an

effective NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA Athletic Director, as preferred by the

University President and self-viewed by the Athletic Director.  Chapter V provides an in-

depth discussion of the findings and includes additional supporting information from data sources other than the interviews.

**Importance of Themes Relative to the Literature**

The eight emerging themes (driven, personable, poised, principled, self-aware, skilled, and visionary) from this research directly align with the findings in the literature review.  Examples of this include an Athletic Director's ability to *inspire* and *motivate* the department toward a universal *vision* (Manning, 2012); articulating a clear set of *core values* to establish a cohesive *culture* (Cooper & Weight, 2011; Ferguson & Milliman, 2008); or executing *goals and tasks* (Branch, 1990).  In these cases, the emergent themes run parallel to the literature.  This is further demonstrated in the understanding of the complex nature of the Athletic Director role (Hardin et al., 2013), requiring someone of high *intelligence* and industry *expertise* (Northouse, 2015), and a business *strategist* on par with the CEO of a major corporation (Belzer, 2015b).  The Athletic Director is the chief *problem solver* (Manning, 2012) while maintaining people's *development* and *mentoring skills*, which are essential in a *team building* (Branch, 1990).  *Communicating* a mission statement to stakeholders also is an important *strategy* in intercollegiate athletics (Ward, 2015).

**Importance of Themes Relative to the Theoretical Framework**

The Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (Zhang et al., 1997) was utilized as the theoretical framework for this study.  The RLSS model was devised to measure the perceptions and preferences of intercollegiate student-athletes toward the behaviors of their coaches and the coach's self-perception of his or her role.  This study included the insights of 14 senior administrators within intercollegiate athletics, with the intention of

building a similar style model to measure University President's preferences for leadership behaviors required for the Athletic Director role and the Athletic Director's self-view of those required behaviors.  The eight emergent themes were essential building blocks toward the building of a new model.

**Development of an Instrument**

The researcher's intention is to build a prototype to measure the behaviors of an effective intercollegiate Athletic Director at the NCAA I, II, III, and NAIA levels based on the existing RLSS Factors.  The building of the modified instrument will take place in future research.

**CHAPTER V**

**Discussion**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to a) examine the leadership

traits of effective Athletic Directors and b) determine the differences and similarities

between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic

Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director

of Intercollegiate Athletics.  The researcher's hypothesis is in addition to the business

expertise required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director role at the NCAA Division I,

II, III, and NAIA level an equally important criteria of leadership traits also are required

for the Athletic Director to maximize their effectiveness.

The researcher set out to determine which leadership traits were most important

for an Athletic Director to be effective.  Eight major themes emerged from the research

question based on the insight gleaned from the semi-structured interviews of 14 NCAA

Division I, II, III, and NAIA senior administrators.  Those themes were: (a)

communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g)

skilled, and (h) visionary.  In Chapter V, the researcher reviews the following: (a)

discussion of findings, (b) discussion relative to literature, (c) discussion relative to

theoretical framework, (d) implications and recommendations for practice, (e)

implications and recommendations for future research, (f) conclusions and summary of

the chapter.

**Discussion of Findings**

Intercollegiate Athletic Directors face a vast array of business and political

challenges in a rapidly changing environment.  In addition to the business-centered skills

required for an effective Athletic Director, an accompanying set of leadership traits, as conveyed by the participants of this research, is required to be successful in the job. This is consistent with industry professionals who have cited a trend toward hiring candidates who have business expertise (Wong et al., 2015; Hardin et al., 2013). The rise in popularity of intercollegiate athletics has led to an exponential rise in revenues from national television-rights fees and from conference television networks. The growth has placed the Power 5 Conference members on par with Fortune 100 corporations (Badenhausen, 2014). The business skills required are extensive, equivalent in many ways to a major corporate CEO, with some suggesting the Athletic Director role is even more difficult (Belzer, 2015b). The Athletic Director is faced with many challenges, from negotiating media and licensing rights, to funding major capital projects, to managing high-profile and powerful head coaches who, in many cases, are not only the highest-paid individuals on campus, but often are the highest-paid state employees (Pincin & Hoffer, 2013).

Coaches benefit from the free market system that desires winning programs that positively promote universities and all the related benefits, but the high salary also draws heavy scrutiny from academia, the media, and those who believe that student-athletes should benefit financially from the astonishing revenues being generated by high-profile intercollegiate athletic programs. The business skill set required for the Athletic Director role is matched by the need for a strong political acumen, capable of managing the intense public and media scrutiny, which inevitably goes along with the high-profile nature of intercollegiate sports; the ability to maintain the balance of the academic mission and the enormous pressure to win; and the ability to articulate a vision of a

promising future to key stakeholders, while aligning with the core values and mission of the university.

The widening financial gap between the Power 5 and every other conference has had a trickle-down effect (Belzer, 2015b). An Athletic Director at a Group of 5 school has the formidable undertaking of competing in the shadow of Power 5 schools, managing increasing expenses with smaller revenue streams, and hiring and retaining quality coaches who will ultimately be sought out by the larger schools. An Athletic Director at an FCS institution has the overwhelming charge of finding revenues to replace the disappearing game guarantees from Power 5 institutions, the political issues associated with the increasing reliance on student fees, the limited revenues from television-rights fees, and the reactionary market position of that university in relation to those schools at a higher level. Athletic Directors at the Division II, III, and NAIA levels also face increased costs without the benefit of easily found revenue streams to match the increases. Through the findings of this study, the researcher suggested a continued fundamental shift in the leadership traits and skills required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director position. The following is a review of each of those traits:

**Communicator.** The need for a strong communicator emerged through the literature and the research findings. The ability for an Athletic Director to communicate effectively with a wide range of constituents is the common thread between virtually every behavior outlined in the research. Often referred to as the "front porch" to the university (Desrochers, 2013), intercollegiate athletics has the ability to promote the growth of the university or bring negative publicity to the institution. It is the role of the Athletic Director to leverage the attention received by athletics to positively

communicate the benefits of athletics to the university in the form of increased applications, higher quality students, increased donations, and, ultimately, a higher status for the university.  An effective Athletic Director will inform, guide, assure, and inspire various constituents with a passionate and persuasive message to promote the vision of the athletic department and the core values of the university.

An inside-out approach—starting internally with the athletic department and university administrators and then outwardly to external constituents—may be most effective.  Though it is important to communicate to your outside constituents, to understand and implement the department's vision, it is even more important to first communicate it internally.  Virtually everyone within athletics comes into contact with an external group.  The Athletic Director must lead that communication to the point that all team members can integrate the vision consistently at every possible opportunity.  It's with a clear understanding internally that an athletic department can effectively communicate outwardly.  Also, actively listening to members of the staff, coaches, student-athletes, campus administrators, faculty and staff, and external constituents is critical to the Athletic Director's success and the department's culture.  Active listening creates a stronger connection between the speaker and listener.  Once each party feels that the message is being heard it allows for an easy flow of the conversation, a stronger rapport, and better results within the team.

**Driven.**  An effective Athletic Director is someone who must be highly motivated, proactive in his or her approach, and possess an urgency to complete his or her mission or projects.  The stakes are high in intercollegiate athletics and effective Athletic Directors are driven to hold themselves, as well as their staffs, accountable for

outcomes.  To do so, an effective Athletic Director must be driven to translate vision into

action.  Unless the Athletic Director is committed to an execution mindset and dedicated

to ensuring of the tenacious follow-through by everyone responsible for implementing

the tasks at hand, having a vision is meaningless.  Vision plus execution driven by a

leader who understands how to link strategy to operations and can build a team of people

who are disciplined in carrying out the work has an opportunity to be successful.

