Mainstreaming and integrating the substance and spectacle of scholar-baller: A new game plan for the NCAA, higher education and society

Keith Harrison, University of Central Florida

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/keith_harrison/2/
This next chapter is unique. Keith Harrison and Jean Boyd's chapter, "Mainstreaming and Integrating the Spectacle and Substance of Scholar-Baller®: A New Blueprint for Higher Education, the NCAA, and Society" summarizes the recent NCAA reform policy addressing athletic eligibility, matriculation, and graduation of student athletes, called the Academic Reform Movement (ARM). But in the context of NCAA's efforts to promote policy, these authors also note that the commercialization and entertainment value of sports usually overrides any academic and educational accomplishments of individual athletes. This assessment, then, lends to the creation of what is called the "Scholar-Baller Paradigm." The avowed purpose of the Scholar-Baller Identity Model (SBIDM) is the dissemination of relevant incentives to student athletes through fashion and identity consumption patterns aimed at shattering the stereotyping that obscures the personal, social, cultural development, and educational achievements, in particular, of African American student athletes. The authors articulate how to forge a proactive collegiate environment that is acquired through the Scholar-Baller curriculum.

Abstract • The purpose of this chapter is to theoretically and empirically capture the cultural divide between education and sport and entertainment in American society. The NCAA Academic Reform Movement has evolved from holding individuals accountable to presently monitoring institutions and their retention and graduation success of college student athletes. This movement will require a deeper examination of how culture influences academic attitudes and lifelong learning. Based on empirical data from different methodologies, this chapter proposes that student athletes, especially African American males, are often stereotyped with few strategies to empower their academic and athletic identities. The Scholar-Baller Paradigm is designed to help athletes escape the stereotyping that confines their talents to athletics and hinders personal, social, cultural, and educational development. The new paradigm extends the dominant athletic visuals to include academic excellence. This reframing must be sensitive to the needs of the student athletes themselves. Part of integrating them into the university community will involve fusing their desires, connections, technologies, and artifacts (including video games, language, and fashions) with academic reform initiatives and policies. A key component of the NCAA Academic Reform Movement is the concept of contemporaneous penalties in which "real-time" evaluations will be made in order to improve the academic retention and matriculation rates of student athletes in all sports. A contemporaneous reward system for academic achievement that acknowledges and extends itself to popular culture.

Key Terms
• NCAA: The National Collegiate Athletic Association
• Academic Reform Movement (ARM)
• Scholar-Baller
• Culture
• Higher education
• Critical Race Theory
• Representation

C. KEITH HARRISON AND JEAN BOYD
should also be examined, in addition to traditional recognition artifacts (e.g., trophies, plaques, and certificates). Urban and hip-hop culture have moved into the center of American popular culture. This makes it possible to imagine a synergy of education, sports, and entertainment creating a new paradigm in which athletics, education, and popular culture are united into an indissoluble whole.

**Introduction**

In 2006, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) celebrated its 100th centennial as the marquee infrastructure of competitive athletics in American higher education. Coincidentally, this celebration is concurrent with the new policy known as the Academic Reform Movement (ARM) by the leaders at the national office and membership institutions across the nation. “The NCAA academic reform effort has been a multiphase approach to ensuring student athlete academic success and has been informed by a substantial body of research” (Franklin, 2006, p. 4). The reform effort has occurred in three distinct phases: (1) initial academic eligibility standards; (2) progress toward degree standards; and (3) coaches and institutions being held accountable for the academic performance of their student athletes. These phases have prompted a unique “real-time” system by the NCAA that monitors retention, matriculation, and graduation.

Dr. Myles Brand, president of the NCAA, has created with his constituents the Academic Progress Rate (APR), a formula of accountability for all student athletes in the NCAA membership. This Academic Reform Movement and this formula are timely when considering the private and public debates about commercialism, academic fraud, graduation rates, exploitation of student athletes, and issues of gender and racial equity (Duderstadt, 2000; Gerdy, 2000). These debates are some of the negative highlights of the NCAA, mostly related to academic reform.

Academic reform is not a new dilemma when examining college sports and higher education. Since the NCAA was established, academic reform has been part of the policy initiatives in terms of changing the culture of retention and graduation. College boards and task force committees have been created from 1906 to present to address the academic accountability of student athletes. Faculty, administrators, college presidents, and students have historically been involved in this process (Smith, 1988). In the last couple of decades, Propositions 48, 42, and 16 have all been policy reforms that have been altered and tweaked to “fit” the culture of college athletics and the student athletes that participate while on athletic scholarship. The irony of the ARM is that the presence of African Americans (mostly males), who were legally prevented from integrating sport earlier in history, cultivated much of the discourse and many of the modern developments of reforming college athletics (Watterson, 2000). This was specifically tied to those African American participants from more urban and lower income perspectives (Edwards, 2000; Lapchick, 2001).

The context of African American representation as student athletes in the NCAA membership will be addressed later in this chapter. In general, the theory and practice of issues related to all student athletes have been preoccupied with precollege cognitive characteristics within the SAT/ACT requirements and core classes in secondary education—before student athletes enter college. This is in contrast to other approaches that address socialization and systematic reward sys-
tems that acknowledge positive academic behavior from student athletes (Harrison & Boyd, 2005).

Although men's and women's athletics recognize academic all-conference and national scholar-athletes, these achievements are often unseen by the public, peers of student athletes, and other campus professionals such as administrators and faculty. This raises some theoretical and practical issues to consider about the future of academic and athletic policy outcomes in American higher education.

Ultimately, this chapter bridges representation theories developed by Stuart Hall (2003) and John Singer's (2005) timely article and contribution to Critical Race Theory (CRT) in addressing "epistemological racism in sport management research." Singer stated the following:

Sport management scholars must begin to recognize the significance of race and ethnicity as viable epistemological considerations in research inquiry. Because CRT focuses on issues of justice, liberation, and the empowerment of people of color in a society based on white supremacy (i.e., Eurocentrism), the purpose of this article is to provide sport management scholars and students with insight into how CRT's epistemological and methodological bases could be applied to critical areas of research in our field. The article concludes with some practical suggestions for how we can address epistemological racism in our sport management research and education. (p. 464)

How will the ARM reach the goals it seeks to achieve? What are the cultural and social forces that remain untapped as educational resources that may empower youth and young adults who participate in athletics? What innovative approaches to bridging the gap between academics and athletics would impact the retention of student athletes and alter the historical stereotypes of many athletic populations? These are the central questions this chapter synthesizes and addresses at the practical and theoretical levels. We begin the chapter with an important historical context of the academic and athletic gaps in American higher education.

**Intercollegiate Athletics History:**

**Sport and Entertainment but Not Education**

According to the seminal text *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (1988) by sport historian Ronald Smith, the myth that education was a high priority was less a reality than the issues and problems documented at universities such as Harvard University in 1885. Harvard developed the Athletic Committee concept in large part because Princeton, Yale, and other major eastern colleges and universities had begun to encounter problems that would later become embedded in higher education based on "athletic ills" on campus.

The next section synthesizes some of the examples of these ills. Academic policy reform committees, compiled mostly of faculty members, expressed concerns about the number and intensity of athletic contests disturbing serious academic work (Smith, 1988) (i.e., Division I football contests during the week and no longer restricted to Saturday), ungentlemanly behavior (i.e., fights off campus), injuries and brutality (i.e., paralysis due to the violent nature of football), unhealthy moral influences of big city games (i.e., gambling), financial induce-
ments to attend college (i.e., booster and alumni slush funds or material "hook-ups"), and waste and extravagance under student management (i.e., students missing class, drinking excessively, and partying all day and participating with ESPN's College Game Day).

With the exception of injuries and brutality, these issues remain a challenge for higher education and college athletics (Duderstadt, 2000; Sperber, 1990). In particular, the influence of commercialism and its impact on the academic progress of student athletes in revenue sports is a key factor. Although faculty began to intervene with the cultural and social problems of intercollegiate athletics, a massive compromise between students’ love of athletics and faculty’s concern for educational integrity has never systemically occurred. This treaty between academics and athletics and the communication lines among university administrators, faculty, coaches, and the athletic departments themselves can be attributed to the lack of inter-institutional control (Smith, 1988). These disconnects between education, athletics, and popular culture are depicted in 22 photos and cartoons chronicled in *Sports and Freedom* (Smith, 1988).

These images and representations are central to addressing the timeline of the ARM and the APR formula by the NCAA and how cultural and social forces have been used and not used as resources that influence the mindsets of student athletes. Simply defined, the APR is a real-time assessment of a team's academic performance, which awards two points each term to scholarship student athletes who meet academic-eligibility standards and who remain with the institution. A team's APR is the total points earned by the team at any given time divided by the total points possible.

