

A FOUR-PRONGED APPROACH TO ASSISTING STUDENT-ATHLETES FROM UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

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Introduction

There exists a great deal of research on how best to support the academic and social development of student-athletes on the collegiate level. There is also plenty of research on best practices for assisting college students from underserved populations. However, little work has been done to examine the potential of the collegiate athletics department to serve as a fully functioning pathway to and through college for student-athletes from underserved populations. From recruitment to completion to career entry, a collegiate athletics department can be retrofitted with traditionally successful academic and social support models to address the specific issues facing underserved student-athletes. Many athletics departments across the country provide partial support to these at-risk students, but have not developed all-encompassing programs (Gruber, 2008). It is posited in this paper that in order to be truly successful in serving the underserved, athletics departments must have structures and programming in place to provide guidance during recruitment and participation, encourage the dissolution of social strains, stay ahead of academic challenges and provide intellectual mentoring, all of which aid in dissolving stereotypes and assumptions among and about student-athletes (Sailes, 2008).

Issues Specific to Collegiate Student-Athletes

The academic and social stresses on student-athletes develop out of a “constant pressure to perform both athletically and academically” (Nordeen, 2008). While a coach

may be pressuring a student-athlete to put in more hours, lift harder, run faster or make more of a commitment, that student's professor might also be adding pressure to study harder, read more or commit to extra learning sessions. Coaches tend to view student-athletes possessively due to the hours of recruitment and cultivation they may have spent to get the athlete to the institution (Martin, 2010). Often this effort requires travel, special correspondence and extra time trying to secure, not only a place at the college for the athlete, but also the athlete's commitment to attend the college (Nordeen, 2008). This leads to a tendency of coaches to, usually inadvertently, pressure student-athletes into making choices that may damage their academic performance (Martin, 2010).

Meanwhile, professors expect student-athletes to place priority status on academic commitments over athletic ones (Perlmutter, 2003). Coming from a more structured high school setting, where athletics has, to some extent, found a more collaborative place in the academic realm, balancing the stresses of these two worlds at the collegiate level can be difficult for student-athletes (Sailes, 2008). The balancing act is a unique issue that student-athletes experience separately from their non-athlete counterparts (Sailes, 2008). The excitement and optimism associated with being a recruited student-athlete can quickly fade as the stresses of athletic and academic performance mount (Nordeen, 2008).

One of the most devastating aspects of student-athlete life is the pervasive stereotyping that exists in academia with respect to athletes. While some professors understand the pressures student-athletes face, others regard student-athletes with uncertainty, caution or even malice (Perlmutter, 2003). In accepting a commonly held stereotype, a professor may overlook a student-athlete in class, assuming that the student

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is uninterested in learning, and only in class to fulfill a participation requirement. Other times, the professor may hold lowered expectations for student-athletes, or be suspicious of high-quality work, assuming that the athlete holds the ability to excel on the field, but not in the classroom (Perlmutter, 2003). A professor's disdain towards athletes may even be evident in classrooms, as student-athletes are cut off or dismissed during discussions, or negative comments are made about "dumb jocks" and "privileged athletes" (Perlmutter, 2003). The majority of colleges and universities across the country have embraced programs that aim to deal with this issue. One of the most common is the NCAA's Faculty Athletics Representative program, which calls upon a faculty member to serve as a liaison between the athletic and academic realms (Krebs, 2004). While the program is wide-spread, its implementation and effectiveness varies by campus and is often lacking the support necessary to fully address the rift between athletics and academics.

In the face of inconsistent treatment and suspicion of discrimination within a student-athlete's academic experience, most tend to draw inward, deeper into the athlete identity (Harrison, 2009). This inward withdrawal is expressed in a number of ways. Student-athletes may make a purposeful effort not to self-identify amongst non-athletes or in classes, aiming to avoid the kind of assumptions typically associated with being an athlete (Harrison, 2009) Others may tighten their social sphere to include only the teammates and other athletes with whom they find comfort and familiarity. This practice can lead to an even more prominent "athlete culture" and further widen the gap between athletics and academics (Krebs, 2004). More extreme cases of athlete withdrawal can even result in academic and social harm, materialized through a drop in class attendance,

plagiarism and cheating, bullying and physical altercations (Miller, 2005). Through this process, the development of “jock identity” can lead to risky problem behaviors and unfavorable academic outcomes, particularly when perpetuated by group mentality (Miller, 2005). Further, the existence of the self-isolating “athlete culture” and “jock identity” on a college campus works to perpetuate the preexisting stereotypes regarding the student-athletes’ academic earnestness (Miller, 2005). It is the cyclical nature of stereotyping, mistreatment and inward withdrawal which perpetuates ideas about what kind of athlete behavior is accepted and expected from both student-athletes, themselves, and professors.

