



## Examining the Support of Modern Athletic Reform Proposals Developed by the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics in Response to Higher Education Athletic Reform: A Case Study

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This study was conducted to determine the success for the diffusion of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) white paper Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics. The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) and personal interviews were utilized to collect data and purposeful sampling was used to identify one NCAA Division I university in the state of Texas. Athletic personnel and faculty senate members were asked to complete the SoCQ and participate in an interview for the study. Findings provide evidence that the participants share common concerns in relation to the adoption of the COIA white paper such as creating a balanced approach to academics and athletics, increasing campus pride, and academic integrity. Participants also felt that meaningful collaboration among faculty and staff members can prove beneficial to helping individuals take ownership in the adoption process.

*Keywords:* athletic reform, case study, faculty senate, athletic personnel

Intercollegiate athletics have undergone many changes over the past century. These changes have occurred as a result of reform movements in education and intercollegiate athletic programs. Societal changes occurring during this time period were another factor that contributed to these changes. Maintaining academic integrity, the proper alignment of academic mission statements, the “athletics arms race,” and the increasing concern regarding the commercialization of high profile intercollegiate athletics remains a challenge for many intercollegiate athletic programs.

### Literature Review

#### Role of Athletics in Education

For over a century in the United States alone, athletics have forged an unparalleled path into the higher educational systems we have today. There are many

explanations supporting the integration of athletics into the American higher education system. Supporters claim that “college sports are significant in defining the essence of the American college and university” (Toma, 1999, p. 82). According to Miller (2003),

There are basically three main reasons for the inclusion of athletics into the educational setting. First of all, sports aid to the overall development of young people. Secondly, sports contribute to increased academic performance and upward occupational/social-mobility. Lastly, athletic programs can help increase a school’s overall student enrollment and revenue. (p. 33)

Participation in intercollegiate athletics has long claimed to help students achieve a well-rounded education.

Athletes can acquire many beneficial skills through their participation in sports that can be used off the playing field as well. Miller (2003) suggests that “Higher education is financed publicly because it is thought to have a positive externality” (p. 34). So, the question becomes: How have sports enabled young adults to contribute to a more productive society? Duderstadt explains that “In theory at least, college sports have provided an opportunity for teaching people character, motivation, endurance, loyalty, and the attainment of one’s personal best—all great qualities of great values to citizens” (p. 70). Participation in athletics also requires a delicate balancing act between being able to prioritize one’s athletic, academic, personal, and social life. In order to be successful in the classroom and on the playing field, college athletes must be able to properly balance classes, games, practice, travel, and devoting a sufficient amount of time to study for each class.

As far as intercollegiate athletics and enrollment are concerned, statistics have shown that college athletic programs can help increase a school’s overall student-body enrollment. Over the past century, many have believed that fielding a nationally-competitive athletic program is favorable to an institution’s enrollment and general well-being. With the enormous amount of exposure many of today’s high profile athletic programs are receiving from competing in bowl games and post-season tourneys, it is not surprising that these schools are experiencing an increase in enrollment. For example, “the University of South Carolina had a 23% increment in its pool of applicants in 1985; a year following its most wins in football. Wake Forest had a 14% increase in applicants in 1995 credited largely to the success of its basketball and football teams (Folkenflik, 1995). The type of national exposure that these elite athletic programs receive through media, ticket, and merchandise sales opens up the door to a diverse population of potential students who may not have been familiar with the school, but identify with the particular sports program. Even the academically prestigious Northwestern University experienced an increase in applicants after its football team went to the Rose Bowl in 1996 (Selingo, 1997). Furthermore, the enrollment statistics above suggest that athletic programs can play a significant role in the collegiate atmosphere.

Supporters claim that intercollegiate sports play a vital role in defining the American colleges and universities. Additionally, supporters emphasize benefits associated with athletic programs, such as financial donations (Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994; Rhoads & Gerking, 2000), public perceptions of graduates (Lovaglia & Lucas, 2005), and local community service and goodwill (Toma, 1999). However, balancing such positive claims is not an easy task, as many athletic departments are condemned for bringing down the university’s core academic mission, engaging in excessive commercially-

driven behavior, and permitting unethical behavior (Bok, 2003; Shulman & Bowen, 2001).