The following is a summary of a few selected photos and cartoons most applicable to the issue of academic accountability by student athletes. Sport managers and sport management students should be aware of the stigmas student athletes have faced over time. Sport managers and students of sport studies can become more aware of and begin critically to deconstruct traditional academic and athletic messages in the culture, and possibly even construct new ones. The importance of understanding contemporary student athlete messages is discussed later in this chapter. For now, we turn to a brief analysis of historical photographs that appeared in *Sports and Freedom* (Smith, 1988). The first point in each section is the historical context; the second point is our critical analysis and application to contemporary athletics and higher education:

1. Intercollegiate track and field began as an outgrowth of the annual college regatta in 1873. Participation was stimulated by offers of expensive silver trophies, with some participants known as "pot hunters."

   *Faculty and other educators could have developed incentives for participation in the track and field contest by rewarding those student athletes with high marks in school with rewards beyond the silver trophies. Examples include books and other intellectual necessities, as well as distinctive rewards for those who were "true" student athletes.*

2. Some faculty members, including Professor Woodrow Wilson at Wesleyan College in the 1890s, helped coach football and other sports.

   *Some faculties value the student athlete experience and have learned life lessons themselves from participating in sport as a student athlete, coach, researcher, or administrator.*
3. Few college presidents spoke out against the excesses of intercollegiate athletics, though Harvard's Charles Eliot was an exception. He wanted football banned but could not gather enough support among the forces that controlled it.

_The NCAA is the key organization if any significant cultural change is to take place; however, the NCAA needs cultural partnerships at various levels from external and internal organizations. According to Gerdy (2000), “The most likely source of outside influence would be a body of highly influential leaders in higher education, highly visible and respected business leaders, and a few powerful political leaders, with the sponsorship and political influence of a coalition of educational organizations and foundations behind it” (p. 228)._}

4. Well before the 20th century, the "dumb jock" was caricatured in contrast to the sickly looking "brain." Thomas Nast, the superb cartoonist, may have been first, in 1879, to do so.

_As of 2005, the "dumb jock" caricature is still embedded in the culture and few mainstream outlets promote the scholar-athlete in concert with entertainment and advertising slogans._

5. Athletes from an early time were often more concerned with participation in sports than with academics. Fielding H. Yost, the legendary coach, transferred from the West Virginia Law School to Lafayette in order to play in a game against Pennsylvania in 1896.

_Until the recent Academic Reform Movement, the cultural and commercial emphasis has always been on sports versus academics. The recent NCAA policies should cultivate new attitudes and behaviors about academics and athletics—possibly a cultural shift in the lifestyle of the student athlete in American higher education._

In sum, the historical context of academic reform has focused more on policy and athletic recognition (absent from commercial educational praise) than on the cultural factors that are most influential on the outcomes and practical basis behind the legislation. The commercialization and representation curve of college sports is often critiqued as a negative aspect of the NCAA and higher education (Sperber, 1990). However, some critics, such as Gerdy (1997), see the opportunity for empowering student athletes, educating the public, and changing the stereotype through the same cultural forces that create narrow perceptions of student athletes. Gerdy stated the following:

Television needs college athletics every bit as much as college athletics needs television. Network executives know college sports well. Televised college athletics is a hot property. The public wants to see sports and will continue to watch them even if more time is carved out of broadcasts to promote educational themes. More time and money should be spent developing creative ways to advertise education. (p. 116)

The next section takes a more in-depth look at Gerdy's notion by analyzing the cultural forces in what is known as the "triangle of success" (Harrison & Boyd, 2005). Sport managers and sport management students are challenged in particular to think of and create new ways of presenting academic and athletic success for public consumption.
A Theoretical Basis: Representation and Social Communities that Reinforce Education and Break the “Trinary”

Scholar-Baller and the Triangle Equation\(^1\): Education, Entertainment, and Sport = A “Brand” New Day

Hall (2003) contended that language constructs meanings based on the “Circuit of Culture” that conveys values. What follows is the application and overview of Hall’s major representation theories and concepts from this circuit, applied to a new “brand” and representation in college athletics and higher education—the scholar-ballers. The components include representation (i.e., athletics), regulation (i.e., shaping mindsets through television), consumption (i.e., the public, alumni, and higher education), production (i.e., stakeholders and advertisers), and identity (i.e., outcome of this cyclical machine). As Hall (2003) explained, “We do not have a straightforward, rational or instrumental relationship to meanings. They mobilize powerful feelings and emotions, of both a positive and negative kind. We feel their contradictory pull, their ambivalence. They sometimes call our very identities into question” (p. 10). In terms of education, sport, and entertainment, the meanings attached to the student athlete lack continuity, synergy, and communication. For example, the commercial and mainstream advertising for college sports often has little to do with campus life, academic achievement, and other institutional rituals with value beyond athletics (Gerdy, 1997, 2000). One important question due to this fact is: How might these cultural messages reinforce that student athletes are “truly” student athletes? Currently the messages reinforce the glamour of college sports and athleticism, not education. For the most part, the emphasis is more athlete student when representing college sports. This is not an accident when we consider the documented history of collegiate athletics and the way sport has been represented—it has produced the meaning of athletics through a specific language, discourse, and image.

As college athletics have become more and more commercial (Duderstadt, 2000; Sperber, 1990), they have grown into the institutionalization and marriage of sport and entertainment. What is most powerful is that American college athletics operate in higher education, an institution founded on the values of liberal education and intellectual development. Thus, three spaces or what we might call a “trinary” exists in terms of represention: education, sport, and entertainment. While the latter two have become increasingly intertwined, the reality is that binaries in general still represent win/lose or zero sum identities (i.e., student or athlete). In order for student athletes to use the “triangle of success,” they must identify the educational, sporting, and entertaining priorities they face as one unified lifestyle. This has the potential for a win/win/win trilogy and cultural capacity to achieve Hall’s (2003) theoretical suggestion:

We should perhaps learn to think of meaning less in terms of “accuracy” and “truth” and more in terms of effective exchange—a process of translation, which facilitates cultural communication while always recognizing the persistence of difference and power between different “speakers” within the same cultural circuit. (p. 11)

\(^1\) The triangle symbol is parallel to Rocawear, Inc.’s “diamond” sign that is popular with youth and young adults. The diamond’s meaning could integrate education, sport, and entertainment into one lifestyle, similar to that of the scholar-ballers.
This translation is captured by using “scholar-baller” (someone who succeeds academically and socially) as the language to communicate that being educated, athletically talented, and presented in mass entertainment can exist as one logo, versus choosing only one identity in the “trinary” of higher education, elite sport competition, and pop culture, with many student athletes becoming pop culture icons through mass media and entertainment (e.g., Reggie Bush, the 2005 Heisman Trophy Winner for Division I football). Scholar-Baller challenges the meaning of these cultural messages by serving as a counter-strategy to intervene in representations and to reconstruct stereotypical images of student athletes with a new “brand” and broader meaning(s) of what it means to be a student athlete.

Closely related, entertainment (i.e., music and fashion) tends to construct identities that are focused on other binary cultural representations, instead of including academic achievement and long-term gratification messages. These short-term success messages that parallel athletic marketing and promotion are known in the hip-hop world as “making it,” “bling-bling,” or “blowin’ up”—what some hip-hop artists have coined as the phenomenon of “get rich or die trying” (Boyd, 2003). A great example can be seen in three advertisements that contain messages from two cultural leaders in hip-hop and business, Russell Simmons and Sean “Puffy” Combs (see www.defjamuniversity.com, www.badboy.com, and Figure 1). Although all three advertisements are powerful in terms of projecting self-empowerment and achieving goals, none is explicitly overt in terms of detailing how specifically to “further your knowledge,” “get money,” or define and historicize the meaning of Sean Combs’ fist raised in the air, as the image promotes Sean John clothing apparel (Figure 1). Tommie Smith and John Carlos were demonized at the 1968 Olympics for raising their fists in the air on the victory stand in Mexico City, and now Sean Combs can raise his fist as a major advertisement in Times Square.

Sport and entertainment in reality have numerous representations that collaborate, partner, and coexist in popular text(s), but all are disconnected from education. This phenomenon has major implications for student athletes who are players in the larger game of big-time college sports and mass entertainment. The binary theories that Hall (2003) established through his critique, cited earlier in this chapter, mean that there is a natural conflict between student athlete and being a student first. Further complicating this tension and disconnect between student and athlete is that entertainment and mass commercialization have created a hyper-masculine, hyper-athletic, and anti-intellectual text in most instances of popular representations of high-profile student athletes in American higher education (Burston, 1999; Willis, 1998).