Additional Challenges for the Underserved

The challenges student-athletes face in light of the rift between athletics and academics are complicated, but not impossible to navigate. Miller (2005) suggests that enhancing the educational experience of student-athletes hinges on the athletic department’s ability to “discourage engendering a jock identity among [its] participants.” Student-athletes who are well-prepared for college, familiar with collegiate politicking and confident in their academic and social standing outside of athlete culture can often avoid the pitfalls of jock identity (Miller, 2005). When the majority of student-athletes within an athletic program display these characteristics, the development of jock culture is almost non-existent (Miller, 2005). Amongst these programs, studies have shown a strong correlation between athletic participation and academic achievement, even at the collegiate level (Miller, 2005). However, once athlete culture is well-established at an institution, student-athletes from underserved populations find it particularly difficult to

escape “jock identity” (Schmidt, 2008). This is due to the supplemental academic and social issues facing at-risk cohorts.

While athletic departments develop programs based around the needs of the average, representative student-athlete, special considerations must be made to identify, address and support student-athletes from underserved communities (Schmidt, 2008). Some such underserved student-athletes include, but are not limited to, students who identify as being first generation, minority, LGBTQ, disabled, poverty-stricken, underprepared, non-traditional, international or displaced (Swaner, 2009; Wolf-Wendel, 2008; McLaughlin, 2008) Students from each of these cohorts deal with issues specific to their backgrounds and current circumstances, but themes common across the groups appear repeatedly with regards to social and academic needs in a college environment (Swaner, 2009). Even if an athletic department has in place programming to dissolve any chance of a pervasive jock culture among its population of average, representative student-athletes, there is still a chance that jock culture is thriving among those who can be considered underserved (Schmidt, 2008). While underserved students may be taking advantage of the same programming as their representative counterparts, there is supplemental support needed to shore up these students’ successful navigation through higher education (Schmidt, 2008).

Coach Mentoring

Students-athletes from underserved populations come to college with a host of literacy issues. Literacy in financial matters, the college process, available resources and the benefit of higher education all play a role in whether or not a student successfully

enrolls in college (Schmidt, 2008). “Often, these are students that have the talent and ability to succeed but lack that critical little piece of information... pointing them in the right direction” (Fischer, 2007). For example, first-generation college students might not have experienced adult role models to help guide them through the process of applying to and enrolling in college (Swaner, 2009). Similarly, LGBTQ students may have strained relationships within their families and communities, limiting the number of resources they have to turn to for guidance (Wolf-Wendel, 2008). The issues and circumstances vary from one underserved group to another, but all hold the common thread of suffering some form of illiteracy with respect to higher education (Fischer, 2007).

The athletic recruitment process provides a special opportunity to address the literacy gaps facing these students (Friedman, 2008). Typically, the recruitment of a student-athlete involves a strong focus on athletic talent and aptitude (Martin, 2010). A coach will review the athlete’s abilities and if the athlete’s skills are desirable, the coach will ultimately try to sell the program to the athlete. The majority of this pitch plays up how this particular coach’s program, over other programs, can benefit the athlete, including hints at playing time, notoriety, perks and even advancement to professional play (Martin, 2010). Sometimes the coach will include information about academic support or major programs, but in most situations, the real excitement and draw to the program is being a recruited athlete, not a recruited student-athlete (Friedman, 2008). Much of the time, downplaying the academic aspect of becoming a member of a collegiate sports team is not wholly intentional on the coach’s behalf (Martin, 2010). The sports program, not the academic program, is the coach’s area of expertise and the realm within which the coach holds the most control. While some coaches do intentionally

mislead student-athletes with promises of easy classes and special treatment, the majority just simply do not know enough about the academic and financial ins and outs of higher education to comprehensively guide their recruits in those areas (Friedman, 2010).

For average, representative student-athletes, this simply means seeking out information elsewhere in order to build an educational plan that incorporates athletic participation, short term needs fulfillment and long term goal completion. However, student-athletes from underserved populations, with hazardous gaps in literacy about higher education, often miss this planning step (Schmidt, 2008). These students tend to focus on the aggrandized positive outcomes associated with playing a sport on the collegiate level (Sailes, 2008). Without factual knowledge about collegiate to professional sport transfer rates or opportunities to play after college, the likelihood of being a professional athlete does not seem as out of reach as it actually is (Krebs, 2004). Additionally, the recruited student-athlete oftentimes fails to grasp a full understanding of the time constraints, athletic and academic pressure and social stresses of becoming a student-athlete (Sailes, 2008). Many float through the recruitment process without fully digesting the weight of student loan debt, leaving home or living independently (Walters, 2006). Many fail to realize the differences between high school and college, in the necessity to buy books, complete assignments, attend class regularly and study autonomously. Students from underserved populations are not only frequently underprepared academically, but also underprepared with respect to knowledge of the policies, rigor and pathways of higher education (Swaner, 2009).