### **Current Issues & Challenges in Intercollegiate Sports**

Maintaining academic integrity, the proper alignment of academic mission statements, and the increasing concern regarding the commercialization of high profile intercollegiate athletics has been a challenge for many intercollegiate athletic programs. As far as commercialism is concerned, “big time college sports today more closely resemble the commercialized model appropriate to professional sports than they do the academic model” (Knight Foundation, 2001, p. 9).

Several polls over the past twenty years have shown that public perception of intercollegiate athletics has been depicted in an unfavorable light. According to the Knight Foundation Commission (1991), three out of four Americans believed television dollars, not administrators, controlled college sports, while eight out of ten Americans believed intercollegiate sports are “out of control” and athletic programs are corrupted by big money. Additionally, the poll found that Americans felt that many cases of serious rules violations undermine the traditional role of universities as places where young people learn ethics and integrity (Knight Foundation Commission, 1991). In 2006, another poll was published by the Knight Commission that found 74% of Americans believed that a conflict exists between the commercialization of college athletics and academic values. The same poll further noted that many Americans believed that commercial interests often prevail over academic values and traditions. The results of these polls suggest that further examination of the reform efforts of intercollegiate athletics is needed.

Finding innovative ways in which to fund intercollegiate athletics programs has remains a challenge for many institutions. Aside from private donors and alumni, universities have used a combination of sources to help fund and maintain their athletic programs, such as: club and suite sales, concessions, corporate sponsorships, facility naming rights agreements, facility rental fees, game guarantees and ticket sales. However, it has been reported by Sperber (2000), that the majority of American universities subsidize their athletic programs out of the general funds, thus funneling money that could be used for educational pursuits into intercollegiate athletics. This claim can be supported as annual budgets for athletic department expenses increase by approximately ten percent each year (Hall & Mahoney, 1997). Zimbalist (1999) asserts that there is little, if any relationship between the success of a school’s athletic program and contributions to the general fund. Additionally, others argue that the revenues raised from athletic booster organizations are at the expense of contributions to the university’s academic fund (Shulman & Bowen, 2000). University student fees have also been a key source to help subsidize many institutions. Gillum, Upton, and

Berkowitz (2010) found that more than \$800 million in student fees and university subsidies are being used to support athletic programs at the nation's top sports colleges, including hundreds of millions in the richest conferences.

Ensuring the proper alignment of academic mission statements with intercollegiate athletics is a concern for many universities across the country. Many cite the educational mission of the university as a contradiction to intercollegiate athletics, referred to as the "mission drift" (Shulman & Bowen, 2001, p. 278). Universities have lowered academic standards in order to admit some student-athletes who would not normally be accepted. To help ensure athletic success, specific numbers of places are commonly being set aside for high profile recruited athletes, and admissions directors are often lowering academic standards to fill them (Fiske, 2001). A recent study involving the University of Oregon has further found a relationship between declining grades and success on the field (Lindo, Swensen, & Waddell, 2011).

Modern intercollegiate athletic programs have become a major commercial endeavor in American society and have helped to contribute to higher education through aiding in the overall development of students, allowing for increased visibility/marketability, resource acquisition in the form of capital, and by helping to increase a school's overall student enrollment. Intercollegiate athletics have further developed as the most significant commercially driven auxiliary enterprise at many of today's larger universities. However, as today's colleges and universities continue to receive less state and federal financial backing, the place of athletic programs in higher education is being examined.

Athletic reform has been a constant in intercollegiate athletics for more than 100 years. Within the last twenty years there has been a number of reform initiatives aimed at returning academic values to the realm of intercollegiate athletics. Recent proposals have called on faculty to become more involved in intercollegiate athletic reform and to spearhead policy formulation both on their campuses and at a national level (Bernard, 2003; Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2004; Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2005; Splitt, 2003).