Why is this disconnect so crucial when analyzing the Academic Reform Movement and the power of cultural forces such as athletics and music? Coleman (1960) theorized and empirically supported a hypothesis that links to the Scholar-Baller Paradigm of magnetizing education, sport, and entertainment at the macro (structural) and micro (individual) levels as one lifestyle and social identity. In other words, cultural communities and organizations such as the NCAA, hip-hop entities such as Phat Farm or Bad Boy, film/modern cinema, and finally the student athletes themselves would all be on the same cultural page—reinforcing a unified
lifestyle. Coleman (1960) articulated an important analysis of the connecting of these impressionable social worlds:

In effect, then, what our society has done is to set apart, in an institution of their own, adolescents for whom home is little more than a dormitory and whose world is made of activities peculiar to their fellows. They have been given as well many of the instruments which can make them a functioning community: cars, freedom in dating, continual contact with the opposite sex, money, and entertainment, like popular music and movies, designed especially for them. The theory and practice of education remains focused on individuals; teachers exhort individuals to concentrate their energies in scholarly directions, while the community of adolescents diverts these energies into other channels. The fundamental change which must occur is to shift the focus; to mold social communities as communities, so that the norms of the communities themselves reinforce educational goals rather than inhibit them, as is at present the case. (pp. 337–338).

The relevance of Coleman’s study with current theories and research will be further analyzed after the Scholar-Baller Identity Model (SBIDM) is examined in the next section.

**The Scholar-Baller Identity Model (SBIDM)**

The Scholar-Baller Identity Development Model (SBIDM) of persistence is a simplified longitudinal version of reality that specifies the conditions and varying factors presumed to influence whether a student athlete matriculates and graduates from a given institution of higher education. SBIDM identifies the student athlete’s accumulative processes prior to and during college entry, various interaction patterns, and the relationship among those patterns within the college environment and the persistence decision; it has some roots in Tinto’s model of attrition. In order to conceptualize SBIDM, we contend that there are several important issues to define: matriculation, identity formation, variable selection, and the interrelationships among selected variables.

From our perspective, matriculation is a process in which student athletes make consistent, annual progress toward a degree. The goals of matriculation are to ensure that student athletes complete their course requirements in a specific degree program, develop a philosophy of life, and achieve their educational objectives. In the early stages of the matriculation process, student athletes may struggle to form positive identification with the college environment (Erickson, 1987). As such, we integrate the identity framework of Erickson into SBIDM, which is assumed to yield early identification of student athletes who enter from diverse cultural backgrounds. In doing so, we expect that if student athletes develop a positive self-identity and integrate into selected college environments, they will increase the likelihood of being college persisters.

Furthermore, since the college environment encompasses both an academic and social sphere, it is important to separate what Tinto (1975) interpreted as the “normative and structural integration in the academic domain of the college from that in the social domain of the college” (p. 92). This distinction is necessary because students may connect with the academic domain, increasing the likelihood
of academic success and varying forms of persistence behavior; the same would hold true for integration into the social domain.

Separating both the academic and social sphere infers that student athletes who connect with the academic domain do not have to integrate socially in order to persist. This is conceivable, according to Tinto, yet “one would expect a reciprocal functional relationship between the two modes of integration such that excessive integration in one domain would, at some point, detract from one’s integration into the other domain” (p. 92). Nonetheless, integration achievement may vary from individual to individual depending on the level of positive self-identity and to what extent integration, either socially and/or academically, is personally relevant to one’s own culture (Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002).

Precollege Characteristics

Selected precollege or input characteristics are included in the longitudinal, theoretical model because they appear to relate to the college persistence and academic achievement of the student athlete. The most significant precollege characteristics shown to relate to persistence and academic achievement include family background, educational experiences and preparation, and individual characteristics.
Family background characteristics have shown to influence students' expectations about college, as well as their likelihood of interacting in certain college environments (Astin, 1993a; Lang, Dunham, & Alpert, 1988). Student athletes with higher socioeconomic status (defined as a composite of mother's and father's educational attainment, as well as students' estimate of their parents' income) are associated with higher persistence and graduation rates (Sellers, 1989, 1992). Further, the quality of relationships within the family and the degree of support and mentoring shown by the parent(s) or guardian toward the students' academic and athletic prowess are all important factors for educational attainment and college persistence, as well as sport commitment (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992). Relationships within the family and even peer educational encouragement also, to some extent, influence the long- and short-term educational and sport goals of the student athlete (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992). Thus it appears that the family's expectations of college are as vital to the student athlete's success as the student athlete's own expectations about college.

Included in family background are varying forms of culture. Cultural factors are imperative for any meaningful responsive evaluations of student athletes (Hood, 2004). The types and magnitude of culture one secures, as defined by the institution entered, play an important role in student athletes' persistence and performance in college. Put another way, the more cultural capital students bring to the institution and also inherit during their academic journey within the college environment, the more likely they will be college persisters (Bourdieu, 1986). In this sense, the existing structures of institutions of higher education do not represent cultural diversity, and thus could affect one's ability to persist in college (Tierney, 1993).

Precollege academic experiences and preparation are related to college performance. High school GPA, for instance, continues to be a strong predictor of academic achievement in college (Astin, 1993a, 1993b; Seller, 1992). Teacher support and academic advising, among other characteristics within the high school environment, are also associated with one's college aspirations and expectations (Comeaux, 2005). By contrast, disparities in access to advanced placement classes, honors courses, and other college preparatory services for high school students in underserved communities have proven to affect college access as well as persistence and full participation within the college environment for many student athletes and their non-athlete peers (Allen et al., 2002).

Furthermore, academic characteristics may directly or indirectly affect the student athlete's sport commitment (Simons et al., 1999). For example, a high school student athlete who becomes academically ineligible as a result of failing grades would not be able to participate in his or her sport. This situation would not necessarily affect immediate or future sport commitment despite being academically ineligible, because the student would have opportunities to pursue desired outcomes—to participate in sport—after improving his or her academic status.

**Individual Characteristics**

Individual characteristics are shown to be associated with college persistence and academic achievement. Noncognitive characteristics such as academic motivation (Lang, Dunham, & Alpert, 1988; Lawrence, 2001; Simons, Van Rheenen, & Cov-
ingston, 1999), academic self-concept (Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; White & Sedlacek, 1986), mental health (Petrie & Russell, 1995; Sellers, Kuperminc, & Wadell, 1991), and educational goals (White & Sedlacek, 1986) are related to academic performance. In addition, Simons and Van Rheezen (2000) also found that noncognitive variables of athletic-academic commitment, feelings of being exploited, academic self-worth, and self-handicapping excuses were all associated with college performance. Long- and short-range educational goals are an integral part of understanding persistence in college as well. Student athletes, for example, interested in attaining a doctoral degree would more than likely fare better than student athletes whose expectations are only to complete a four-year degree.

Finally, the type of sport, race/ethnicity, gender, and level of competition appear to be associated, to some extent, with matriculation and graduation (NCAA, 2005a). That is, (1) male football and basketball players perform less well academically than other athletes as measured by grades and graduation rates; (2) black student athletes tend to come from poorer backgrounds and are the least prepared academically; (3) female athletes exhibit academic preparation/performance similar to that of their nonathletic peers, and considerably better than that of their male counterparts; and (4) the higher the level of competition (Division I vs. Division II and III), the less likely the athletes will compare favorably with nonathletes.

Environmental Characteristics

College environmental characteristics are associated with academic success for student athletes (Comeaux, 2005). The environment encompasses all that happens to student athletes during the course of their educational programs, which may influence their desired educational outcomes—to matriculate and graduate (Astin, 1993a). As is the case with precollege characteristics, matriculation and graduation are the results of a longitudinal process that includes the interaction of environmental characteristics with the academic and social domains. As such, it has been well documented that the more time and energy that student athletes devote to learning and the more intensely they engage within the college environment both academically and socially, the greater their potential outcomes for achievement, satisfaction with educational experience, and persistence in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987). Such environmental characteristics as interactions with faculty, study time with other students, and volunteer work, among other activities, influence academic success.

Longitudinal Process of Interactions

The SBIDM employs “Input-Environment-Outcome” (I-E-O) for understanding and explaining the accumulative processes and interaction patterns on student athletes’ outcome (Astin, 1993a). “Inputs” refer to the student athlete’s entering or precollege characteristics, “environment” is that which the student athlete is exposed to during college, (i.e., faculty, peers, college coaches, etc.) and “outcomes” are the student athlete’s characteristics after interacting with the environment, in this case, matriculation and graduation (Astin, 1993a).