As one of the first points of contact with student-athlete recruits, coaches must be in the business of, not only selling their institution's sports program, but also selling their

institution's academic program (Gruber, 2008). This task requires a coach to address the student-athlete's past, present and future educational goals and to take on the responsibility of providing the recruit with information, guidance and linkage to support resources. Identifying the recruit's lack of literacy regarding higher education is a key component of this responsibility (Sailes, 2008). By determining the at-risk students within the cohort, the coach can put into action a number of support systems to preemptively address potential issues (Sailes, 2008). For example, if the recruit shows signs of being academically underprepared, the coach can provide resources for high school-to-college tutoring. If the student is lacking a support structure at home, the coach can provide guidance in connecting with a community mentor. If the student is confused about the world of financial aid, the coach can set up one-on-one advising through the college's financial aid office. While some coaches might be doing some of this from time to time, there exist very few athletic programs that specifically train coaches to identify literacy issues and provide comprehensive support in the areas of shortfall (Friedman, 2008).

Social Support

Students from underserved communities typically experience a culture shock of sorts during the transition from high school to college (Walters, 2006). Pop culture and stereotyping instills that straight, white, well-educated, upper middle class culture is the norm in American society (Swaner, 2009). Underserved students carry a common thread of coming from a background that does not fit this mold. While their "otherness" may linger in the back of their minds within their communities, stepping onto a college

campus brings it to the forefront (Perlmutter, 2003). From a difference in demographics to socioeconomic background, from ideas about success to customs in relationship building, students from underserved populations can identify their otherness in the almost immediate struggles they experience finding connections on campus (Sailes, 2008). Most colleges and universities acknowledge this struggle, and have created social support networks to help these at-risk students connect with each other and support each other in acclimating to their new environment (Sailes, 2008).

Similar support programs exist separately for student-athletes, who are often brought on campus early to facilitate the development of team bonds. Student-athletes are encouraged to build friendships, study with each other, take classes together and spend time outside of practice together (Sailes, 2008). For the majority of these students, the purpose of developing bonds with other student-athletes is to create a group dynamic and team loyalty, both of which contribute to success on the field (Nordeen, 2008). However, for the underserved student-athlete, the time with teammates meets another need; the need to be around and connect with people who have common personal experiences (Nordeen, 2008). For a student-athlete experiencing otherness, being with teammates who can sympathize and empathize with them provides a system of support that helps them feel more comfortable in the unfamiliar college environment (Nordeen, 2008).

However, with the positive aspects of team bonding, also comes a negative repercussion, particularly for student-athletes from underserved populations. While non-athletes from underserved communities may be involved in programs that encourage relationship building specific to their background, student-athletes often miss out on this opportunity due to athletic obligations (Sailes, 2008). Walters (2006) notes that in the

weeks before college classes begin, many institutions invite at-risk populations to campus early, specifically to engage in such programs. Student-athletes also come to campus at this time, but spend up to eight hours a day practicing and are with teammates from dawn to dusk, and beyond. Athletes who might otherwise participate in the college's minority programs are inadvertently excluded by athletic obligations (Walters, 2006). For student-athletes from underserved communities, the athletic sphere becomes their place of comfort and support, further pushing non-athlete relationships and the non-athletic spheres from their collegiate experience (Walters, 2006).

The main concern in underserved student-athletes sinking themselves deep into the athletic sphere is that it supports the development of jock identity. Frequency of participation in sport does not determine jock identity, but instead it is a status determined of a subjective, self-reported perception (Miller, 2005). While forming social bonds with other student-athletes is a positive in terms of enhancing on-field performance, it can quickly become a negative for underserved student-athletes, in encouraging them to burrow deep into their athlete status and take on jock identity (Miller, 2005).

In order to avoid widening the gap between the athletic and academic realms, student-athletes must be encouraged to socialize outside of the athletic community as well (Schmidt, 2008). Coaches should promote course grouping amongst athletes, getting athletes into courses together which will allow them to experience and value each other in their academic, rather than athletic, contributions (Schmidt, 2008). Other methods of linking the athletic and non-athletic world might also include requiring student-athletes participate in service learning, community engagement and group academic pursuits (Schmidt, 2008). Partnering athletic teams with non-athletic clubs on campus would also

be valuable in helping athletes connect with non-athletes and in creating peer influence from non-athletic sources (Krebs, 2004). Finding connection outside of the athletic realm, and even within the academic realm, will help student-athletes from underserved populations develop social ties beyond the athletic sphere, which will combat the formation of jock identity (Sailes, 2008; Miller, 2005).

Academic Support

It is the case that across the United States some public school districts perform at higher rates of success than others. Because of the local funding structure of public education, the ability of a high school to provide necessary resources to its students varies from district to district (Swaner, 2009). In underserved communities the public schools tend to be underfunded and underresourced, leading to lower graduation rates and higher incidences of underpreparedness of those who do graduate (Swaner, 2009). Despite a lack of funding and resources, underperforming schools do sometimes produce star students, who end up at elite colleges with a wealth of resources available to them (Swaner, 2009). While some slip through the cracks, oftentimes these high-achievers are guided with individualized help in accessing these resources and thus, are able to succeed in higher education (Swaner, 2009).