Established in 2002, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) was formed as an independent grassroots organization seeking to provide a faculty voice in the future of college sports. The COIA is currently comprised of an alliance of 57 Division I-A university faculty senates whose chief aim is to promote comprehensive reform of intercollegiate sports. The COIA has developed several policy papers and reports addressing comprehensive intercollegiate athletic reform.

In 2007, the COIA issued its most recent white paper titled *Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics*.

The white paper identified some of the "current major challenges facing intercollegiate athletics and offers a set of proposals that are meant to enable college sports to be integrated into the overall academic mission and remain a positive force on our campuses" (COIA, 2007, para.1). The white paper also provided 28 proposals which cover four primary areas of concern: academic integrity and quality, student-athlete welfare, campus governance of intercollegiate athletics, and fiscal responsibility. According to the COIA,

The level of implementation - local, conference, and/or national—is identified for each proposal. This white paper is intended to stimulate dialog at these various levels with the ultimate goal of having these proposals accepted as standard working policies and practices. (2007, para. 3)

Addressing the issue of comprehensive athletic reform is not an easy task and requires the attention of all the stakeholders involved (coaches, athletic directors, faculty athletic representatives, faculty members, university presidents, and governing bodies). Thus, the COIA has been making a concerted effort to work with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and a number of constituents at the higher education level in order to help develop a plan of action for the coming decade (COIA, 2007).

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this case study was to determine the success for the diffusion of the COIA's *Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics* white paper (2007) at an NCAA Division I member institution in the state of Texas. The study investigated how NCAA Division I university administrators and athletic personnel manage the implementation of the many proposals encompassed in the white paper at the selected university.

Specific purposes included the following:

1. Determine whether or not the institution had a structure in place for facilitating the adoption of modern athletic reform proposals developed by the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA).
2. Determine whether or not the athletic and academic mission statements were aligned.
3. Determine whether or not the university had initiatives promoting academic integrity in intercollegiate sports.
4. Determine whether or not the concerns of athletic personnel differed from those of university faculty senate members regarding the adoption of athletic reform proposals developed by COIA.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to focus the study on its purpose related to athletic reform and academic integrity:

1. How is the institution conforming to contemporary athletic reform white papers and reports developed by the COIA?
2. How are institutional leaders aligning athletic rules of integrity with academic mission statements?
3. What initiatives promote academic integrity in intercollegiate sports?
4. What are the perceptions of athletic personnel and faculty senate members in regards to the adoption of athletic reform proposals developed by COIA?

The first research question was addressed via semi-structured interviews with members of the faculty senate and athletic personnel to determine how the institution is conforming to athletic reform. The second and third research questions were addressed via document analysis to determine if the athletic rules of integrity and academic mission statements align. And the fourth research question was addressed via the CBAM instrument in combination with semi-structured interviews to determine where athletic personnel and members of the faculty senate are in their intensity of concern regarding athletic reform and academic integrity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In response to over a decade of highly visible scandals in intercollegiate sports, the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics was established by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in 1989. In the early 1990s, the Knight Commission focused much of its attention on involving university presidents in athletic affairs; however, recent proposals have called on faculty to become more involved in reform and to spearhead policy formulation both on their campuses and at a national level (Bernard, 2003; Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2004; Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2005; Splitt, 2003). However, according to Lawrence, Hendricks, and Ott (2007), "Little systematic information has been collected nationally that can inform efforts to enlist faculty assistance" (p. 8).

Faculty involvement in the realm of intercollegiate athletics has been minimal for many reasons. Frey (1994) acknowledged that there are various factors inhibiting faculty from being involved in the governance of intercollegiate athletics. Some of these reasons include the following: faculty members are often uncomfortable with the nonacademic nature of athletics; there are few rewards for faculty who get involved in the governance of college athletics; and there is a risk of losing status among their peers and colleagues. Lawrence et al. (2007) explained that "the most commonly cited impediment to becoming involved is the high time

commitment that faculty perceive is required, and some also worry that they do not have the necessary competencies and skills" (p. 8).