The framework for the analysis of student athlete matriculation is derived from studies that have examined precollege characteristics of student athletes and on this basis have attempted to predict the likelihood that the student athlete will
matriculate and graduate at a given institution of higher education (Astin, 1993ab; Comeaux, 2005; Sellers, 1992). Precollege characteristics (family background, educational experiences and preparation, and individual attributes) interact with one another and are likely to influence initial institutional commitment (commitment of matriculation and graduation) and sport commitment (commitment of developing various athletic skills; e.g., leadership; see Figure 2).

Environmental characteristics also play an integral role in the likelihood that the student athlete will matriculate and graduate at a given institution (Comeaux, 2005). In line with Tinto’s Model (1975) on student attrition, within the academic domain, utilizing such services as tutoring, the library, faculty office hours, and so on increases the likelihood of student development, higher academic performance, and academic integration, which is expected to influence institutional commitment. In the social domain, peer group interaction and faculty interaction, among others social factors, result in social integration, which is likely to influence institutional commitment. And lastly, student athletes’ involvement in team practices and games, various community services activities, and interaction with coaches in the social system also result in social integration, which in turn influences their sport commitment.

Various Forces that Impact Persistence

The SBIDM is a practical illustration of the matriculation process across institutions of higher education. It indicates information about the student athlete that, if it were known, would likely reveal student athlete’s probability of matriculation and offer reasons for success. The SBIDM, to reiterate, identifies three classes of variables—precollege variables, environmental variables, and outcome variables—that have direct or indirect effects on intent to matriculate and graduation. The SBIDM also allows us to identify classes of variables related in a causal sequence. It is also important to note that the degree of institutional factors such as institutional racism, the instructional image, administrative policies and decisions, institution size, and academic standards are influential in the academic and social integration and identity development of student athletes. Moreover, coaches demand an incredible amount of the student athletes’ time with practices, travel, team meetings, and game schedules that structurally inhibit their academic presence on campus. Thus, unlike traditional students, student athletes are burdened with many pressures that are vital to their academic success. Unless student athletes are able to develop a strong sense of positive identification with the self and the college environment early on, there are potential barriers and constraints that increase the likelihood of their voluntary or involuntary withdrawal from the college or university.

Breaking Timeless Stereotypes of Student Athletes:
Fusing Cultural Forces

Coleman (1960) exposed gaps in the United States educational system nearly 50 years ago that are still major challenges today. The intention of Coleman’s (1960) methodology was to study schools that had quite different status systems, yet the similarities were far more striking than the differences. In a questionnaire, male stu-
students were asked, "How would you most like to be remembered in school: as an athletic star, a brilliant student, or most popular?"

The data from this study revealed the results of examining the status systems of the adolescent communities in ten high schools in the Midwest and the effects of these status systems upon the individuals within them. The findings indicated:

- The schools were remarkably grouped somewhat off-center, showing a greater tendency for the students to say "star-athlete" than either of the other choices.
- In almost every case, the leading crowd tended in the direction of the athlete—in all cases away from the ideal of the brilliant student.
- For the leading crowds as well, as for the students as a whole, the uniformity was remarkably great.
- The uniformity was not so great in the absolute positions of the leading crowds but in the direction they deviated from the student bodies.
- Overall, the data indicated the importance of athletic achievement as an avenue for gaining status in the schools.

The cultural phenomenon of athletic glory and popularity continues in present-day athletics in higher education. This cultural context of athletic emphasis versus academic excellence suggests that student athletes may not always find themselves in an academically supportive or unbiased performance context. This is historical for student athletes in terms of being stereotyped and stigmatized as "dumb jocks" based on their participation in athletics. For African American student athletes, there are specific and unique effects of being stereotyped (Laphchick, 2000). The remainder of this section focuses on theoretical and practical issues related to strategies that may help break common stereotypes that student athletes face.

Recent research about collegiate culture and education validates some of Coleman's (1960) major findings but also extends his inquiry in other related ways (i.e., qualitative methods, studies on race and gender in sport). For example, Donnor (2005a) departed from extant inquiry and reductionism of academics and athletics by examining a more holistic picture of the scholastic education of African American male student athletes. This particular study explored the academic preparation of 17 African American male college football student athletes and revealed "specific actions taken by parents and teachers. In examining the scholastic education experiences of black male student athletes from this viewpoint, this study revealed the conditions (i.e., race, socioeconomic, and institutional) that shaped individual behavior outside of sport" (Donnor, 2005b, p. 2). In short, this study created new knowledge instead of continuing the "critical shortcoming of conventional studies and their inability to delineate the attributes of individual black males irrespective of sport" (Donnor, 2005, p. 2). While Donnor's findings are less generalizable to a broader context of student athletes, the results still reveal a deeper meaning about attributes developed by African American male student athletes at some institutions. Among these attributes are academic success and the self-perception of intellectual prowess.

Martin (2005) has also contributed to examining less stereotypical attributes instead of continued reliance upon research that consistently calls attention to the
problems and shortcomings of African American men in higher education. As Martin (2005) stated, “Most of the published research regarding their experiences at highly selective institutions disproportionately focuses on low retention rates, dismal graduation statistics, and other maladjustments to higher education” (p. 2).

The high-achieving African American male student athlete is “rarely highlighted in the higher education literature, thus making his reflections of success seemingly insignificant and unknown” (Martin, 2005, p. 1). Other scholars have examined this phenomenon of academic success and cultural expression in terms of African American female student athletes with research and commentary stretching beyond traditional epistemologies (Bruening, 2003, Sloan-Green, 1981; Smith, 2000; Suggs, 2003). This raises the question: what strategies are available to assist student athletes? Steele et al. (2002) noted that there are few empirically established individual strategies that empower “targets” with skills and responses that can mitigate the effects of being stigmatized (Aronson, Fried & Good, 2002; Major et al., 2000). This may help explain and interpret some of the other research related to academic and athletic identities that have followed Coleman’s earlier data. First, Settles et al. (2002) found in their investigation of student athletes (N = 200):

- Despite the correlation they found between role interference and well-being, much of that relationship could be explained by other demographic and role importance factors.

- In general, both the academic and the athletic roles appeared to be highly central identities for the student athletes in this sample.

- No relationship between level of interference and well-being was found for student athletes who viewed being a student and an athlete as a single role.

Yopyk and Prentices’s (2005) findings are also pertinent to the theories and research related to academic and athletic identity. In their two studies at Princeton, which consisted of student athletes (N = 87) and members of three all-male a capella singing groups (N = 30), they found:

- In terms of test performance, athletes primed with their athlete identity performed less well on the test than did athletes primed with their student identity or with no identity.

- Both singers and athletes who were primed with their extracurricular identity attempted fewer problems on the test and gave fewer correct answers, but athletes less successfully solved those problems they did attempt.

- As expected, athletes primed with their athlete identity reported significantly lower academic self-regard than did athletes primed with their student identity. Likewise, athletes primed with no identity reported lower self-regard than did athletes primed with their student identity. There was no difference between the athlete-prime and no-prime conditions, and no differences for singers across conditions.

One area of inquiry that may be helpful to understanding various intellectual debates about student athlete identity roles (that has not received much empirical attention) is the use of self-affirmation (i.e., academic success) processes (Steele,
1998). Although there is still some debate in the literature, the ability to reflect on positive self-attributes may provide a buffer against the threat imposed by the salience of a negative stereotype in a performance context. For example McIntyre et al. (2003) reported that providing women with feedback about achievements by females—a group level affirmation—enhanced the performance of female college students on a math test when they were under stereotype threat. Based on these assumptions and findings, Scholar-Baller as a concept and unique affirmational strategy intends to help targets such as student athletes disarm the threat they experience when negative stereotypes are salient in a performance context.

One stigma intervention is based on the new individualized affirmation concept of the scholar athlete model (Harrison, 2002). Research decades after Coleman's (1960) indicated that intelligence and athleticism are considered to be mutually exclusive at the high school level (Chandler & Goldberg, 1990; Nixon, 1982), and there is some evidence to suggest this is the case for intercollegiate student athletes (Harrison, 1998, 2002). The purpose of Scholar-Baller is to eliminate this dichotomy for student athletes by helping them reconceptualize the mental and physical aspects of their self-concept (Harrison & Boyd, 2005; Stone & Harrison, 2005). As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, entertainment has further complicated the dichotomy into a "trichotomous" identity struggle. With this reality in mind, sport managers and athletic leaders have the unique opportunity to fuse education, sport, and entertainment into one unified message.