Underperforming high schools are also producing star athletes who end up going to college. However, unlike their star student counterparts, these athletes are not typically attending elite schools, characterized by small class sizes, individual attention and plush with support resources (Swaner, 2009). Star athletes from underserved communities typically attend public universities or community colleges, where class sizes are large and

the majority of professors are busy adjuncts (Swaner, 2009). For the average, representative student-athletes, institutions like these are well-equipped to provide the services and resources needed. However, underprepared student-athletes may not have the know-how or ability to access and use these resources (Swaner, 2009). While student-athletes from underserved communities may have earned passing grades in high school, they may not have had a valid academic experience (McLaughlin, 2008). It is often the case that underperforming high schools hold athletes to lower standards, inflate their grades or give them special attention or treatment (McLaughlin, 2008). With such a background, these star athletes tend to need multiple developmental classes, lack basic academic skills, and fail to realize the importance of attending classes and completing homework (McLaughlin, 2008). Even at institutions where multiple academic support resources are available and easily accessible, underprepared student-athletes may shy away from trying to use them (Swaner, 2009).

Student-athletes who prescribe to the “jock identity” tend to lack confidence in their academic abilities and advisors often experience difficulty in encouraging them to seek out academic support (McLaughlin, 2008). Between practices, games, classes and team meetings, student-athletes can get overwhelmed and identifying primarily as an athlete pushes the student to ignore academic responsibilities rather than sacrificing athletic obligations when experiencing overload (Friedman, 2008). However, even if the underprepared student-athlete commits to an effort to correct academic issues, the lack of academic skills quickly discourages and frustrates these students (McLaughlin, 2008).

Without a support structure in place from day one, the chances of underprepared student-athletes maintaining eligibility throughout their collegiate career are much less

than chances of the representative student-athlete (Swaner, 2009). The athletic department can assist in serving underprepared student-athletes by trying to stay ahead of the academic issues. Once an athlete has been recruited, accepted to the institution and signed to the team, there must be additional academic supports in place to guide that athlete through the testing, placement and enrollment process (Friedman, 2008). At the majority of institutions, advising personnel helps student-athletes pick out classes that will both advance them towards a degree and meet their athletic eligibility requirements (Friedman, 2008). However, additional work should be done to assist the underserved student with setting up tutoring sessions, study halls and mentoring meetings (McLaughlin, 2008).

Coaches should be involved with this and work with academic advisors in setting up mentoring and tutoring systems that play to an athlete's strengths (Baines, 2003). Coaching at the collegiate level is a form of mentoring, in that while a coach may sometimes teach specific skills (comparable to academic content), the coach at this level more often teaches techniques and methods in utilizing skill (Baines, 2003). These sport techniques and methods are more akin to the academic skills, such as study skills, outlining and reading for comprehension, which the underprepared student may be lacking. By understanding the way in which athletes are familiar with learning on the field, there may be insights into how to best assist athletes in learning off the field (Krebs, 2004). Krebs (2004) suggests "coaching the student in the student-athlete" by encouraging mentors and tutors to establish a coach-like bond with student-athletes in order to acknowledge their athletic identity and use it to enhance their academic commitment. Academic advisors and coaches can work together to identify mentors and

tutors who excel at these kinds of relationships, then guide them in best supporting the underprepared student-athletes from day one (Friedman, 2008).

Intellectual Mentoring

In addition to academic mentors, tutors and forming peer relationships that expand beyond the athletic realm, underserved student-athletes would also greatly benefit from having an intellectual mentor. Harrison (2006) defines an intellectual mentor as a professor who can serve as a role model for students by building a relationship through both formal and informal communications. Representative student-athletes are disadvantaged by the stereotyping of athlete culture, but underserved student-athletes are set back and driven deeper into jock identity by such treatment (Miller, 2005). The positive feedback loop created by stereotyping, mistreatment and withdrawal, as discussed earlier, exacerbates the internalized otherness these athletes already experience. Providing an intellectual mentor can help break up the cycle by breaking down barriers and countering stereotypes (Harrison, 2006). An intellectual mentor may help students with academic issues, but their purpose is much broader in that their main goal is to expand the student's horizons and life experience (Schmidt, 2008).

Relating to professors can be difficult for underserved student-athletes, who not only have to deal with athlete stereotyping, but also the otherness brought to the forefront by being thrust outside their own comfort zone (Perlmutter, 2003). Intellectual mentors can provide students access to a world outside of their previous life experience (Harrison, 2006). For example, an African American student-athlete may have grown up in a primarily African American neighborhood and attended a similarly segregated high

school. With little experience being surrounded by Caucasian peers and teachers, being at a predominately white university (as most American universities are) might be alienating. (Harrison, 2006). The student-athlete might be tempted to withdraw into the athlete culture, shutting out the student-professor interactions that are needed to fulfill a comprehensive higher education experience (Harrison, 2006).