Athletic Directors put an enormous amount of time into the job and face obstacles,

exhaustion, and stress.  Successful outcomes often can be attributed to the leader's

persistence in ensuring that extra effort is in place until the objective has been achieved.

Recognizing this fundamental underpinning that drives success in an athletic department

is essential to Athletic Directors, as well as to those in position to hire or evaluate

Athletic Directors.

  **Personable.**  Executing a vision or many objectives requires the cooperation of a

lot of people.  An effective Athletic Director is one who is approachable and able to

strike an emotional connection with the people with whom he or she comes in contact.  It

is their strong intrapersonal skills that distinguish them from a less effective counterpart.

In showing a pleasant and supportive manner, as well as drawing upon a mutual respect

between the leader and follower, the Athletic Director demonstrates value in the follower

or constituent, and thus creates a positive and thriving relationship.  Through the

enthusiasm built through these flourishing relationships, a team-oriented culture is

possible, and once united in purpose, great things are possible.

  Often there is a tendency to hire strong, assertive, and competent leaders who

bring their credentials to the Athletic Director role, but intrapersonal skills can be equally

important. Research increasingly suggests being personable and approachable and treating people with warmth is the best approach to influencing followers (Cuddy, Kohut, & Neffinger, 2013). In fact, in a study of 51,836 leaders, only about one in 2,000 who were strongly disliked were rated in the top quarter of leadership effectiveness (Zenger & Folkman, 2009). Athletic Directors can benefit from being conscious of the value of being viewed as personable. As a highly visible leader, Athletic Directors must realize they are being evaluated consistently and be mindful of the effect of a give-and-take relationship in their experiences with others, be it colleagues, subordinates, or constituents. Each interaction represents how the Athletic Director is perceived as a leader. Being cognizant of the importance of these interactions and being approachable and friendly can have a positive impact on the department's success and is essential in the Athletic Director's career advancement.

**Poised.** All Athletic Directors will be faced with crisis situations, unexpected challenges, unreasonable expectations, and unpleasant people. It is sometimes common that an Athletic Director will spend as much, or more, time on the unexpected as he or she does on the intended mission. Demonstrating a deep self-assurance and a calm demeanor goes a long way to minimize the impact of insecurity among team members and constituents. An Athletic Director who is poised and logical allows his or her team to see the big picture and effectively put any given situation in perspective. Also, a flexible mindset is imperative to an effective Athletic Director in order to positively respond to the inevitably changing circumstances.

As the leader of a multimillion dollar enterprise, when Athletic Directors face complex or serious issues the implications can be immense. For good or bad, an athletic

department often secures the majority of the media coverage and thus has a major influence on driving the public perceptions of a university. Winning and a positive profile can benefit the university's enrollment and fundraising and the impact of a crisis-management situation with negative implications can have the reverse effect. Top performers are able to maintain their poise and guide the athletic department through stressful situations. Under the right circumstances, exceptional leaders are able to turn adverse situations into opportunity. It's how an Athletic Director reacts under duress that will set him or her apart from his or her peers.

Effective Athletic Directors must understand that their reactions to stressful situations have a trickle-down effect. Crisis can be perpetuated, and even heightened, with negative body language or the absence of a calming presence. A lack of composure in such circumstances can devalue the Athletic Director's leadership credibility. Effective Athletic Directors work the problem, focus on solutions, and act like they've been there before.

**Principled.** As with many high-profile public endeavors, intercollegiate athletics has been faced with its share of controversies and scandals. To succeed in avoiding such issues, an effective Athletic Director must lead by example by exhibiting extraordinary character and have the courage to operate from a firm foundation of core values and morality. However, to secure public trust and authenticity, it also is important to internally and externally communicate and live by those values, while having everyone within the department do the same.

The reputation of a university is closely associated with the status of its athletic programs. An Athletic Director who makes key decisions guided by a key set of core

values has an improved chance of securing positive benefits for the university.  Among

the helpful implications include portraying a positive image for the university, a sense of

pride within the community, and free media coverage, which can result in increased

enrollment and revenue for the university.  Additionally, the benefits of the positive

virtues taught to student-athletes such as character, teamwork, self-discipline,

perseverance, and leadership are immeasurable.

In contrast, an athletic department that operates with less-than-stellar principles is

capable of causing irreparable damage to the academic reputation of the university.

Questionable conduct has damaging implications, including a blemished academic

integrity of the university in the form of altered grades, as well as fabricated assignments

and classes.  At a number of universities questionable conduct has surfaced, with the use

of illegal substances to gain a competitive edge, sexual misconduct, and, in the rare case,

illegal gambling.  Additionally, the Athletic Director must be trustworthy in the

department's compliance with Title IX and be transparent in dealing with the public

scrutiny that comes with extraordinary salaries for coaches at high-profile universities.

The pressure to win, via the influences from external constituents, can be enormous and

difficult to monitor.  To succeed the Athletic Director and the aspiring Athletic Director

must live by the courage of his or her convictions and lean on the core values of the

department as a guide.  Those responsible for hiring Athletic Directors will want to

search for individuals who are principled.

**Self-Aware.**  Intercollegiate athletic departmental operations are complex.

Although it is important to demonstrate a strong presence, no leader can be expected to

know every issue that is associated with the job.  An athletic department can benefit from

an Athletic Director who is curious in nature and cognizant of his or her strengths and

weaknesses and who does not pretend to know the answer to every situation or problem.

A self-aware Athletic Director is more apt to build a senior staff to cover shortcomings

and lean on his or her trusted advisors for assistance.  A self-aware Athletic Director also

is cognizant of how he or she is perceived and how his or her actions and behaviors affect

the team.  Because self-awareness is potentially a strong predictor of success (Lipman,

2013), an Athletic Director who is willing to entertain a better idea and promote an

atmosphere of collaboration usually is in a better position to secure a positive result.

A lack of self-awareness leads to poor leadership performance and unproductive

and ineffective operations.  Signs of a lack of self-awareness include being defensive,

controlling, bullying, and making excuses.  In extreme cases, this can lead to self-

destructive behaviors (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015; Tobak, 2013).  Athletic Directors and

aspiring Athletic Directors can work to improve their self-awareness through a variety of

steps.  Taking psychometric tests such Myers-Briggs and the Predictive Index may

provide the insight needed to build self-awareness and develop professionally.  Being

mindful of one's strengths and weaknesses, understanding one's emotional triggers, and

knowing the influence of body language are all critical to improving self-awareness.

Asking for regular feedback and leaning on trusted friends and colleagues are among the

ways to monitor one's actions on a day-to-day basis (Fallon, 2014; Nguyen, 2016; Tjan,

2015).

**Skilled.**  An Athletic Director cannot be expected to know everything related to

the role; however, the depth and range of the business expertise required to flourish in the

Athletic Director role is extensive.  It's a role that requires extensive experience to be in a

position to be successful.  One participant of this research described the job as having

more moving parts than the Pentagon.  An Athletic Director must have the business

expertise to be credible in overseeing a multimillion-dollar operation (Belzer, 2015b;

Hardin et al., 2013; New, 2014; Stickney, 2015; Thomas, 2010).  The skills required

include:  revenue generation via fundraising, corporate partnerships, broadcasting, ticket

sales and licensing income; financial and data analysis; marketing and branding; contract

negation; human resources and personnel management; the hiring of coaches and sport

oversight; facility construction and operation; customer service; academic advising and

NCAA compliance; and diversity and legal issues, including a fundamental

understanding of NCAA rules and Title IX issues.  Many Athletic Directors also carry an

academic rank in their titles, such as Vice President and Director of Athletics (e.g.

Chandler, 2011; Prendergast, 2015; "Stansbury named OSU Athletic Director Vice

President," 2015).