This possibility is summarized by Gerdy (1997): "Athletic departments produce an incredible amount of material promoting their teams—media guides, game programs, and posters. Athletic events themselves offer an opportunity to address a captive audience on campus. But once again, the messages and themes associated with these publications and events are almost exclusively sports related" (p. 118). Scholar-Baller serves as a cultural intervention package that athletic managers can use to promote broader characteristics of the student athlete.

The goal of this Scholar-Baller intervention is to help student athletes integrate their academic and athletic self-concepts into one positive superordinate self-image (Steele, 1997). The hypothesis is that when a threat to their academic self-concept is imposed by the salience of a negative stereotype in the classroom, the integrated "scholar athlete" conception of self can then serve as an affirmational resource that reduces their concern and empowers them to perform well in the testing context (Steele et al., 2002). One of the major reasons the salience of education is less than that of sport and entertainment is that the education does not engage and/or inspire the masses of youth and young adults at the magnitude and with the frequency that music and athletics do. The section that follows discusses how hip-hop culture links to the scholar-ballers concept.

**Hip-hop as a Positive Cultural Force**

The spread of hip-hop in present society is similar to Coleman's (1960) observation about rock and roll and to the influence of popular culture as a whole. Today, entertainment (i.e., music, film, fashion, video games) and hip-hop influence the attitudes and values of youth and young adults on a global scale (Boyd, 2002; Keyes, 2004). Any serious academic reform movement must acknowledge the realities of various cultural artifacts that teach values and influence social perceptions. West (2004) stated the following:
Although hip-hop culture has become tainted by the very excesses and amoralities it was born in rage against, the best of rap music and hip-hop culture still expresses stronger and more clearly than any cultural expression in the past generation a profound indictment of the moral decadence of our dominant society. (p. 179)

Examples of cultural artifacts include PlayStation (NCAA college version), music on iPods and CD players (hip-hop and other genres), and the public consumption of major and big-time college athletics as they continue to be embedded in America’s psyche (e.g., March Madness and the Bowl Championship Series [BCS]). All of these examples serve as translators of the engagement with popular culture and athletics and with what youth and young adults learn and internalize as social reality.

Dyson (2005) critiqued the power and influence of entertainment. “Even more than their predecessors, hip-hop artists play a critical role in circulating the meanings and messages of urban black culture. Hip-hop stars and impresarios like Sean “P. Diddy” Combs (Sean John), Jay-Z (Rocawear) and Russell Simmons (Phat Farm) have branded their products—compact discs, films and especially fashion lines—across a number of media, proving that black urban styles have global reach in the international marketplace” (p. 113). This is why urban culture and its related styles have become institutionalized and mainstream. The challenge is to mainstream the academic and educational identities through this same representational system, as discussed in Hall’s research earlier in this chapter. The importance of styles should be acknowledged in this quest for change.

Patillo-McCoy (2000) analyzed one type of representational system and the targets for consumption of its product: “Styles are generated by the strong messages delivered in advertising, and transformed through local processes of re-definition. It is clear that Nike has made a strategic pitch to the African American community, especially its youth, and that Nikes have in turn been incorporated into a dialogue of symbols for courtship, for self-esteem, for aesthetic enjoyment, for gang affiliation” (p. 166). Educational styles are normally created outside the medium of sport and entertainment and tend to be conservative and less innovative (Meier, 1995). Public service announcements (PSA’s) and Public Broadcast Service (PBS) are exemplars of the traditional educational representation system.

In terms of visibility, non-revenue sports do not receive the attention that revenue sports enjoy. However, the student athletes who participate still co-exist on campus and in a society that privileges athletic participants. This is why organizations such as the National Association for Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A) have been formed, as well as educational intervention programs such as CHAMPS/Life Skills. These two important entities will be analyzed in the context of meeting the cultural needs of today’s student athlete.

First, N4A is comprised mostly of academic advisors, assistant athletic directors, and associate athletic directors who direct student athlete services: tutoring, advising, study hall, and monitoring of academic eligibility through higher education’s athletic departments. Although these are important developmental infrastructures, the limitation of this model (for the most part) has been its inability to address the dichotomy of academics and athletics in a culturally influential capacity that significantly impacts a quality education, graduation rates, and career development in the revenue sports. Both authors of this chapter have attended
several N4A meetings, and the dominant theme is that "everyone knows the problem of student athlete retention," especially in revenue sports, but what do leaders, administrators, and faculties do to change it? This remains the question, and the next program we will discuss has addressed part of this question.

Second, the CHAMPS (Challenging Athlete's Minds for Personal Success)/Life Skills program was created in 1991 through the collaboration of the NCAA Foundation and the Division I-A Athletics Directors' Program. It was not until the summer of 1994 that 46 NCAA institutions participated in the first orientation for administrators from around the country. Since then, approximately 40 member institutions and conferences have joined the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program each year.

Participating institutions in the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program are provided with instructional materials and supplemental resources that support a student athlete's development in five areas: academics, athletics, personal development, career development, and community service. The stated mission of this program is "to provide services and support to the membership, public and media to develop and enhance the life of the student athlete through educational programs and resources focusing on gender equity, student athlete welfare and life skills" (NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills Pamphlet, 2005b, p. 1). The components of the program are extensive, thus only those aspects that address culture on campus versus a broader societal level will now briefly be analyzed in contrast to the Scholar-Baller program.

First, the objectives that CHAMPS/Life Skills strives to fulfill are relevant for college sports and higher education. However, the mission statement focuses on gender equity, student athlete welfare, and life skills. Scholar-Baller focuses on culture, race, gender, and lifelong learning with a foundation on diversity. In other words, promoting respect for diversity among student athletes is not limited to tolerance, but includes valuing the diversity of student athlete profiles in terms of social class, perceptions of education and life, and respecting how the construction of self has been developed by each student athlete. Second, ownership by student athletes of their academic, athletic, and social responsibilities can be realized only by enhancing and creating new partnerships among the NCAA, member institutions, and social communities—this is the purpose of education (Coleman, 1960; Meier, 1995).

This is precisely the theory of representation and shared meaning discussed by Hall (2003) as noted previously in this chapter. All of this social and cultural synergy will be difficult to achieve if the consciousness of each student athlete is not raised to a level of self-respect. After self-respect has been achieved, student athletes will be on the road to becoming lifelong players and leaders in the greatest game, of all, life. In sum, the Scholar-Baller differs from N4A and CHAMPS/Life Skills strategies because of its theoretical and practical applications to the social communities that shape the mindsets of student athletes in American culture.

Examining deeper narratives at the practical level must be substantiated by rigorous theoretical and cultural frameworks that reveal the true experiential aspects of student athlete perceptions and lifestyles about education. This is key for sport management scholars, practitioners, and students seeking to understand student athletes from diverse backgrounds and social origins. The next section addresses the notion of how Scholar-Baller can theoretically and practically illuminate some of these realities.
Critical Race Theory and Critical Scholar-Baller Theory and Application (CSBTA)

Singer (2005) summarized the defining elements of CRT and, more pertinent to this chapter, a foundation for a Critical Scholar-Baller Theory and Application (CSBTA) when he stated, "CRT challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical examination of the law and acknowledgement of the experiential knowledge of people of color in analyzing the law and society" (p. 469). This is key when hearing the narratives of student athletes in high-profile sports such as football, but especially African American males who are often stereotyped because of sport participation and racial category. Often, marketing and advertising from athletic departments exclude the cultural perspective of student athletes and, in general, perspectives outside the dominant ideology of whiteness and mainstream society (Armstrong, 1998).

CSBTA models Singer’s (2005) provocative challenge that “sport management scholars must begin to recognize the significance of race and ethnicity as visible epistemological considerations in research inquiry” (p. 464). As an extension and case example of CRT’s growing body of knowledge, CSBTA extends the CRT framework by legitimately challenging traditional approaches. This is the long-term goal of intellectualism and scholarship in terms of sport studies, to examine alternative and other scholarly and applied approaches that overlook racial and culturally based emancipatory research and best practices sport management, athletic administration, and the educational training of students as future leaders or researchers in these areas (Singer, 2005). CSBTA parallels the themes of CRT’s focus on issues of justice, liberation, and the empowerment of people of color in a society that has historically resisted multiculturalism, inclusion, and diversity. The following is research from a single institution to illustrate some of the major points synthesized earlier in this paragraph. It also addresses alternative research approaches suggested by some of the scientists, scholars, and researchers mentioned in the section on recent campus climate literature and student athletes, focusing on African American males and females.