Additionally, Frey (1994) found that university presidents often tolerate deviant behavior, therefore, placing faculty in a difficult position. By understanding the various reasons, universities may be able to help bridge the gap in communication between faculty and intercollegiate athletics. Lawrence et al. (2007) found the following:

Faculty members believe intercollegiate athletics is an auxiliary enterprise and that faculty oversight is weak. While most think that administrators on their campus consult with faculty governance groups about academic matters (54%), the largest portion of respondents also believe it is not common practice for administrators to consult faculty governance groups on intercollegiate athletics decisions (48%). They are inclined to believe that faculty governance roles in this domain are ill defined and tend to be dissatisfied with the nature and impact of their involvement. (p. 80)

The findings from Lawrence et al. (2007) further suggested that faculty may feel disconnected from intercollegiate athletic institutional decision-making. The study also found that "faculty members believe external groups that influence campus decisions about intercollegiate athletics have minimal regard for their universities' academic missions" (Lawrence et al., 2007, p. 81).

The cultural divide between academics and athletics can make achieving meaningful reform a complex task. According to the Roundtable on Intercollegiate Athletics and Higher Education (2006):

Too few academic leaders understand college sports, and athletic leaders commonly do not appreciate academe. Both sides criticize the other without really knowing the contexts in which the other operates, and neither recognizes that trends and issues in both academe and athletics are often more alike than they are different. (p. 2)

Encouraging collaboration between academic and athletic leaders is a key component to achieving meaningful adoption of the COIA proposals.

Over the past century, numerous athletic reform white papers and reports were developed to address concerns about commercialization, professionalization, and academic integrity in collegiate sports; however, there has been a great deal of resistance to the adoption of these reform efforts at many institutions. As far as commercialism is concerned, "college athletics has been transformed into a multi-billion dollar entertainment industry that has compromised the academic mission of

the university” (Shapiro, 2000, para. 3). Conforming to modern athletic reform proposals while also finding a balance between athletics and academics has been an ongoing challenge for today’s institutions of higher education. There is a current need to examine the level of adoption of modern athletic reform initiatives at institutions of higher education in order to help bring about lasting structural and cultural changes.

According to the Knight Foundation (2001), big time college sports today more closely resemble the commercialized model appropriate to professional sports than they do the academic model (p. 9). Competition at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I level has been fierce in order to attract sponsors, donors, and contracts. In 2010, the NCAA announced a new 14-year television deal with CBS Sports and Turner Broadcasting to present the Division I Men’s Basketball Championship for more than \$10.8 billion. Tucci (2004) explained that “with this comes television’s control of game times and dates along with game interruptions due to commercials” (p. 16). Competitions for national exposure also lead colleges and universities to fight for television time and money. The Knight Foundation (2001) stated that “the schools more in demand by network schedule makers—get richer; the poor get deeper in debt” (p. 20).

There has also been competition among institutions to attract students, faculty, and coaches, which has forced colleges and universities to become entrepreneurial in the academic programs and student amenities they offer. This in turn has led to significant increases in coach’s salaries and facilities. In 2007, a study by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics found that “three in four faculty members say salaries paid to their schools’ head football and basketball coaches are excessive. The majority of faculty members also believed athletics financial needs get higher priority than academic needs” (p. 6).

There are many reasons for the inclusion of athletics in higher education. Institutions of higher learning are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to attract students in today’s large educational marketplace. Smart and Wolf (2000) recognized that “colleges and universities are finding themselves competing more aggressively for students and faculty and for the increasingly scarce monetary resources needed to provide a superior educational experience” (p. 136). This competitive atmosphere has in turn taken its toll on intercollegiate athletics.