This social move does not preclude the athlete from the necessity to interact in the academic realm of the college, but it does discourage that interaction. Soon the African American athlete finds that it is harder than ever to approach, confront and carry on dialogue with Caucasian professors, which ultimately leads to poor academic performance (Perlmutter, 2003). An intellectual mentor serves as the connective tissue between the student-athlete and the broader college community, both academic and extracurricular (Harrison, 2006). By giving the athlete insight into the aspects of higher education that are unfamiliar, the intellectual mentor can lessen the discomfort with and dissociative nature of those aspects (Harrison, 2006). In the case of the African American student-athlete and the Caucasian professors, an intellectual mentor can help the student-athlete glean a better understanding of the differences between the cultures and facilitate better communication between the two.

By providing an intellectual mentor who can connect students underserved populations with those from the representative communities, bridges are constructed to open pathways for these students to embrace a more wide-ranging collegiate experience (Harrison, 2006). Evidence shows that students yield a “greater capacity for deep, integrative learning” when they have had the experience of working side-by-side with a professor (Schmidt, 2008). Intellectual mentors can help students in this regard by

including them on research projects, or connecting them with other faculty members who need assistance on such projects (Schmidt, 2008). As a student-athlete from an underserved community, this works two-fold in both disrupting the formation of jock identity and in providing an experience that exists within unfamiliar parameters. Both consequences lead to the development of academic self-identity, which underserved student-athletes need to thrive on the collegiate level and develop career goals outside of athletics (Swaner, 2009).

Case Study Introduction

An assessment of the underserved student-athlete population at Montgomery County Community College (Blue Bell, Pa.) during the 2013-2014 academic year can provide insight into the need for a comprehensive program of support for this at-risk cohort. **Table 1.** shows the data compiled from this group. The underserved designation for this cohort was determined from four sets of data collected by the College: race designation as non-white, ethnicity designation as Hispanic, financial aid status as accepting need-based grant aid and developmental course load as enrolled in one or more developmental courses. Student-athletes meeting any one criterion were added to the underserved cohort. Of the 215 Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 student-athletes, 130 qualified for the underserved designation based on this criteria.

The cohort was broken down further into seven groups based on the services they were involved with during the semester, beginning with the team in which the student-athletes participated. At Montgomery County Community College, the athletics program consists of seven varsity sports teams. Five of the seven sports teams, men's and women's

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soccer, men's and women's basketball and softball, were created provisionally in 2008 and began competing in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) in 2009-2010. Baseball was entered into the NJCAA in 2010 after existing as a club sport at the College for 26 years and volleyball was added in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Of these seven squads, five were led by coaches who attempt to engage their athletes in education during the recruitment process. The coaches of men's soccer, women's soccer, women's basketball, women's volleyball and men's baseball led their student-athletes through the application and enrollment processes, informed them of future opportunities in academics and athletics and engaged them in discussions about goal setting and career paths. Belonging to one of these five teams qualified student-athletes as being engaged in the service of "Coach Mentoring" as denoted in Table 1. Belonging to these same five teams also qualified the student-athletes for engagement in the service of "Social Support" as denoted in Table 1. The coaches and student-athletes of these five teams also pursued multiple projects that involved building community relationships, partnering with peers outside of athletics and serving the community at large. Student-athletes participating in men's basketball and women's softball did not experience the same levels of engagement regarding coach mentoring or social support.

Engagement in the service of "Academic Support" as denoted in Table 1. was characterized by attending at least 14 hours per semester, or one hour per week, of the College's available study hall, tutoring, academic advising or peer mentoring services. Use of these services was widespread across the teams and although the athletics department required each student-athlete to complete 14-28 hours of attendance per semester, only a portion of the student-athletes fulfilled this requirement. Similarly, all

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minority male student-athletes were encouraged to join the Minority Male Mentoring Program (MMMP), but only a portion did. The MMMP was created in 2009 to help minority male students succeed on the college level by pairing them up with an intellectual mentor. Participation in the MMMP qualified a student-athlete as engaged in “Intellectual Mentoring” as denoted in Table 1.

Table 1. Montgomery County Community College Underserved Student-Athlete Data

Underserved Student-Athlete Grouping	N	ENROLL	W	D/F	COMP	SUCC	GPA	Under/Over Performance	
COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM	2	14	0	0	100.00%	100.00%	3.72	321%	Decreasing Jock Identity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL MENTORING	32	12.2	1.0	0.9	91.80%	84.43%	2.69	96%	Decreasing Athletics/Academics Gap
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
ALL UNDERSERVED STUDENT ATHLETES	130	11.6	1.2	1.7	89.66%	75.00%	2.39	0%	
COACHES WORKING ALONE	50	11.1	1.2	1.6	89.19%	74.77%	2.36	-1%	Increasing Jock Identity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
ALMOST NO ASSISTANCE	15	10.6	1.0	2.0	90.57%	71.70%	2.24	-19%	Increasing Athletics/Academics Gap
<input type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
ONLY ACADEMIC SUPPORT	10	12.9	1.6	1.9	87.60%	72.87%	2.53	-33%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
ONLY INTELLECTUAL MENTORING	6	10.7	2.7	0.5	74.77%	70.09%	2.14	-96%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									
NO SUPPORT FROM COACHES	15	12.3	1.1	3.6	91.06%	61.79%	1.83	-137%	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coach Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Social Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Mentoring									

Table 1. Data compiled from the underserved student-athlete population at Montgomery County Community College (Blue Bell, Pa.) during the 2012-2013 academic year. See Appendix A for the raw data.