There are several opportunities for aspiring Athletic Directors to prepare for the

Athletic Director role and for current Athletic Directors to polish and expand their skill

sets.  Initially, students can prepare for their careers in athletics through the more than

300 sport management programs that offer undergraduate and graduate degrees at

colleges and universities throughout the United States (College Programs in Sports

Business, n.d.).  Once successfully entering intercollegiate athletics, the National

Association of Directors of College Athletics (NACDA) annual convention offers

sessions in virtually every business aspect of intercollegiate athletics.  There are

additional national conferences, such as the NCAA Convention and the Collegiate

Athletic Leadership Symposium (CALS), the NCAA Mentoring Institute, and NCAA

Pathway Program, and data resources, such as the Win AD, to offer insights to the

Athletic Director position.

Moreover, the Athletic Director role goes deeper than the fundamental business

skills required for the job. It is the behavioral skills described in this research that are

fundamental to the Athletic Director's ultimate success. He or she must be a motivator

and an effective manager to assure that the team is executing the basic requirements to

meet the departmental objectives. The Athletic Director role also requires a political

acumen to adeptly manage the complexities associated with the needs and desires of

various constituents. At his or her most effective, an Athletic Director is a mentor and

motivator to his or her staff. Finally, it is imperative that an Athletic Director has the

capacity to blend cognitive skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills to solve

complex issues.

**Visionary.** To achieve the highest level of success, an effective Athletic Director

must have the intelligence, innovation, and foresight to strategically spell out a vision for

the athletic department. The vision should be the cornerstone from which all decisions

driving the department are made. Providing a clear vision inclusive of a specific set of

goals allows the athletic staff to operate with a clear sense of direction and purpose. The

benefit of a strong vision is that it serves as an inspiration and motivator to employees.

When a department outlines a 5-10 year plan, a team's motivation can rise, as well as its

productivity. A vision can also improve efficiency through a better alignment within the

organization. The consequences of a lack of vision permeate throughout a department.

Team members could feel disconnected from understanding the value of their

contribution, leading to increased uncertainty, poorly planned and ineffective strategies, and an inefficient or even stagnate operation.

**Discussion of Findings as Relative to the Literature Review**

The present study examined the leadership traits required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director role at the NCAA I, II, III, and NAIA levels. There are other studies that have examined the leadership behaviors of intercollegiate Athletic Directors that have some similarities to this research. The two studies mentioned in the Literature Review that bear the most similarities are by Branch (1990), who examined the leadership behaviors of Athletic Directors as self-perceived and as viewed by other upper-level administrators within the department of athletics, and by Watkins and Rikard (1991), who investigated the differences between the leader behavior of Athletic Directors as self-described and as viewed by their intercollegiate sport coaches, Deans, and University Presidents. Branch (1990) limited his research to the relative contributions of "consideration" and "initiating structure" as fundamental leadership behavior constructs. The author noted of the six independent variables only initiating structure—as perceived by the Athletic Directors themselves—significantly predicted athletic organizational effectiveness.

The information outlined in this research also concurred with Barnhill's (1998) conclusion that an Athletic Director's role has transitioned toward that of a business executive. It suggested, through the results of this research, that there is the need for an effective strategist who has the ability to achieve his or her goals and respond to the needs of the stakeholders, as previously revealed by Cunningham (2002). Elements of influence, motivation, and the importance of building successful relationships, as cited in

Christian (2000), also align with the findings of this study. Also aligning with the current research is the effect of leadership on the organizational culture, as outlined in Keiper (2002).

In Kent and Chelladurai's (2001) research regarding perceived Transformational Leadership, Organizational Commitment, and Citizenship Behavior, the theme personable within the current research, aligns with relationship to individual consideration found within the connection to Leader-Member Exchange. Scott (1999), in reviewing Bolman and Deal's (1991) four-frame model of leadership, found that effective Athletic Directors often must operate in more than one frame. The participants in the current research strongly suggested Athletic Directors must be strategic, collaborative, flexible, and problem solvers, all sub-themes in this study that align with Scott's findings.

Geist (2001) found that the factors of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, found in Transformational Leadership, was the strongest influence on followers, which also was found within the subthemes in the current research. Kim (2010) discussed the positive effect of Transformational Leadership on the behaviors of coaches but also discussed value of contingent rewards in the relationship between Athletic Directors and Head Coaches, the latter theme not appearing as a significant point in the behavioral subthemes of this research. Manning (2012) discovered Division I Athletic Directors demonstrated the leadership styles of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation values, also found in the theme vision within the current research.

**Discussion of Findings as Relative to the Theoretical Framework.**

By including a question designed for each of the six RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997) constructs—(a) Autocratic Behavior, (b) Democratic Behavior, (c) Positive Feedback, (d) Situational Consideration Behavior, (e) Social Support Behavior, and (f) Teaching and Instruction Behavior—the researcher intended to confirm or disprove the RLSS Factors as relevant to the current research. The researcher cross referenced Zhang's (1997) RLSS Factors (i.e., Autocratic Behavior, Democratic Behavior, Positive Feedback Behavior, Situational Consideration Behaviors, Social Support Behavior, and Training and Instruction) with the 38 subthemes that make up the eight Athletic Director leadership traits (i.e., Communicator, Driven, Personable, Poised, Principled, Self-Aware, Skilled, and Visionary) to determine if there was noteworthy interaction between the RLSS Factors and the leadership traits as defined in the current research. This process showed an important correlation between all of the RLSS Factors except Autocratic Behavior, where the interaction was minimal. Therefore, utilizing the RLSS as a basis for building and testing an instrument to measure leadership effectiveness is a valid proposition. The current research presents an opportunity to expand on the model developed by Zhang et al. (1997), thus opening a future area of research utilizing a modified version of the RLSS as an instrument to quantitatively measure the preferences of leadership behaviors among intercollegiate administrators. The findings of the current study provide an enhanced understanding of the leadership qualities that are important to the Athletic Director role. As such, these findings, when combined with research findings involving the RLSS, could help influence the design of a new quantitative instrument that will merge tenets from both studies. Such an instrument could then incorporate significant factors from

both studies to best evaluate the leadership qualities that are important to the modern collegiate Athletic Director.

Given prior literature and calls for further research, the eight Athletic Director leadership traits—(a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary—will serve as a start to modifying the existing RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997) or creating a new instrument to measure the University Presidents' preferences for the leadership traits required for the Athletic Director role versus the self-perceptions of the Athletic Director; such instrument would be validated and refined at a later time.  Once completed, information will contribute to a nationwide quantitative survey instrument of ADs and Presidents. This research fills the gap for an existing need for a model measuring the leadership behaviors of intercollegiate Athletic Directors.

**Implications and Recommendations for Practice.**

The current research has a practical benefit to several groups, including, internally, College or University Presidents, Athletic Directors, Head Coaches, and campus administrators, among others.  Externally, the research is valuable to governing organizations such as the NCAA and the NAIA, as well as their respective conferences, university alumni, and search firms looking to place the best Athletic Director candidate on behalf of a university, to name a few.  The following are the key beneficiaries of this research:

**University Presidents.**  This research will benefit University Presidents in their understanding of the leadership behaviors required for the Athletic Director role.  Due to the high stakes and complex nature of intercollegiate athletics, hiring the most qualified

candidate to serve as an Athletic Director for a university is important. Selecting the right candidate for the role can assist the university in maximizing its success and reputation on the field, in the classroom, and in the community, as well as in improving its market position nationally. A poor selection can have the opposite results. University Presidents new to the role, transitioning to a new university, or who are less familiar with the inner workings of intercollegiate athletics could greatly benefit from applying the themes outlined in this research to the search process. Also, having more insight into the Athletic Director role through the lens of the eight behavioral themes could serve to assist the University President in better understanding the intricacies of the Athletic Director role.