That is, athletics can positively influence a university’s climate, culture, and reputation and can contribute to the loyalty of important constituencies (e.g., students, alumni, and legislators). Such resources (culture, reputation, loyalty) are intangible and,

therefore, are difficult to imitate and not easily traded among institutions. (Smart & Wolfe, 2000, p. 137)

Intercollegiate athletics in the United States have become an increasingly expensive enterprise at many of today’s institutions of higher education. The term “arms race” is generally used to describe any competition where there is no absolute goal, only the relative goal of staying ahead of the competition. In the realm of collegiate athletics, maintaining a competitive advantage has been an ongoing battle, which has created an “athletics arms race” across the nation. Institutions across the country are striving for ways in which to build upon the success of their athletic programs and maintaining an edge on their competition. The intense pressure to recruit high caliber student-athletes and attract well-connected donors has escalated the ongoing “athletics arms race.” With the escalating cost of coach’s salaries and an increasing need to divert more financial resources to keep athletic programs competitive, universities have been driving up costs to maintain a competitive advantage on the national stage. The “athletics arms race” is not limited to coach’s salaries but includes everything from upgrading athletic facilities to fringe benefits offered to coaches and staff. Athletic programs that have had success on the national stage have facilitated the acquisition of more tangible resources (i.e., human resources and financial resources). This in turn has allowed successful athletic programs to create a competitive advantage.

Bridging the gap between academics and athletics has been one of the many concerns of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). Gaining knowledge and an understanding of the many factors inhibiting the adoption of athletic reform proposals and reports at the higher education level are essential if institutions expect to conform to contemporary athletic reform models. By understanding the concerns of the stakeholders (head coaches, athletic directors, faculty athletic representatives, faculty senate members, and students) involved in the adoption process, institutions will be able to help identify barriers to change and incorporate feasible solutions to current athletic reform proposals and reports. Thus, it is important for all of the stakeholders (head coaches, athletic directors, faculty athletic representatives, faculty senate members, and students) at each institution to be able to work collectively to help bring about meaningful change.

#### **Method**

The purpose of this case study was to identify concerns of athletic personnel and faculty senate members in relation to the diffusion of the COIA’s white paper *Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics*. Purposeful sampling was used to select one NCAA Division I school in the state of Texas. By utilizing purposeful sampling, the researcher was able to target key

informants who had direct involvement with the diffusion of the paper at the school. The key informants in this study included: four head coaches (non-revenue producing sports), the athletic director, the faculty athletic representative, and three members of the faculty senate. The main objective of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of concern.

The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) and interviews were used by the researcher to collect the data. The SoCQ is one of three diagnostic tools of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model or CBAM, a framework for measuring implementation and for facilitating change in schools (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006). For the purposes of this study, the innovation is the white paper developed by the COIA in 2007 titled *Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics*. The SoCQ allows researchers to assess concerns of individuals about innovations that are introduced in an educational setting. George et al. (2006) noted, "Implementation researchers may also use the CBAM tools to build knowledge about how teachers make sense of reform policies and resulting innovations" (p. viii).

Additionally, the questionnaire plays an important role in helping to understand and address the concerns of adopters in order to assess the extent to which implementation has occurred and to know how to effectively guide adopters through the change process. The SoCQ identifies seven specific stages of concern using a 35-item questionnaire with strong reliability estimates and internal consistency (Hall & Hord, 2001). The second instrument used for the study was an interview protocol consisting of 11 open-ended questions developed by the researcher to obtain additional information from participants in the study in relation to faculty concerns, campus governance of intercollegiate athletics, and academic integrity at the institution. Additional data were also retrieved by the researcher for document analysis to include the NCAA Academic Progress Rates (APR), self-study reports, and the financial records from the athletic departments.

An audit trail, accessible only by the researcher, was developed in order to ensure confidentiality of the participants in the study to include the participant's name, school mailing address, email address, and a participant code assigned by the researcher. A copy of the SoCQ with the assigned participant code was mailed to the participants along with a letter of informed consent and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Interviews were conducted with individuals who agreed on the informed consent to provide additional information.