Case Study Results

In studying the 130 underserved student-athletes demarcated during the 2012-2013 academic year, it was found that as a whole the cohort averaged an enrollment of 11.6 credits per semester, with an average withdrawal of 1.2 credits and an average unsuccessful completion of 1.7 credits. The cohort averaged a 2.39 term GPA, with an average completion rate of 89.66% and an average success rate of 75.00%.

The 130 student-athletes were then divided into groups based on the services in which they participated. Two groups performed better than the cohort as a whole, while five groups performed worse. The “Comprehensive Program” group consists of student-athletes who engaged in all four services (Coach Mentoring, Social Support, Academic Support and Intellectual Mentoring) during each semester. The data for this group shows an average enrollment of 14.0 credits, with 100% completion and success rates, resulting in a 3.72 average term GPA. This is a 321% better performance than the cohort average. The “Without Intellectual Mentoring” group consists of student-athletes who participated in all services but Intellectual Mentoring. These student-athletes performed 96% better than the cohort, with a completion and success rates of 91.80% and 84.43% respectively, and an average GPA of 2.69.

Leading the groups of student-athletes who performed worse than the cohort average is the “Coaches Working Alone” group. This group only performed 1% worse than the cohort average, earning an 89.19% completion rate, a 74.77% success rate and an average term GPA of 2.36. Following this group is the group of student-athletes, labeled “Almost No Assistance,” who were not at all engaged in any of the four support systems. They performed 19% worse than that cohort average with an average term GPA

of 2.24 and completion and success rates of 90.57% and 71.70%. The subsequently worse performing groups are labeled “Only Academic Support” and “Only Intellectual Mentoring.” The “Only Academic Support” student-athletes performed 33% worse than the average, with an 87.60% completion rate, a 72.87% success rate and a 2.53 average GPA. “Only Intellectual Mentoring” student-athletes performed 96% worse than the cohort average, earning a 74.77% completion rate, a 70.09% success rate and an average GPA of 2.14. The lowest performing group is the “No Support from Coaches” group, which averaged results 137% lower than the cohort average. The group earned a 91.06% completion rate, a 61.79% success rate and a 1.83 average term GPA.

Case Study Discussion

The results of the case study at Montgomery County Community College hold insights into the benefit of a four-pronged approach to supporting student-athletes from underserved populations. Though an N=2 group population is small, the “Comprehensive Program” group performed far above all other groups in the cohort. In comparing the results of this group to the next highest performing group, labeled “Without Intellectual Mentoring,” data shows an 8.2% increase in completion rate, a 15.57% increase in success rate and a boost in GPA of 1.03 grade points. This is the most significant jump in performance between all the groups in the study and may suggest that (1) an intellectual mentor is crucial to the success of a support program and (2) the four services working in concert are better than any individual or partial cluster of services.

It is also noteworthy to examine the unexpected result of the “Almost No Assistance” group outperforming the groups of student-athletes who engaged solely in

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academic support, intellectual mentoring or both. Taking into account the possibility of the development of athlete culture and jock identity among student-athletes, these results may point to a disadvantage in engaging a student-athlete in non-athletic support services without the participation of coaches and teammates. The four worst performing groups all lacked coach mentoring and social support, while the top three performing groups each included both. This may mean there is a decrease in jock identity as coaches become more involved in mentoring student-athletes in non-athletic issues, and as athlete peers become more involved in working together on non-athletic projects.

The conclusion could then be drawn that academic support and intellectual mentoring alone may only go so far in helping underserved student-athletes succeed. As suggested throughout the course of this paper, and amongst many experts in the field of servicing student-athletes, both athletic and non-athletic authority figures should be involved with the delivery of support services for student-athletes. Providing academic or intellectual mentoring services absent of the apparent support of coaches and teammates could contribute to the development of jock identity. Athlete culture and jock identity could be reduced among student-athletes from underserved communities if the services provided seem to be part of a comprehensive program of support, spanning across the athletic and academic realms. As Table 1. suggests, the more silo'd the academic support is from the athletic support, the more likely it is for jock identity to develop.