The research also will benefit University Presidents in understanding the dynamic of the Athletic Director-University President relationship. It will benefit University Presidents in their evaluation of their current Athletic Director, as well as their ability to provide insight that may improve the performance of their Athletic Director. The information also will be invaluable if a University President is faced with a search for hiring a new Athletic Director and how candidates may align with the university mission. Moreover, the research model may provide the opportunity to understand the similarities and differences in philosophies between the University President and Athletic Director and allow the two to build a strong congruence that could be beneficial in producing positive results for the university or in preventing major misunderstandings or issues.

**Athletic Directors.** Sitting Athletic Directors will benefit from this research by gaining a better understanding of the foundation of leadership behaviors that are seen to fundamentally best serve the role. The research model could benefit an Athletic Director

by providing specific insight and focus to leadership behaviors required for the role that an Athletic Director had not previously considered.  In doing so, it could allow the Athletic Director the opportunity for self-evaluation.  A self-reflection could lead to an improved understanding of how he or she is perceived by colleagues and constituents, as well as to an improved performance and career development.  With a firm awareness of the eight themes outlined in this research Athletic Directors can modify their conduct to the preferred leadership traits.  The eight leadership behavior themes will serve as the underpinnings that provide the Athletic Director with the direction to ensure the highest performance possible.  With this information, an Athletic Director can strive to amplify his or her strengths and improve his or her weaknesses by augmenting the developmental gaps in his or her self-knowledge in these specific areas through the reading of journals, books, industry publications, research, training courses, continuing education, skill-based training, etc.  If there is a lack of self-awareness of their own leadership traits an Athletic Director can turn to colleagues, close friends, and trusted advisors to analyze how their leadership traits align with the eight leadership behavior themes.  When the opportunity is presented, the Athletic Director can make adjustments to his or her senior staff to cover areas of weaknesses.  The Athletic Director also can actively step forward with areas of strength to complement the staff in his or her areas of weakness. With this information, the Athletic Director can approach his or her role with a higher degree of confidence, focus, and enthusiasm, as well as an opportunity to ultimately reduce stress.  The knowledge also will be valuable in mentoring and nurturing the Athletic Director's staff.

The research also could provide the Athletic Director with important insight on how the University President perceives the needed traits for the role and, thus, improve

his or her relationship with the boss.  With the current evolution of the role and the

intricate dynamics of intercollegiate athletics, having a model in place to pattern

behaviors is important.  Finally, by having a firm understanding of the required

leadership traits, an Athletic Director can leverage his or her areas of strengths in a job

interview situation or contract extension.

**Aspiring Athletic Directors.**  The research model will benefit an aspiring

Athletic Director who is looking to position himself or herself as a candidate for

consideration for a future opportunity as an Athletic Director.  Aspiring Athletic

Directors also can take advantage of this research by doing a self-evaluation of their

leadership traits and working toward improving upon their weaknesses in advance of

their pursuit of an Athletic Director position.  This information also could help aspiring

Athletic Directors chart their paths for forward mobility or ask for an increase in

compensation based upon their strengths.  Having the opportunity to glean insights to the

viewpoints of University Presidents and sitting Athletic Directors is invaluable in

preparing for the role.  It could also assist with training opportunities within athletic

departments.  The insights from this research also could lead to an improved performance

in the aspiring Athletic Director's current role.  An aspiring Athletic Director could use

the eight leadership behavioral themes to structure a resume or be prepared to answer

interview questions around these themes, providing an edge against his or her

competition.

**Head Coaches and aspiring Head Coaches.**  Coaches can be narrowly focused

on the task at hand and the resources required for the team to be successful.

Understanding the preferred leadership traits of an Athletic Director will be beneficial to

Head Coaches in understanding how the Athletic Director and Head Coach relationship

dynamic should work.  This research model would provide coaches a better

understanding of the mindset of an Athletic Director, the complexities of the role, and the

relationship between the athletic department and the university hierarchy.  This

information would be valuable to coaches in navigating their role as it relates to the

athletic and university administration.  It also will be beneficial to Head Coaches when

they are in pursuit of new opportunities and making decisions on whether their approach

aligns with that of an Athletic Director who is a future prospective employer.  The

understanding of the perspectives of the Athletic Director and what his or her strengths

and weaknesses may be could lead to strengthening their relationship with the Athletic

Director.

**Student-Athletes.**  Largely, when recruited by a university, the primary

interaction with the recruit is with the coaching staff.  This research could provide the

recruit with an expanded understanding of the leadership and vision of an athletic

department, the operation, and athletics role within the university setting.  This insight

also could prove beneficial to existing student-athletes.  Understanding the dynamics of

the Athletic Director role is something to which Student-Athletes have limited access.

Therefore, the Student-Athletes will benefit in learning the preferred leadership traits of

an Athletic Director and perhaps gain a better understanding of their alignment with the

vision of the department.  Also, some of the Student-Athletes will be interested in

pursuing administrative careers in intercollegiate athletics.  A familiarity with the

behavioral themes will allow them to quietly evaluate their Athletic Director throughout

their playing and academic career.  Witnessing behavior first hand will serve as an

opportunity to shape their own behaviors and philosophies in preparation for a career in athletic administration.

**Conference Commissioners.** It is common that University Presidents will call upon Conference Commissioners to recommend candidates for an open Athletic Director position. The information outlined in this research will be valuable in their evaluations of prospective Athletic Director candidates, whether they be a sitting Athletic Director or aspiring Athletic Director. Having an understanding of the preferred leadership traits required for the Athletic Director role is another prism with which they can make their evaluations and recommendations. The research will provide Conference Commissioners insight to the Athletic Director role. This will be particularly valuable to those Conference Commissioners who have not served in an Athletic Director role. Additionally, the insights from this research can be shared as part of conference meeting agendas as a resource for development for athletic administration personnel.

**Campus Community.** As noted in the research, there are often tensions between intercollegiate athletics and the university mission. Campus administrators, faculty and staff, alumni, and the student population could benefit from an improved understanding of the insights on how the athletics mission is, or could be, aligned with the university mission. Additionally, campus administrators could benefit by understanding the Athletic Director role and the benefits of intercollegiate athletics on the university culture.

**External Constituents.** External constituents such as the NCAA and NAIA—as well as their respective conferences and membership, university alumni, media, and others—could benefit from this research by getting a better understanding of the Athletic

Director role.  The Athletic Director behavioral model could particularly benefit search

firms that recommend and place Athletic Director candidates with universities.  Often,

both members of the campus community and external constituents are asked to partner

with athletics on various projects, and select members within each group often participate

in a committee that selects an Athletic Director hire.  Having a strong understanding of

the preferred leadership traits for the Athletic Director role will be valuable in that

selection process.

**Implications and Recommendations for Future Research.**

The current research introduces the need for an instrument to measure the

effective leadership behaviors of an intercollegiate Athletic Director, thus filling a gap in

the current research.  The RLSS (Zhang et al., 1997) served as a resource to guide the

current research.  The specific design of the RLSS instrument is to measure leadership

behavior for sports.  In its original form, the RLSS measured the leadership behaviors of

intercollegiate athletic coaches.  The measurement included the student-athletes'

perceptions and preferences of the leadership of their Head Coach, as well as the Head

Coach's self-perception of his or her leadership style.  Many researchers have utilized the

RLSS in a variety of ways, but to this point, the instrument has not been applied to

measuring intercollegiate athletic administration.