Returned SoCQs were electronically scored by calculating the raw scores for each of the seven stages, or percentiles, and then locating the percentile score for each stage in a table. Results of the SoCQ were used to determine the intensity of concern of all participants at

each Stage of Concern in regards to the white paper. These results were also used to make comparisons between the concerns of athletic personnel and faculty senate members at the University. Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher prepared a SoCQ profile based upon the results and gave the profile and interpretive summary to the participant at the start of the interview session. Additional questions were added to the interview protocol based upon the SoCQ results and the document analysis.

Interviews were conducted either by electronic mail or face-to-face depending upon the preference of the participant. The interview protocol (see Appendix) consisted of questions related to faculty/staff concerns, campus governance of intercollegiate athletics, and academic integrity at the institution. Interview data, SoCQ interpretations, and collected documents were analyzed via the constant comparative method (Bogden & Biklen, 1998) to compare data across categories, construct meaning, and to develop naturalistic generalizations allowing the researcher to isolate the most important aspects of the data. Categories were developed by the researcher based upon the patterns that emerged from the data.

### **Findings**

A completed Stage of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) was returned by nine members of the athletic personnel and faculty senate. Of those who returned completed questionnaires, six were from members of the athletic personnel and three were from members of the university faculty senate. Although, this study was distributed to head coaches of revenue and non-revenue producing sports, only head coaches of non-revenue producing sports programs chose to participate in the study.

The researcher scored each returned SoCQ and prepared an individual SoCQ profile of the peak stage scores. Peak stage scores were calculated for each Stage of Concern for the University. The calculations indicated the level of intensity of concern for each of the seven Stages of Concern. The seven stages of concern include stage 0 "Awareness," is when the individual is aware of the innovation, but is not concerned about it or does not understand how it will affect them. Stage 1 "Informational" is when the individual wants to know more about the innovation. Stage 2 "Personal" is when the individual wants to know how using the innovation will affect them personally and stage 3 "Management" is the stage where the individual has the perception that they spend all of their time managing the innovation. Stage 4 "Consequence" is when the individual spends less time managing the innovation and more time learning how the innovation affects others. Stage 5 "Collaboration" is when the individual can actually start to relate what they are doing to what others are doing with the innovation, and stage 6 "Refocusing" is when the individual begins to

refocus and come up with other ideas as to how the innovation can work better. The intensity of concern was highest at Stage 0 (99%), followed by two Stages of Concern similar in intensity of concern, Stage 1 (97%) and Stage 2 (96%). Additionally, first and second highest stage score interpretations were performed on the individual and group data. The highest Stage of Concern for most individuals of the total faculty senate/athletic personnel group at the University was Stage 0 at 84%, Stage 1 at 82%, or Stage 2 at 84%.

The highest Stage of Concern for the group of athletic personnel was at Stage 0 at 81% and Stage 2 at 83%. This indicated that the group of athletic personnel was presently not concerned about the innovation or was unclear as to what the innovation entails (Stage 0: Unconcerned). "Stage 2 (Personal) concerns deal with what Frances Fuller (1969) referred to as *self*-concerns. Respondents are most concerned about status, rewards, and what effects the innovation might have on them" (as cited in George et al., 2006, p. 33). Individuals recording a high score in this stage (Stage 2: Personal) also indicated ego-oriented questions and uncertainties about the innovation. Additionally, the majority of athletic personnel respondents scored a slightly higher Stage 2 score than the Stage 1 score (known as a "negative one-two split"). A "negative one-two split" is indicative of various degrees of uncertainty and potential resistance to an innovation. Respondents with this type of response are also typically more concerned with job security or personal position than the desire to learn more about the

innovation.

The highest Stage of Concern for the group of faculty senate members is Stage 0 at 92% and Stage 1 at 93%, indicating that the faculty senate respondents are presently not concerned about the innovation or they are still unclear as to what the innovation entails (Stage 0: Unconcerned). Stage 0 scores help "provide an indication of the degree of priority the respondent is placing on the innovation and the relative intensity of concern about the innovation" (George et al., 2006, p. 33). A high score in this stage indicated that the respondents are currently concerned with other initiatives, tasks, and activities other than the innovation (Stage 0: Unconcerned). Stage 1 scores focus on the structure and function of the innovation. A high score in this stage (Stage 1: Informational) indicated that the respondents would like to know more about the innovation. Figure one provides a snap-shot of the SoCQ result comparing athletic personnel and members of the faculty senate.