The four-pronged approach to supporting student-athletes from underserved populations seems to be supported in the initial data collected from Montgomery County Community College. Student-athletes in the cohort performed better with multiple

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sources of support, and performed best when engaged in all four services: coach mentoring, social support, academic support and intellectual mentoring. The data suggests further, that these four services acting in concert will decrease the athletics-academics gap, making it easier for student-athletes from underserved populations to find their way out of jock identity. The next step in the study will be to develop a comprehensive four-pronged support program for student-athletes at Montgomery County Community College and implement it during the 2014-2015 academic year.

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APPENDIX A

Montgomery County Community College - Blue Bell, Pa.
2012-13 Academic Year Underserved Student-Athletes Report

"Underserved" was determined by the student-athlete falling into any one of the following classifications:

Race:	Non-White	Minority Status
Ethnicity:	Hispanic	Minority Status
Financial Aid Status:	Need-Based Grant	Socio-Economic Disadvantage
Developmental Courses:	1+ Developmental Level Course	Underprepared

130 of 215 student-athletes (60.5%) were determined to be classified as "underserved"

Comprehensive Program

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
A	1	0834832	16.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.67
A	1	0834832	17.50	16.00	0.00	0.00	16.00	16.00	3.77
	2		33.50	28.00	0.00	0.00	28.00	28.00	7.44
			16.75	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00	14.00	3.72

Without Intellectual Mentoring

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
B	1	0832667	73.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.75
B	1	0832667	42.25	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.58
B	1	0832661	35.50	15.00	4.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	3.15
B	1	0832135	34.25	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.33
B	1	0835332	33.25	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.84
B	1	0835661	30.25	16.00	4.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.50
B	1	0834867	29.50	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.33
B	1	0834867	22.75	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.67
B	1	0835332	22.75	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.89
B	1	0832135	18.75	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	1.83
B	1	0837564	28.25	13.00	0.00	3.00	13.00	10.00	2.33
B	1	0798598	38.00	12.00	3.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.78
B	1	0834524	28.50	16.00	0.00	0.00	16.00	16.00	4.00
B	1	0794457	17.00	9.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	3.00	1.17
B	1	0798598	16.00	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.00
B	1	0831115	15.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	2.67
B	1	0812979	20.00	12.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	3.00
B	1	0859626	28.50	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.72
B	1	0835194	27.25	18.00	6.00	6.00	12.00	6.00	1.50
B	1	0833434	21.50	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.67
B	1	0835251	17.50	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.11
B	1	0831088	15.00	18.00	0.00	0.00	18.00	18.00	2.00
B	1	0831424	35.50	11.00	0.00	3.00	11.00	8.00	2.09
B	1	0847432	34.50	12.00	3.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.67
B	1	0831424	29.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.25
B	1	0835154	17.25	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.85
B	1	0837033	16.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.58
B	1	0835154	15.25	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.00
B	1	0834075	15.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.69
B	1	0831437	31.25	15.00	3.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	1.92

B	1	0848955	40.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.00
B	1	0848955	39.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.25
	32		887.50	389.00	32.00	30.00	357.00	327.00	86.11
			27.73	12.16	1.00	0.94	11.16	10.22	2.69

No Support from Coaches

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
C	1	0837574	81.75	9.00	0.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	1.78
C	1	0837574	63.25	12.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	0.00	0.00
C	1	0839868	62.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.42
C	1	0837166	54.00	12.00	3.00	4.00	9.00	5.00	2.00
C	1	0837166	46.25	14.00	4.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	3.27
C	1	0872731	46.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	16.00	16.00	2.88
C	1	0839868	43.00	15.00	0.00	6.00	15.00	9.00	1.93
C	1	0825836	41.25	12.00	7.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	2.33
C	1	0825836	38.50	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.92
C	1	0872731	37.50	12.00	3.00	4.00	9.00	5.00	1.56
C	1	0875830	18.50	12.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	0.00	0.17
C	1	0844712	41.50	12.00	0.00	4.00	12.00	8.00	1.86
C	1	0842414	36.50	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	1.75
C	1	0843153	25.75	9.00	0.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	0.67
C	1	0842414	16.50	13.00	0.00	3.00	13.00	10.00	1.92
	15		652.25	184.00	17.00	54.00	167.00	113.00	27.44
			43.48	12.27	1.13	3.60	11.13	7.53	1.83

Coaches Working Alone

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
D	1	0835458	10.50	8.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	8.00	2.37
D	1	0835458	2.50	9.00	6.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
D	1	0878500	13.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	3.22
D	1	0878500	1.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	2.00
D	1	0795413	0.00	13.00	3.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	2.00
D	1	0795413	0.00	12.00	7.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	3.33
D	1	0827564	0.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	11.00	11.00	3.55
D	1	0831488	0.00	9.00	3.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
D	1	0831488	0.00	9.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	0.00	0.33
D	1	0793966	10.75	7.00	2.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	2.00
D	1	0806447	8.50	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
D	1	0838017	8.00	13.00	5.00	0.00	8.00	8.00	2.88
D	1	0858017	5.00	12.00	3.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.22
D	1	0834524	3.50	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00	14.00	3.84
D	1	0832065	1.50	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.25
D	1	0832065	1.50	15.00	0.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	2.86
D	1	0819573	1.00	15.00	0.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	2.80
D	1	0806447	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
D	1	0793966	0.00	9.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	0.00	0.00
D	1	0831115	0.00	15.00	0.00	3.00	15.00	12.00	2.13
D	1	0809944	13.75	13.00	3.00	1.00	10.00	9.00	3.70
D	1	0833736	12.50	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00	14.00	3.72
D	1	0847177	10.50	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.67