Therefore, this research has implications on several possible future research

opportunities.  Future research could include a modification of the current instrument to

measure University Presidents' preferences for the leadership behaviors of an Athletic

Director versus the Athletic Director's self-perception of those behaviors, as well as

building and testing such instrument at a later date.  Future research could lead to an

entirely new instrument being created, based off of the eight Athletic Director leadership behavioral themes outlined in this research.  Future researchers could look to validate the current research results in their own studies.  Future research could create a study of University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' leadership preferences by division for NCAA I, II, III, and NAIA.  Future research could measure leadership preferences using either coaches or senior athletic administrators' perceptions of the leadership needed for the Athletic Director role versus the self-perceptions of the Athletic Director.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to a) examine leadership traits of effective Athletic Directors and b) determine the differences and similarities between NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, particular regarding to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors, which are concepts drawn from prior research.

The eight leadership behavioral themes emerged as required for the Athletic Director position, as viewed by the 14 participants of this study—(a) communicator, (b) driven, (c) personable, (d) poised, (e) principled, (f) self-aware, (g) skilled, and (h) visionary—will serve as the foundation for the development of a new instrument that will be valuable to various constituents touched by intercollegiate athletics.  The newly developed instrument will lead to further research on the viewpoints of the leadership behaviors required for the Athletic Director position as viewed by University Presidents

and Athletic Directors.  The model outlined in this study also could be further explored by researchers in a variety of ways.

It is the researcher's hypothesis that in addition to the business expertise required for the intercollegiate Athletic Director role at the NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA level, it is equally important a that criteria of leadership behaviors are also required for the Athletic Director to maximize their effectiveness.  As such, this research will lead to an improved performance by current Athletic Directors; bridge the existing knowledge gap regarding leadership styles specific to the intercollegiate Athletic Director position; serve as a foundation for training future Athletic Directors; improve relationships with department personnel, Head Coaches, Student-Athletes, campus leaders, and external constituents due to a better understanding of the Athletic Director role; and assist University Presidents and search committees, which can utilize the themes presented in this research as a model for effectively selecting the best fit among candidates, based on the importance of how their leadership behaviors align with the values and mission of the university.  The generalizations of this phase of research are limited to intercollegiate athletics, specifically NCAA Division I, II, III, and NAIA institutions.  Results may not be generalizable to the relationships between the University President and other members of his or her cabinet or be translatable to sports outside of the university situation.

In Chapter V, the researcher reviewed the following: (a) discussion of findings, (b) discussion relative to literature, (c) discussion relative to theoretical framework, (d) implications and recommendations, (e) conclusions, and (f) summary of the chapter.

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# APPENDIX A

Sam Houston
STATE UNIVERSITY
*A Member of The Texas State University System*

DATE: June 10, 2016

TO: David Paitson [Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Matt Fuller]

FROM: Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: *Assessment of the Leadership Skills Required for the Athletic Director Position [T/D]*

PROTOCOL #: 2016-05-28873

SUBMISSION TYPE: INITIAL REVIEW

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: June 10, 2016

REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 2—Research involving the use of survey procedures unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

**\* What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research. In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Donna Desforges
IRB Chair, PHSC

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Sam Houston State University IRB's records

# Sam Houston State University
MEMBER **THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

I hope this email finds you well.  You have been identified, among a select group of elite university leaders, to participate in a qualitative research project assessing the leadership behaviors and skills required for the intercollegiate Athletic Directors position.  Your input in this IRB approved research is essential in the development of a new instrument that will support the accurate measurement of leadership topics related to University Presidents' perspectives and Athletic Director self-perceptions on the Athletic Director position.

As a doctoral candidate at Sam Houston State University this dissertation research will establish the initial foundation in establishing the new instrument.  Subsequent research will test the validity of the newly established instrument.  Ultimately a quantitative study of NCAA and NAIA University Presidents and Athletic Directors is projected to be completed within 18 months of the final dissertation defense.  I will be happy to share each phase of the research findings with you.

I will need one hour of your time to conduct the interview either in person or via phone in June or July, 2016.  I will transcribe the interview notes and return a transcript to you to confirm I am accurately reflecting your thoughts.  No recording devices will be used.  Your identity and the identity of your university will be protected.  Research methods and procedures are outlined in the attached informed consent form.  I will be happy to answer any questions you may have as you consider your potential participation in this research.

I appreciate your consideration and am enthusiastic about your potential participation.  I believe this research will be valuable to University Presidents, Athletic Directors, and various stakeholders associated with intercollegiate athletics.  I need your help in establishing an instrument to adequately assess the leadership behaviors and skills required for the intercollegiate Athletic Directors position.  Your role as an institutional leader situates you as the ideal participant to support the development of this instrument.  As such, I respectfully request your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Mr. David Paitson

Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership

College of Education

Sam Houston State University

Huntsville, TX 77340-2119

University President Personal Information

Please complete the following questions as part of the research process.

Age: _____

Sex (circle one):      Male    Female

Race (circle one):      White  Black  Hispanic        Asian  Other

Years working in an intercollegiate environment:  _____

Years working at your current institution: _____

Years in your current role as University President: _____

Appendix A, Document 3

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

**Informed Consent for (University Presidents, Athletic Directors, Conference Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches at NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA institutions)**

Researcher:  Mr. David Paitson, Doctoral Candidate, Sam Houston State University

Title of Research: Assessment of Leadership Skills Required for the Athletic Director Position

Dissertation Committee: Dr. Matthew Fuller, PhD; Dr. George Moore, PhD; Dr. Ryan Zapalac, PhD, Dr. James Zhang, PhD.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research assessing the leadership behaviors required for the Athletic Director position. The research interviews are to take place from June through July, 2016.

The purpose of this study is to a) examine leadership behaviors of effective Athletic Directors, and b) determine the difference between NCAA Division I University Presidents' and Athletic Directors' assessments of the methods of leadership required for the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics with particular regards to Autocratic, Democratic, Positive Feedback, Training and Instruction, Social Support, and Situational Consideration Behaviors, which are concepts drawn from prior research.

The researcher will conduct interviews of Athletic Directors, Presidents, NCAA Commissioners, Athletic Administrators, and Head Coaches.  Participants will be purposively selected to represent Athletic Directors and University Presidents from NCAA Division I, II, and III and NAIA athletics. In addition to these eight participants, two NCAA Commissioners, two senior- level athletic administrators, and two head coaches will also be interviewed. Zhang, Jensen, and Mann's (1997) Revised Leadership Scale for Sport was chosen as the theoretical framework for the research. The RLSS will guide the development of a new instrument to study Athletic Directors and University Presidents, as opposed to coaches and student-athletes. The development of this new instrument will support the accurate measurement of leadership topics related to University Presidents' perspectives and Athletic Director self-perceptions on the Athletic Director position.

Participants will first be asked to describe the leadership behaviors of effective Athletic Directors. An interview script—complete with probing questions using the RLSS as a guide— has been developed to guide these interviews. Participants are invited to lead the discussion and develop it as he or she desires. Following each interview, notes and content will be transcribed into text that will serve as the basis for coding through classical content analysis methods. The interview will be member checked with the participant. Each interview text will be coded into themes, taking care to identify

associated behaviors for each theme. These associated behaviors will serve as the stems for questions on a new instrument for use with Presidents and Athletic Directors. The researcher will develop these stems using drawing upon interviews, the RLSS, and the existing scholarship. The researcher will personally transcribe notes as the only record of the interview.  All participants and universities will be identified through a pseudonym.

Neither the participant's name nor university will be revealed in order to keep all identities protected. Additionally, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.  If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, please contact Sharla Miles, Research Compliance Administrator, liaison to the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board at 936.294.4875 or at irb@shsu.edu, referencing approved protocol 28876.

Please feel free to ask any questions or concerns you may have during any point in the process of the research.  My contact information is david.paitson@gmail.com or 614-746-5635 (cell).