Based on a narrative study (N = 17) by Harrison (2004) of the 28 total student athletes (11 of the players were unavailable at the time of the study) who displayed the Scholar-Baller patch during the 2004 NCAA Division I football season, the following is a summary of the African American male “voices” and counter storytelling as they name their own reality and engage in dialogue that enables them to reflect on their situation and what can be done to change and improve it (Singer, 2005). The following are the compiled narratives and stories from the African American male football players (there were five non-African American players with narratives that are not the present focus) in the study (Harrison, 2004; N = 12):

It’s something to be proud of. It informs people that athletes these days are not one dimensional. We can excel in different aspects of life. Personally, being a black college athlete the blessing doubles, because it gives us a chance of pace, instead of the “coming from the hood” story the media loves to tell. This gives them something positive to talk about. It changes the goal of those we influence—they not only want to come play ball . . . now they want to come play ball and get a degree. That’s what it
means to me; it says look at me, not only am I on a Division I
football team and an athletic specimen, I am also a scholar
and if I no longer had football I would excel in whatever area
I choose to pursue. I am well rounded. I am trained for all as-
pects of life. I am no longer a boy. I have become a man. (Af-
rican American male student athlete, junior)

To me it feels really good to be a Scholar-Baller because to me
it lets me tell people that hey I’m a good student as well as a
football player. And it makes me feel real good in the inside. I
think it’s really cool that we are the first school to ever do this
because now we could lead by example and set certain stan-
dards for other schools to reach. (African American male stu-
dent athlete, graduate student with athletic eligibility/fifth
year senior)

It's nice to be able to be recognized as being a good student.
It is not often that student athletes get recognized for their
academics. Especially football players get the stereotype of being dumb
jocks. So, it is nice to be recognized. (African American male student
athlete, junior)

It feels good because of the stereotypes that have been set about fball
players and that we can’t be smart, but society always changes. Happy
to represent by wearing the patch. (African American male student ath-
lete, sophomore)

Our bodies endure the grind of two-a-days and the outcome is athletic
performance at a high level. With academics the playing field is the
classroom and the course material are the plays. What happens if one
doesn’t know the plays on the field? They’re benched! It’s different with
academics, except you’re benched in the game that matters—life. (Af-
rican American male student athlete, freshmen)

I am glad that there is finally a program that recognizes the positives in
academics. Usually people are always focused on the negatives! Football
players don’t do this... And don’t do that... just a bunch of haters. Fi-
nally a program that recognizes and rewards the student athlete for good
work. (African American male student athlete, senior)

It feels good because it took work to accomplish it and not everyone has
a Scholar-Baller patch. Also it shows that academics are taken seriously.
I also believe that the few who have one get an extra level of respect from
others. They see that the people who have one work a bit harder than
others, because it is not easy to be successful on the field and carry high
marks in school. (African American male student athlete, junior)

It feels good to be recognized for something positive. Many people think
of football players as dumb, so this was a way to prove that they were
wrong. It gave me something to push for. (African American male stu-
dent athlete, sophomore)
I think it is unique to be recognized on the field for my academic achievements. It's a good feeling to be a "pioneer," so to speak, of this trend. (African American male student athlete, junior)

It's an honor really! I believe the Scholar-Baller identity will take off. I can't lie; it's been sort of an adjustment for me to recognize my education on the football field. But I'm proud to do it, I'm proud of it. I work hard on and off the field to be the best football player I can be, and to achieve Scholar-Baller status I must do the same, in and outside the classroom. This is history, being the first NCAA school to represent Scholar-Baller! It's an honor and I strive to continue achieving this academic status. (African American male student athlete, sophomore)

I feel good to know that I am a part of something that will eventually blow up. I really think it shows people on the outside how much work student athletes put into their academics. It is also a personal honor to be recognized for something other than ball. (African American male student athlete, senior)

I felt good wearing the patch on my jersey because people also could know that I can get it done on the field and in the classroom. Football players usually never get noticed for what they do in the classroom nationally, but after the patches came out, people started to notice it. Compete with Passion and Character (CPC) Nationwide! (African American male student athlete, junior)

As Martin (2005) suggested, “the paucity of research regarding African American male student athletes who perform well academically is highly problematic” (p. 1). He theorized that his study would assist college administrators in marketing and promoting more emphasis of academic success of student athletes; faculty, in mentoring student athletes; coaches, in reinforcing the value of education; and officials within the NCAA, in creating effective programming (e.g., see Coach Carter film screening in the conclusion of this chapter) and interventions (e.g., Scholar-Baller) that will aid in reversing the current perceptions of African American male student athletes in higher education (Harrison & Boyd, 2005; Martin, 2005).

The narratives reveal themes of pride and liberation and acknowledge how deficit perspectives on student athletes influence how they see themselves. This is why Martin's (2005) non-traditional research design and findings are key, as they break tradition by examining African American male student athletes with a cumulative grade point average at or above 2.8 and on schedule to graduate in five years or less. Martin (2005) found the following to be most characteristic of academic achievement by student athletes in his study (N = 27):

1. Having a host of peers, family, professors, and academic advisors as sources of support
2. Having pride and working diligently in all of their scholastic endeavors
3. Engaged in campus and community organizations and other purposeful out-of-class activities that enable them to bond with the institution beyond their athletic obligations
4. Equating masculinity with having strong, upstanding, and moral character
5. Not characterizing masculinity through their athletic accomplishments, material possessions, or popularity among the women they were dating

6. Not desiring to be defined by the "jerseys on their backs," as they characterized themselves as men with aspirations and identities that stretch beyond the realm of athletics

These findings, coupled with the Scholar-Baller narratives, are key, because with Critical Race Theory they inform sport scholars, students, and sport managers of a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, and methods that could help sport management scholars identify, analyze, and change those structural and cultural aspects of sport that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of various sport organizations. CRT and qualitative research could allow us to better understand how these structures and practices negatively impact people of color in sport organizations, and what needs to be done to ameliorate the social conditions of these individuals. (Singer, 2005, p. 471)

Harrison's (2004) and Martin's (2005) findings are most pertinent because they are counter-stereotypical in a culture that often sees African American male student athletes as intellectually inferior to all other students on campus (Sailes, 1993). What follows in the next section is a single-institution analysis of the Scholar-Baller implementation in the culture of Division I athletics. Recent research and policy analysis by Bell (2005) indicated that "with support, encouragement, and interest, student athletes can be successful in challenging courses if those lacking academic skills are given the support they need, and if each student can discover where his 'spark' lies" (pp. 3-4).

The Triangle: A Community of Scholar-Ballers

Scholar-Baller is a committed team of educators, practitioners, professional athletes, and entertainers dedicated to educating today's youth about the importance of academics using sports and entertainment. Established in 1995, Scholar-Baller evolved in response to concerns that the student athlete's athletic role increasingly superseded the student role. In order to address this issue, the founding members of Scholar-Baller developed a paradigm to bridge the education and sport gap that utilizes student athletes' common passion for sport and entertainment.

The implementation of the Scholar-Baller program at Arizona State University (ASU) has been a collaborative effort between Dr. C. Keith Harrison, director of the Paul Robeson Research Center for Academic and Athletic Prowess, Jean Boyd, associate athletic director for student athlete development, and the ASU football coaching staff, led by head coach Dirk Koetter (2001–2006). The Scholar-Baller Paradigm teaches that performing well in school and earning a bachelor's degree are victories that last a lifetime. As a result, the Scholar-Baller program has produced unprecedented outcomes in student retention and academic achievement. What follows is a summary of the program's results, which help buttress the theoretical claims asserted earlier in this chapter. This implementation approach is multifaceted and consists of identity and curriculum intervention, academic team competition, single-institution analysis, and descriptive statistics of the progress in terms of matriculation and graduation at Arizona State University. The process
of Scholar-Baller has consistently taken place during summer practices and in-inseason/off-season meetings twice a week during the academic school year. The Scholar-Baller intervention focuses on critical pedagogy and "transformative knowledge by engaging the student athletes in experiences of values, character, morals, attitudes, outlooks, and so on" (Pugh & Bergin, 2005, p. 19). What produces the results that follow are weekly lesson plans and internal team competition in academic performance. This all begins during two-a-day practices where 15 of the 47 lessons plans are taught in a two-week period.

In three fall semesters previous to the arrival of Dirk Koetter and his staff and Jean Boyd's appointment as coordinator of football academics, the freshmen classes averaged a grade point average (GPA) of 1.67 (1998, 1.74; 1999, 1.70; 2000, 1.57). In the three fall semesters after Coach Koetter's arrival, the freshmen classes averaged 2.40 GPA (2.55, 1.91, and 2.31).