D	1	0833745	10.50	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00	14.00	3.69
D	1	0836936	8.75	12.00	0.00	9.00	12.00	3.00	0.75
D	1	0836567	6.50	13.00	0.00	7.00	13.00	6.00	1.69
D	1	0812973	0.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	2.50
D	1	0847177	0.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	4.00
D	1	0830944	0.00	9.00	0.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	1.89
D	1	0836507	0.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	1.92
D	1	0831063	7.00	11.00	3.00	0.00	8.00	8.00	2.79
D	1	0835134	2.25	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.84
D	1	0870971	2.00	13.00	0.00	4.00	13.00	9.00	2.69
D	1	0870971	2.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	3.20
D	1	0839626	0.25	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.41
D	1	0855444	0.00	12.00	3.00	9.00	9.00	0.00	0.00
D	1	0833251	0.00	15.00	0.00	0.00	15.00	15.00	3.22
D	1	0837033	10.00	16.00	0.00	0.00	16.00	16.00	2.50
D	1	0834075	1.50	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	3.44
D	1	0847432	0.00	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.67
D	1	0828011	6.00	12.00	0.00	6.00	12.00	6.00	1.42
D	1	0828011	4.00	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.25
D	1	0831437	7.25	18.00	6.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.00
D	1	0833237	5.50	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	1.50
D	1	0833237	2.50	15.00	0.00	3.00	15.00	12.00	2.13
D	1	0712325	0.50	6.00	0.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	2.00
D	1	0712325	0.50	13.00	0.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.98
D	1	0736413	8.50	12.00	7.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	3.33
D	1	0736413	0.00	13.00	3.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	2.00
D	1	0834322	8.50	13.00	4.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	3.11
	50		197.50	557.00	59.00	82.00	498.00	416.00	117.79
			3.95	11.14	1.18	1.64	9.96	8.32	2.36

Only Academic Support

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
E	1	0875333	44.75	15.00	0.00	4.00	15.00	11.00	2.16
E	1	0900021	37.50	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.42
E	1	0875333	34.00	17.00	4.00	0.00	13.00	13.00	2.98
E	1	0837185	32.00	15.00	3.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.67
E	1	0870930	28.00	9.00	0.00	6.00	9.00	3.00	1.33
E	1	0833511	20.50	12.00	0.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	2.42
E	1	0837185	16.00	15.00	3.00	3.00	12.00	9.00	1.83
E	1	0836381	14.25	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.59
E	1	0875600	17.00	6.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	3.22
E	1	0845433	15.50	16.00	4.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.67
	10		259.50	129.00	16.00	19.00	113.00	94.00	25.27
			25.95	12.90	1.60	1.90	11.30	9.40	2.53

Only Intellectual Mentoring

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
F	1	0855367	6.00	12.00	3.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.22
F	1	0839330	0.50	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.78
F	1	0839330	0.00	9.00	4.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	2.73

F	1	0833153	0.00	12.00	9.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
F	1	0834712	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	2.70
F	1	0835367	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	2.42
	6		6.50	64.00	16.00	3.00	48.00	45.00	12.85
			1.08	10.67	2.67	0.50	8.00	7.50	2.14

Almost No Assistance

		Student ID	Aca. Hours	Credits	Withdraws	D/F's	Completed	Successful	Term GPA
G	1	0858831	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	4.00
G	1	0870980	0.00	12.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
G	1	0833511	0.00	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00	14.00	2.36
G	1	0900021	0.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
G	1	0874707	2.00	12.00	3.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	2.00
G	1	0878600	1.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	2.00
G	1	0714545	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.84
G	1	0714545	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.67
G	1	0860796	0.00	15.00	0.00	3.00	15.00	12.00	2.27
G	1	0860796	0.00	14.00	0.00	12.00	14.00	2.00	0.79
G	1	0874707	0.00	9.00	0.00	0.00	9.00	9.00	2.78
G	1	0879651	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
G	1	0879651	0.00	12.00	0.00	6.00	12.00	6.00	1.50
G	1	0833926	0.00	6.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	2.33
G	1	0845483	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	12.00	12.00	3.03
	15		3.00	159.00	15.00	30.00	144.00	114.00	33.55
			0.20	10.60	1.00	2.00	9.60	7.60	2.24

Totals	130
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2039.75	1510	155	218	1355	1137	310.443496
15.69	11.62	1.19	1.68	10.42	8.75	2.39