I have reviewed the foregoing information and have had the opportunity to ask any pertinent questions about the purpose of the study and research methods to be implemented. As such, I consent to voluntarily participate in a research project conducted by Mr. David Paitson, doctoral candidate, from Sam Houston State University as outlined in the aforementioned information. I also permit the researcher to transcribe the interview via note taking and authorize use of said information with the understanding that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.


Please check the appropriate box and sign below indicating your interest in participating in the research.



☐ I understand the above and would like to participate.

☐ I do not wish to participate in the current study.


_____

Name (signature)


Date

**APPENDIX B**

Table B1

*Participating Regions*

| United States Region | Number of Participants |
|---|---|
| Middle Atlantic | 1 |
| East Central | 4 |
| Midwest | 2 |
| Southeast | 2 |
| Southwest | 1 |
| Heartland | 1 |
| Rocky Mountain | 1 |
| Pacific Coast | 1 |
| Pacific Northwest | 1 |

Table B2

*Research Participants*

| Position | Division | Geographic Region | Public/ Private | Age | Gender | Race | Years in Intercollegiate Environment | Years at Institution | Years in Current Role |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Athletic Director | NCAA Division I | Pacific | Public | 64 | Male | Hispanic | 34 | 14 | 14 |
| Athletic Director | NCAA Division II | Southeast | Non-Profit Independent | 49 | Male | White | 19 | 19 | 2.5 |
| Athletic Director | NCAA Division III | Midwest | Private | 41 | Female | White | 20 | 4.5 | 4.5 |
| Athletic Director | NAIA | Southeast | Private | 45 | Male | Black | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| Conference Commissioner | NCAA Division I (Power 5) | East Central | Public/Private | 67 | Male | White | 43 | | 20 |
| Conference Commissioner | NCAA Division I (Mid Major) | Heartland | Public/Private | 65 | Male | White | 40 | 28 | 28 |
| Head Coach (Women's Volleyball) | NCAA Division I (Power 5) | Midwest | Public | 58 | Male | White | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Head Coach (Baseball) | NCAA Division I (FBS) | Rocky Mountain | Public | 34 | Male | White | 12 | 1 | 1 |

(continued)

| Position | Division | Geographic Region | Public/ Private | Age | Gender | Race | Years in Intercollegiate Environment | Years at Institution | Years in Current Role |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Athletic Administrator | NCAA Division I (FBS) | East Central | Public | 40 | Female | White | 18 | 3 | 8 |
| Senior Athletic Administrator | NCAA Division I (FBS) | Southwest | Private | 31 | Male | Black | 11 | 2.5 | 2 |
| University President | NCAA Division I (FCS) | Middle Atlantic, Northeast | Private | 47 | Male | Black | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| University President | NCAA Division II | East Central | Private | 54 | Female | White | 23 | 1 | 7 |
| University President | NCAA Division III | East Central | Private | 57 | Male | White | 35 | 1 | 1 |
| University President | NAIA | Pacific Northwest | Public | 60 | Male | White | 8 | 8 | 8 |

Table B3

*Research Questions*

| Question Category | Question for Participants |
|---|---|
| **Research Question** | What are the leadership traits and behaviors of an effective Athletic Director? |
| **Autocratic (RLSS)** | How important is it that the AD keep a professional distance from his or her staff, coaches, etc. in order to maintain authority over them?  To what degree should that be maintained? |
| **Democratic (RLSS)** | Should an AD employ a collaborative process with it comes to making decisions on behalf of the department? |
| **Positive Feedback (RLSS)** | Should an AD enthusiastically and visibly applaud staff members, coaches, etc. in front of their peers to recognize a job well done? |
| **Situational Consideration Behavior (RLSS)** | How much should the AD consider historical performance, level of resources, time factors, personnel, etc. when setting goals and objectives of the department or of the individual team members? |
| **Social Support (RLSS)** | Should an AD be open to assisting staff members, coaches, etc. with personal or professional issues outside of the work environment, and if so, to what degree? |
| **Training and Instruction (RLSS)** | What leadership role if any should the AD play in the training and development of his or her staff members, coaches, etc.? |

Table B4

*Operational Definitions Pertaining to Emergent Themes*

| Themes | Operational Definitions |
| --- | --- |
| **Communicator** | An individual who through good intentions informs, guides, assures, and inspires others to action with an ability to effectively speak and write openly and persuasively and with clarity and conciseness.  An individual who is an active listener and who understands the subtle elements of communication including interpreting an audiences' nonverbal cues.  An individual who is self-aware enough to recognize that what you say, and on occasion what is left unsaid, can reverberate throughout the operation. |
| **Driven** | An individual who is highly motivated, committed, and serious and whom possesses an industrious work ethic and a sense of urgency to complete their mission or projects with purposeful self-fulfillment, financial incentives, or career advancement in mind. |
| **Personable** | An individual who has strong inner personal skills, a pleasant manner, is approachable, is respectful and patient, and has the ability to easily communicate and connect with people. |
| **Poised** | An individual who possesses a calm demeanor, is level-headed and logical, is self-assured, and demonstrates grace under pressure during the most difficult of circumstances. |
| **Principled** | An individual of extraordinary character who operates from a firm foundation of core values and morality.  An individual who is courageous, honest, loyal, and trustworthy and demonstrates an intrinsic recognition of right and wrong as well as a strong sense of fairness and justice.  An individual who leads by example. |

(continued)

| Themes | Operational Definitions |
| --- | --- |
| **Self-Aware** | An individual who is highly cognizant of his or her personality, beliefs, and emotions and the understanding of how he or she is perceived and how his or her behavior affects others. An individual who recognizes their strengths and weaknesses and has the self-assurance and good judgement to lean on trusted advisors for advice or assistance. Someone who is curious in nature. |
| **Skilled** | An individual who has acquired a mastery of a special knowledge, ability, or expertise typically associated with extensive learning and training. An individual with the capacity to blend cognitive skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills to solve complex issues. |
| **Visionary** | A highly intelligent, innovative, and persistent individual who has the wisdom and ability to synthesize a multitude of perspectives to strategically create, communicate and inspire a collective sense of purpose and unity toward achieving a specific end result. |

Table B5

*Emergent Themes and Sub Themes from Key AD Behaviors as Described by Interview*

*Participants*

| Themes | Sub Themes |
| --- | --- |
| **Communicator** | Communication |
| | Listens |
| | |
| **Driven** | Committed |
| | Dedicated |
| | Disciplined |
| | Proactive |
| **Personable** | Empathetic |
| | Positive |
| | Respectful |
| | Supportive |
| | Team Oriented |
| **Poised** | Calm Demeanor |
| | Flexible |
| | Logical |
| **Principled** | Character |
| | Courageous |
| | Honest |
| | Integrity |
| | Leading by Example |
| | Loyal |
| | Transparent |
| | Trustworthy |
| | Values Oriented |
| **Self-Aware** | Curiosity |
| | Presence |
| | Self-Awareness |
| **Skilled** | Experienced |
| | Expertise |
| | Manager Acumen |
| | Mentor |
| | Motivator |
| | Political Acumen |
| | Problem Solver |
| **Visionary** | Collaborative |
| | Foresight |
| | Intelligent |
| | Strategic |
| | Vision |