In the year previous to Coach Koetter's arrival, the frosh cohort average GPA for the fall semester was 1.57 with 10 student athletes under 1.00. In Coach Koetter and Jean Boyd's first year of the Scholar-Baller intervention, the frosh cohort earned an average GPA of 2.55 with all student athletes over 1.00 and only 4 of 17 under 2.00, with the lowest GPA being 1.75. The cumulative GPA of the football program overall significantly improved as well, and following the summer of 2002, the team cumulative GPA for scholarship student athletes was 2.60, up from 2.23 the previous two years. The cumulative GPA for the fall semesters over the same period of time increased each year from 2.23 to 2.31 to 2.38 to 2.40. Seventy-four percent of all football student athletes who played for Coach Koetter have either graduated or are still competing or finishing school. Overall, Coach Koetter's three recruiting classes have an 84% retention rate. One key aspect of this success is that players are randomly assigned teammates in groups of eight to ten student athletes, and the teams with the highest GPA's are recognized and praised for competing at the highest academic levels. This is where the core values of Scholar-Baller are taught.

The core values of the program are self-respect, perseverance, industry, vision, success, and humility. Adherence to these values in the contexts of academic and social achievement is what makes someone a "baller." To become a Scholar-Baller, student athletes must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0. Professional athletes who have earned a bachelor's degree and others who demonstrate a commitment to the Scholar-Baller value system are also recognized as Scholar-Ballers. As a Scholar-Baller, the student athlete is awarded motivational gear that has the logo of ThinkMan (see Figure 3) or ThinkWoman. This logo is rare in that it represents the fusion of education, sport, and entertainment. The logo represents a well-rounded student athlete who has a positive lifestyle encompassing a lifelong commitment to learning.

Scholar-Baller is a reality due to its curriculum intervention and mentoring program. The curriculum is a culturally innovative and incentive-based program that bridges the gaps between academic and social achievement, athletics and popular culture. Upon completion of the program, all students have a new perspective for what it means to be a "baller." The six principles of the curriculum are:

- Identity (Self and Social)

- The Competitive Spirit/Compete with Passion and Character (CPC)
The Scholar-Baller Paradigm

Purpose/Vision/Mission/Goals

Decision-Making System

Vision, Industry, Self-Respect, Perseverance, Success, and Humility

The following is a synthesis of each of the six principles of the Scholar-Baller curriculum:

Principle One: Identity is something that many individuals pride themselves on. This is an extremely important concept as it relates to being a student athlete. Most student athletes take pride in who they are and what they stand for as athletes. The challenge that many institutions face is getting their student athletes to create an identity as "student" and "athlete." Because of the many differences in individuals who attend institutions across the nation, it becomes very challenging to foster the idea of one unified and shared meaning of this identity. Many student athletes view athletics as their ticket to a life of fame and fortune. As a result, they place a greater emphasis on being athlete. If student athletes come from environments where education is not a priority, they attend a college or university on athletic scholarships and their focus tends to be less on academics and more on athletics. This is sometimes the result of not being able to identify with the importance of academics and athletics as synergistic and inclusive in terms of excellence and cultural performance.

The goal of the self-identity principle is to educate students about stereotype threat processes and to introduce the concept of the scholar athlete self-identity. Getting students to engage in self-exploration through visualizations and workbook exercises accomplishes these goals. There are two major themes: social identity and values clarification. These themes will evolve through self-exploration to assist students in seeing how they identify themselves, as being "just" athletes or more rounded individuals, as well as to assist students in creating a stronger sense of self. A lesson will also address the incorrect assumptions that stereotypes like the "dumb jock" create, and will carefully explain the process of stereotype threat using the educational approach described by some scholars (Steele, 1997; Stone & Harrison, in prep.). Finally, students will critically assess their own balancing act of being a student and athlete and will be exposed to new strategies for managing the balancing act.

Principle Two: This principle focuses on competition and what it means to compete with passion and character (CPC). This principle will identify where competition takes place and will reiterate that competition takes place not only in the sports world, but also in the classroom. Students will investigate why it is important to obtain as much education as possible, learn the statistics that compare income for college graduates versus non-college graduates, learn the percentage of student athletes who go professional versus those who do not, and even more important, learn about those who are professionals in the world outside of physically participating in athletics. It will also highlight both the manifest and latent consequences of earning a college degree. The principle will be completed by presenting the rules necessary to
compete in NCAA sports and how these rules relate to competition in both academics and sports.

CPC is a difficult concept to grasp for many student athletes. A good number of student athletes in our society have gravitated to the notion of becoming a professional athlete. As a result, many have become disinterested in academics. They figure that if LeBron James or Kobe Bryant entered the NBA draft fresh out of high school they will have the opportunity to do the same. They totally ignore the statistics that indicate that fewer than 2% of collegiate athletes actually make it onto a professional roster (Edwards, 2000; Lapchick, 2001). It takes a peer, coach, or administrator who has a passion for teaching and acquiring knowledge to act as a model for these student athletes to relay the message of what it means to “Compete with Passion and Character.”

**Principle Three:** This is probably the most important principle of the Scholar-Baller curriculum, “The Scholar-Baller Paradigm/Standard.” This concept is fueled by the energy of many individuals, past and present, who have exemplified the true meaning of self-respect, perseverance, industry, vision, success, and humility. Scholar-Baller is a committed team of educators, administrators, professional athletes, and entertainers dedicated to educating today’s youth about the importance of academics through their interest in sport and entertainment.

Through educators, athletic administrators, counselors, and most importantly coaches, it is imperative that Scholar-Baller provide student athletes with multiple opportunities to acquire knowledge. Simply put, Scholar-Baller has a unique leadership opportunity that is unparalleled to that of any other profession: to use the power of sport and entertainment to educate today’s youth and young adults. Through this paradigm, the Scholar-Baller team provides innovative approaches by teaching students and student athletes in a language and culture that are relevant to their concept of self.

The Scholar-Baller Paradigm is also designed to challenge student athletes to create entirely different images of themselves. Their major task is to establish a self-identity beyond the playing field or basketball court. Student athletes need positive heroes and role models they can emulate to help them create positive self-identities. Such models are essential to student athletes; therefore, role modeling is something that is greatly emphasized by the Scholar-Baller Paradigm.

This principle focuses on the desirability of the Scholar-Baller image. It begins with a definition and with contemporary examples like Pat Tillman (former pro football player and American hero), Dhani Jones (graduate of the University of Michigan and pro football player of the Philadelphia Eagles), and players from their own teams. The principle then focuses on Paul Robeson, the original Scholar-Baller, and the “Ball Like Paul” phrase, which means to excel in all aspects in the game of life. The session concludes with the students listening to a Scholar-Baller guest speaker. This assists in the embodiment of the concept, as well as lending credibility to it by demonstrating that being a Scholar-Baller is a positive goal.

**Principle Four:** For students, athletes, or businessmen, there are certain criteria that are necessary to be successful. Each of these individuals must have the
ability to perform at the highest level at all times. As a result, a certain amount of planning is imperative for such individuals to become successful in their respective environments. In this fourth principle of becoming a Scholar-Baller, there are four concepts that must be investigated: vision, purpose, mission, and goal-setting. Each of these concepts gives student athletes or any other individuals the blueprint for success because these concepts offer structure to their lives. This principle will also help student athletes to take personal responsibility for their future.

Principle Four focuses on defining and exploring important life goals. It helps student athletes set, establish, and maintain realistic and powerful short- and long-term goals. They think critically about the difference between internal and external motivators and are encouraged to reevaluate their academic goals for staying in school (i.e., change the emphasis from passing to staying eligible to not being personally satisfied with just passing). Lastly, the principle closes with each student creating a personal mission statement, along with a list of goals of how to achieve and maintain that mission.

Principle Five: A student athlete’s ability to make decisions in every aspect of life is critical to achieving overall success. Student athletes are faced with choices on a daily basis; it is imperative that they have a solid decision-making system. This principle focuses on how to make better decisions. It emphasizes the power of one decision that can create a domino effect as a direct result. It explains a decision-making rubric system, which asks the student athletes to critically identify if their decisions are in concert with their goals. This principle uses contemporary examples of positive and negative decisions made by personalities and identities in education, sport, and entertainment. One approach that consistently enables student athletes to become more aware of their goals and choices is to personalize the scenario. Dialogues and vignettes about eligibility for participation in athletics based on life decisions off the field are specific activities that allow players to connect with the reality that choices shape the future of their lives forever.