Table B6

*Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS) Factors, Developed by James J. Zhang, Barbara E. Jensen, and Betty L. Mann (1997)*

| RLSS Factor | Objective: Coaching Behaviors Aimed at: |
| --- | --- |
| **Autocratic Behavior (AB)** | Making independent decisions.<br>Making and stressing personal authority.<br>Using commands and punishment<br>Acting without considering the feelings and think of the athletes.<br>Prescribing the ways to get work done. |
| **Democratic Behavior (DB)** | Allowing participation by the athlete in decisions pertaining to group goals, practice methods, and game tactics and strategies.<br>Respecting and accepting the rights of the athletes.<br>Encouraging involvement of the athletes in personnel selection and performance evaluation.<br>Admitting mistakes and confronting problems. |
| **Positive Feedback Behavior (PF)** | Reinforcing the athletes by recognizing and rewarding good performance.<br>Encouraging an athlete after making a mistake.<br>Correcting the behavior rather than blaming the athletes.<br>Properly Complimenting the athletes.<br>Using body language properly. |
| **Situational Consideration Behaviors (SC)** | Considering situational factors, such as time, game, environment, individual, gender, skill level, and health condition.<br>Setting up individual goals and clarifying ways to reach the goals.<br>Differentiating coaching methods at different maturity stages and skill levels.<br>Selecting an athlete for the appropriate game position or line up. |
| **Social Support Behavior (SS)** | Providing the athletes with psychological supports that are indirectly related to athletic training or competition.<br>Helping the athletes with personal problems.<br>Providing for the welfare of the athletes.<br>Establishing friendship, positive group atmosphere, and warm interpersonal relations with the athletes.<br>Making sport part of enjoyment of an athlete's life.<br>Protecting the athletes from any outside harm. |

| RLSS Factor | Objective: Coaching Behaviors Aimed at: |
|---|---|
| **Training & Instruction Behavior (TI)** | Improving the athlete's performance by emphasizing and facilitating hard and strenuous training. Instructing the athletes in the skills, techniques, and the tactics of the sport. Providing the athletes with facilities, equipment, and practice methods that allow for the safety of the athletes. Planning training practices and evaluating the performance of the athletes. Having knowledge and being responsible. |

Table B7

*Evaluating Interaction between Research Themes and Revised Leadership Scale for Sport (RLSS)*

| Themes & Code Words | Autocratic | Democratic | Positive Feedback | Situational Consideration Behavior | Social Support | Training & Instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Listens | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Committed | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Dedicated | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Proactive | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Purpose | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Serious | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Personable | | | | | | |
| Empathetic | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Positive | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Respectful | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Supportive | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Team Oriented | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Poised | | | | | | |
| Calm Demeanor | | | | ✓ | | |
| Logical | | | | ✓ | | |
| Flexible | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Principled | | | | | | |
| Accountable | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Character | | ✓ | | | | |
| Courageous | | ✓ | | | | |
| Honest | | ✓ | | | | |
| Integrity | | ✓ | | | | |
| Lead by Example | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Loyal | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Trustworthy | | ✓ | | | | |
| Values Oriented | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Self-Aware | | | | | | |
| Flexible | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Presence | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Self-Awareness | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Skilled | | | | | | |
| Experienced | | | | ✓ | | |
| Expertise | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Manager Acumen | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Mentor | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| Themes & Code Words | Autocratic | Democratic | Positive Feedback | Situational Consideration Behavior | Social Support | Training & Instruction |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivator | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Political Acumen | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Problem Solver | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Visionary | | | | | | |
| Collaborative | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Foresight | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Intelligent | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Strategic | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Vision | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

VITA

# David Paitson

## EDUCATION

*Doctorate in Educational Leadership*, Sam Houston State University–Huntsville, TX, December, 2016. *Assessment of Leadership Traits Required for the Intercollegiate Athletic Director Position.*

*Master of Science in Marketing and Communication*, Franklin University, Columbus, OH. May, 2003.

*Bachelor of Arts in Sports Administration* (Cum Laude), Biscayne College–Miami, FL. May, 1982.

## PUBLICATIONS

Jordan, J., Wilcox, R., **Paitson, D.**, Parker, M., Li, X., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (tbd). The role of doctoral studies on the relationships between select doctoral students and their partners: A collective case study. *The Qualitative Review* (In Press).

**Paitson, D.**, & Merz C., (2015). *Chill factor: How a minor league hockey team changed a city forever.* New York, NY: Skyhorse. Amazon Books #1 Sports Industry and #1 Hockey.

**Chill Factor a Class Resource in the Following Sport Management Programs:**

- Ohio University: SASM 3220 Sports Leadership and Ethics
- Ohio State University: KNSISM 6809 Sport Marketing
- Neumann University: Fall 2015 – SEM 221 – Facilities and Event Management
- Northern Illinois University: LESM 543 – Fall 2015 -- Seminar in Sport Management
- Sam Houston State University: Summer 2016 – KINE 5399 – Sport Consumer Behavior
- University of Dayton: Spring 2016 – HSS 353 – Sports Media
- University of Findlay: SPEM 337 – Sport & Special Events Marketing
- University of Iowa: SRM 6254:0001 – Spring 2016 – Marketing and Sport Promotion

## PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Jordan, J.; Wilcox, R.; **Paitson, D**.; & Parker, M. (2015, February). *The role of doctoral studies on the relationships between select doctoral students and their partners: An intrinsic case study*. Paper presented at the annual conference of Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA), San Antonio, TX. **Dean's Award** – Awarded for outstanding paper (SERA, 2015).

Gonzales, V.; **Paitson, D**; Valle, R.; Venzant, M; & Wilcox, R. (2014, February). *Relationship between graduation rates and percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty among 4-year Texas public universities*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA), New Orleans, LA.

Parker, M., Wilcox, R., Gonzales, V., Jordan, J., LeBron, J., **Paitson, D.**, Venzant-Sampson, M., Valle, R., Skidmore, S., Combs, J. P. (2015, February). Secondary data analysis: Lessons learned in a doctoral course. Workshop presentation at the Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA), San Antonio, TX.


## Academic Class Guest Lectures

| | |
|---|---|
| 2015-2016 | HSS 353 – Sports Media – University of Dayton, Dayton, OH |
| 2015-2016 | KNSISM 6809 – Sport Marketing, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH |
| 2015-2016 | SMGT 6600 – Sports Business Toolkit Class – University of New Haven, New Haven, CT |
| 2014-2015 | KINE 3378 – Sport Administration, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX |
| 2012-2015 | KINE 1331 – Foundations of Kinesiology, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX |
| 2010-2014 | KINE 5370 - Sport Marketing: Theory and Practice, Sam Houston State University, The Woodlands, TX |
| 2010-2012 | SPMT 217 (intro to sports management), Texas A&M University, College Station, TX |
| 2010-2016 | SPMT 402 (pre-internship), Texas A&M University, College Station, TX |
| 2000-2008 | HSS 357 Sports Marketing, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH |
| 2000-2008 | HSS 111 Introduction to Sport Management, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH |
| 1992-2008 | Sport Management Courses at Ohio State University, Columbus, OH PAES 836 (Structures and Processes of Sport Organizations), Ohio State University, Columbus, OH |
| 1992-2008 | Sport Management Courses at Ohio University, Athens, OH |

# PROFESSIONAL EXPEREINCE

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**, <u>Associate Athletic Director, External Operations</u>, Huntsville, TX, 2009 – Present

- Served on athletic director's senior management team overseeing strategic planning and student-athlete welfare issues.

- Supervised and managed the following departments: Corporate sales, ticket sales, Bearkat Champions Fund, licensing, and marketing/event presentation.

- Oversee ticket operations and sales, corporate sponsorships, fundraising and licensing for the third oldest institution in Texas with over 20,000 students and 20 Division I athletic teams.

- Overhauled and rebuilt a dedicated team of seven which centralized all athletic-driven revenue processes under the department providing the focus and alignment necessary to grow total external revenues from $700K to over $2.5M.

- Redesigned and modernized ticket operations and sales increasing ticket revenues across all athletic programs from $250K to over $1M by the third season
  - Achieved significant results with an underperforming football program increasing per game revenue from $28K to $90K.

- Led the centralization of all athletic fundraising efforts, which tripled Bearkat Champions Fund net revenue from $300K to $900K within two years; and consolidated annual events from dozens of coach-driven initiatives to five large scale events attended by up to 500.

- Established a strong team culture of commitment and integrity, which inspired 100% participation in all faculty and staff fundraising campaigns.

- Forged, negotiated and managed over 80 key corporate sponsorships growing revenues from $50K to $450K by implementing "business-first" print, digital and interactive advertising opportunities.

- Rebuilt brand integrity gaining alignment, securing licensing agreements and monitoring quality across more than 150 licensees and buyers increasing licensing and apparel gross retail sales by over 150% to more than $2.75M annually.

- Negotiated a four-year agreement with the Houston Texans and Lone Star Sports & Entertainment to host the Battle of the Piney Woods, an annual rivalry football game held at NRG Stadium – with up to 27,000 attendees each year.
  - Drove the event generating up to $295K in ticket sales, more than 60% of total tickets revenues generated

**COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS (NHL),** Columbus, OH, 1998 – 2008

<u>Vice President of Ticket Sales</u>, 2006 – 2008

- Led a team of 40 responsible for $37M in annual ticket sales representing two-thirds of National Hockey League franchise's overall operating income.

- Drastically improved customer service levels by restructuring ticket operations and doubling sales staff to deliver a more focused vision and direction – completely overhauled all systems, processes and procedures.

- Increased group sales by over 42% and mini-plan sales by 63% over a two year period.

<u>Vice President of Marketing</u>, 1998 – 2006

- Key member of executive team responsible for successfully launching all franchise operations contributing to the development of franchise's strategies, vision, mission and business/marketing plans – built and led a high performing team of 20.

- Consistently achieved over 96% capacity levels including 58 consecutive sellout games during the 2001 – 2003 seasons.

- Drove the development and launch of compelling brand image, promotional strategy, seasonal theme plan, mascot and website design – achieved 99% market awareness 18 months prior to inaugural home game and co-developed current lead logo.

- Successfully implemented first-ever personal seat license (PSL) in indoor arena sports history selling 12,000 season tickets in the first season representing 77% of arena capacity – sustained ticket volumes through four seasons through innovative programming.

- Voted by ESPN as #1 Stadium Experience among 121 North American professional teams.

**COLUMBUS DESTROYERS**, <u>President</u>, Columbus, OH, 2004 – 2006

- Concurrently assumed all franchise operations for the Arena Football Team's second and third seasons – led a shared team of over 120 sales, marketing, public relations, finance, community, event and operations staff and a budget of over $3.5M.

- Developed and implemented an overhaul of team's brand strategy collaborating with Nike and Arena Football League Office to adapt Buffalo's inherited design

and create a more localized identity successfully attracting over 16,000 fans per game.

**COLUMBUS CHILL**, <u>President and General Manager</u>, Columbus, OH, 1991 – 1998

- Led all start up and ongoing business operations for new expansion team of the East Coast Hockey League franchise ultimately recognized as one of most successful franchises in minor league history generating annual profit margins of up to 30%.

- Maintained 80% sellout levels over seven seasons and earned the minor league hockey record of 83 consecutive sellouts in 1996.

- Spearheaded an aggressive and edgy grassroots advertising campaign quickly attracting a loyal fan base – awarded 1991 ADDY Best of Show award and 1993 AMA's prestigious Project of the Year for creativity and impact.

- Successfully built Columbus into a 'hockey town' setting the stage for securing and launching the city's first NHL franchise:
  - Drove expansion efforts co-leading the pitch to the NHL Commissioner, campaigning aggressively throughout a controversial stadium referendum and playing a key role in the franchise's transition.
  - Efforts led to a commitment of $150M from *Nationwide* to build a new stadium following a failed referendum – today, stadium is the centerpiece of the Columbus Arena District and part of over $1.3B in infrastructure investments.

- Negotiated over $500K in corporate sponsorships with major partners including McDonalds, Burger King, Donatos Pizza, Anheuser-Busch, Miller, Big Bear, Kroger and Star Bank.

- Served as a member of a 10-person Arena Task Force commissioned by Mayor Greg Lashutka to assess feasibility of building a 21,000 seat downtown arena and 30,000 seat soccer stadium; campaigned aggressively for three years.

- Awarded East Coast Hockey League's Executive of the Year in 1996 – 1997.

**CENTRAL OHIO ICE RINKS (*THE CHILLER ICE RINKS*)**, <u>President</u>, Dublin, OH, 1992 – 1998

- Led newly-created business organized to build a network of ice rinks across Central Ohio in support of Columbus Chill's vision – directed a staff of 135 to manage all business, marketing, facility and financial operations.

- Built region's first and minor league hockey's first owned and operated dual ice-skating rink – coordinated all legal, architectural, construction and financing for $3.5M project.

- Negotiated partnerships and managed over $7.5 M in public and private funding to build *Chiller Dublin* in 1993 and *Chiller Easton* in 1997 – success of organization ultimately led to future expansion from four sheets of ice to nine.

- Grew a highly successful business generating $2M annually through public skating, lessons, figure skating programs, youth/adult hockey and group sales – one of the premier Ice Skating Institute group lesson programs exceeding 2,000 participants per session.

- Served as key catalyst to increasing hockey presence in the city leading to considerable growth since 1992, including an increase in adult league participation from 100 to 3,000, youth participation from 200 to over 4,500 and high school teams from one to 32.

**INDIANAPOLIS ICE**, <u>Marketing Director</u>, Indianapolis, IN, 1988 – 1991

- Key contributor to establishing and building Indianapolis' first financially successfully hockey franchise.

**INDIANA PACERS**, <u>Assistant Market Director/PR Director</u>, Indianapolis, IN, 1982 – 1988

- Helped revive failing NBA franchise increasing attendance from 4,500 to over 12,500 despite poor team performance.

- *Sports Illustrated* featured our "Toast of the Town, An Opening Night Celebration".

## Affiliations

- Collegiate Athletic Leadership Symposium, 2015
- Sports Marketing Association, 2015
- NACDA Mentoring Institute, 2013-2016
- NAADD Membership, 2011-2016
- NACMA Membership, 2010-2016
- ICLA, 2014-2016
- American Diabetes Association, Board of Trustees, 2007 – 2009
- Prevent Blindness Ohio, Board of Directors, 1999 – 2001
- East Coast Hockey League, Board of Directors, 1991 – 1998
- East Coast Hockey League Properties, President, 1995-97

- Multi-Purpose Sports Facilities Work Group (Downtown Arena Commission), Member and Volunteer 1995

## Honors

- Dean's Award for Graduate Research, Southwest Educational Research Association, 2015.
- New Institution of the Year (Licensing), Strategic Marketing Affiliates, 2013
- Voted by ESPN in 2003 as the #1 Stadium Experience among 121 North American Professional Teams (Columbus Blue Jackets)
- East Coast Hockey League Executive-of-the-Year, 1997
- Business First Newspaper *40 Under 40*, Honoree, 1996
- American Marketing Association's prestigious Project of the Year for creativity and impact, Central Ohio Chapter, 1993
- Named by Columbus Monthly as the Best Sporting Event in Columbus (Columbus Chill), 1992 & 1993
- Named by Columbus Alive as Best New Addition to Columbus (Columbus Chill), 1992
- ADDY Best of Show Award (Columbus Chill Radio Campaign), 1991

## Community Service

2007-2009     Board of Trustees, American Diabetes Association

1999-2001     Board of Directors, Prevent Blindness Ohio