Principle Six: The sixth and final principle of becoming a Scholar-Baller is “Compete; Live the Scholar-Baller Way.” This principle has a direct influence on coaches, teachers, counselors, administrators, and student athletes themselves. Most important, cultural changes on the entire campus and social environment are the goal. In many instances, “Living the Scholar-Baller Way” will revitalize certain individuals, who have been given these tools, to take life more seriously, not only competing on the playing field, the basketball court, or the baseball diamond, but also having that competitive spirit in the classroom. This principle is the most important of all because it truly defines what the Scholar-Baller program is all about: Getting student athletes to compete and live the Scholar-Baller way.

By living the Scholar-Baller way, these student athletes will be given the skills to compete in the game of life. They will have the confidence needed to attack any obstacle that life has to offer. These student athletes will have earned the right to be considered Scholar-Ballers.

This principle summarizes and reiterates the main points of the previous principles. Students connect with a panel of faculty, who provide tips for
success in the classroom, including study skills, test taking, time manage-
ment, and how to interact with professors.

This principle also connects pop/hip-hop culture to the students by em-
phasizing the marriage of hip-hop and sport. This principle re-discusses the
issues of character, how it is defined, and its significance. It introduces the
character quotient, which focuses on the concept that having a strong char-
acter will take an individual further in life than will a weak character. Finally,
this section uses college situations and distractions in which character is re-
vealed, exemplifying both strong and weak characters.

Summary

In this chapter, the Academic Reform Movement (ARM) and Academic Progress
Rate (APR) by the NCAA are put into a historical context in which systemic prob-
lems such as academic accountability can be understood as a multi-layered, multi-
faceted challenge by higher education and society. A timeless theme of academic
reform has been the lack of institutional control, the primary focus on the new
educational policies in place (Smith, 1988). It is important and timely that the
NCAA has created a policy and shift in formally holding institutions accountable
for the welfare of student athletes, regarding not only eligibility, but also matricu-
lation and graduation.

Additionally, the representational system of education, sport, and entertain-
ment is explained and labeled the “tri-nary,” and Scholar-Baller as an inter-
vention and symbol for these three cultural forces is synthesized. By creating a syn-
ergy of shared meaning in one symbol such as Scholar-Baller, the cultural forces of
education, sport, and entertainment no longer compete with the desires of youth
and young adults. On the contrary, all three constructs via Scholar-Baller reinforce
a unique energy that embraces learning, no matter which domain is being con-
sumed by the individual.

Third, the SBIDM is presented in order to contextualize the various theoretical
and practical components that influence retention in terms of psychosocial
issues in higher education. There is a scarcity of student athlete development theo-
ries in the higher education literature and few models of student athlete matricu-
lation have been developed. (Some attention has been given in the psychological
and sociological fields.)

Also, recent empirical findings are presented on stereotypes and counter-
stereotypes specifically applied to the plight of African American student athletes.
In general, this body of emerging knowledge related to the phenomenology of
African American student athletes (especially males) reveals key factors that posi-
tively affect the academic performance of African American student athletes.

For instance, Gragg (2003) found in his qualitative study of Southeastern
Conference (SEC) football student athletes (N = 18) the following positive fac-
tors of educational persistence: family/significant other influence, institutional
commitment, teammate influence/peer acceptance, self-motivation, fraternity in-
fluence, and spirituality. This is juxtaposed with obstacles to positive academic per-
formance, found in Gragg's study: unhealthy team subcultures, institutional barri-
ers, racism, lack of positive interaction with campus and community constituents,
and personal challenges. It is important to remember that much of the qualita-
tive data synthesized in our chapter was conducted on predominantly white campuses. More qualitative research in the future should examine African American and other ethnic group student athlete experiences at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU’s).

Lastly, the Scholar-Baller community at Arizona State University is examined as a single-institution self-study of the program since its implementation with significant results in academic retention, matriculation, and graduation rates. The Scholar-Baller Paradigm compels dramatic cultural change that transforms and unifies, when defining aesthetic understanding(s) in both research and everyday life. As Pugh and Bergin (2005) stated, “Transformative experience and aesthetic understanding both emphasize acting on subject matter ideas in everyday contexts and undergoing an expansion of perception and value” (p. 20). This transformative perception of self and worldview is more salient when there is synergy and transfer within the triangle of success—education, sport, and entertainment. The final section of this chapter presents a vision for the future of the previously analyzed topics.

The Future

On January 13, 2005, the “trinary” and triangle of success celebrated a collaborative moment. Scholar-Baller and its team of educators, Rush Philanthropic led by Ellen Haddigan and Russell Simmons, and the NCAA represented by Senior-Vice President Bernard Franklin all partnered together for a film screening of Coach Carter for over 500 urban and inner-city youth in New York City. Educational and critical dialogue followed, with a panel and group discussion about the influence of sport and entertainment on the educational aspirations of youth and young adults in America.

In the film Coach Carter (2005) many of the student athletes/players sported the latest name brands in urban hip-hop wear (Phat Farm, Sean John, Rocawear, Ecko, and Nike). As we have articulated throughout this chapter, these identities are produced and consumed by the meanings and connotations that go with this type of attire—the baller and player lifestyle. By designing a cultural reward system through institutions like the NCAA and higher education, Scholar-Baller has the opportunity to symbolize academic excellence as well as athletic prowess. This type of campus and societal “coolness” in concert with America’s cultural forces of entertainment (e.g., hip-hop, country music) and college athletics can shape new and progressive attitudes about education in modern society. This would enable students and student athletes to have at least a common meaning and perception to reach their goals. In essence, commerce will be used to highlight education while also being culturally salient to values typically learned through sport and entertainment.

The desires of youth and young adults in the modern world would be communicated in harmony while stretching across a boundary yet to be systematically embedded in the visceral cultures of sport and entertainment—education. This communication would enable the Scholar-Baller Paradigm to be more than a passing fad or traditional educational service announcement that lacks innovation and style. In order for this to transpire, Dr. Myles Brand’s leadership of the Academic Reform Movement must continue to be taken seriously and enforced with a cul-
tural sensibility for partnerships and alliances that are most influential in the lives of young people who participate in athletics and students in general.

Russell Simmons, the godfather of hip-hop, can continue to be a stakeholder in this Academic Reform Movement. Author and close friend of Simmons, Nelson George (1998), offered these words:

Having cracked the forty mark in 1997, Russell is at one of those psychological crossroads where his relevance to contemporary hip-hop will be challenged, both by the constant emergence of new musical trends and by unpredictable cultural shifts. His many nonmusic initiatives are a response to the business opportunities hip-hop’s maturation affords him. (p. 88)

Regardless of their success, Nelson George continues to challenge Simmons and other cultural leaders in the hip-hop communities to evolve. The potential synergy for a unifying message with college sports is only one idea of this (r)evolution. Both sport (e.g., NCAA, leisure activities, professional sport) and entertainment (e.g., hip-hop, video games, film) have the power and influence to positively and predictably shift cultural attitudes about their respective entities and more importantly education. However, it is impossible to predict all of the positive outcomes of this three-prong marriage of education, sport, and entertainment.

We do know as a society that not all young people are negative about the future and do aspire to opportunities that can liberate them as United States and global citizens. As West (2004) articulated, "Some young folk do persevere and prevail: those who are dissatisfied with mere material toys and illusions of security. They hunger for something more, thirst for something deeper. They want caring attention, wise guidance, and compassionate counsel. They desire individuality, community and society" (p. 177). Finally, it is time for education to gain ground in the sprint of sport and entertainment to reach the finish line of representation. Sport managers can make a difference in the “representation race” between academics and athletics to inform the public and broaden its perceptions about student athletes’ accomplishments in the classroom and off the field of play. If we continue in this direction, our society may have the opportunity to mainstream and integrate the spectacle and substance of Scholar-Baller, a new blueprint for higher education, the NCAA, and society.

△▼ Suggested Readings △▼


.movies

*Coach Carter* (2005)
*He Got Game* (1998)
*Varsity Blues* (1997)
*The Program* (1993)

.music


.study

1. What is the history of the Academic Reform Movement in higher education and how does the NCAA currently address this issue?
2. What is Scholar-Baller and how does it complement the Academic Reform Movement?
3. Explain the triangle of success and the importance of education, sport, and entertainment existing as one lifestyle and cultural approach to human excellence.
4. How has Arizona State University collaborated with the Scholar-Baller program and what results and patterns of behavior change have they seen?
5. How might Scholar-Baller influence the future of higher education, the NCAA, and entertainment?
References


Franklin, B. (2006, March). College athletics as a model for promoting academic integrity in higher education. Presentation given to graduate class Higher Education (HED) 691 Educational Leadership and Diversity in Sport, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.