In order to progress to higher concerns earlier concerns must first be resolved. Timely provision of affective experiences and cognitive resources can help individuals progress to develop higher concerns. Analysis of the SoCQ indicated that the greatest concerns of the athletic personnel and faculty senate members at the University as a whole are in the area of "Self" (Stages 0, 1, 2). Separate analysis of the SoCQ for athletic personnel and faculty senate members indicated that only a few athletic personnel members are beginning to transition into a higher Stage of Concern.

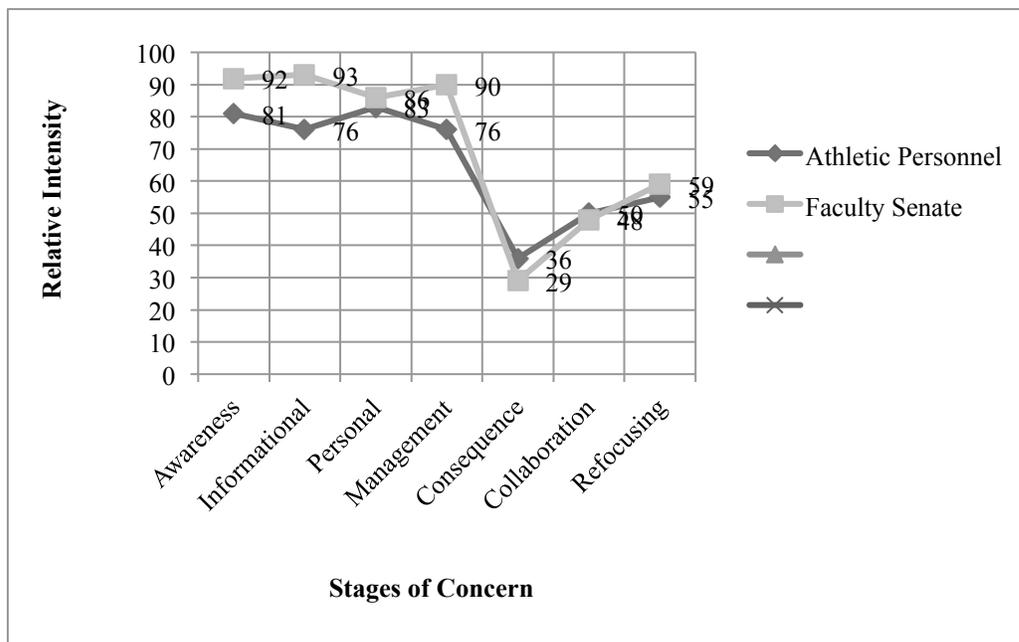


Figure 1. University Athletic Personnel and Faculty Senate Stages of Concern, fall 2008 through spring 2009.

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Document analysis (i.e., NCAA Academic Progress Rates [APR], self-study reports, and athletic department financial records) prior to the interview found that the University has been taking measures to improve upon its current intercollegiate athletics facilities. In almost ten years the University has constructed ten new athletic venues. The “athletics arms race” seems to be evident at the University as another large athletic facility is being built. A combination of sources will be used to help fund and maintain the new facility such as: club and suite sales, concessions, corporate sponsorships, facility naming rights agreements, facility rental fees, game guarantees, private donations, ticket sales, and student athletic fees. Additional funding for the new stadium was raised from private donors and alumni.

Prior to the interviews, the researcher also researched the University’s Academic Progress Rate (APR). The APR was established in 2005 by the NCAA as a means to help measure term-by-term academic achievement and retention of NCAA Division I teams and is separate from the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). According to the NCAA (2008), “each student-athlete earns one point for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible. A team’s total points divided by points possible is the team’s APR score. Programs that fall below the minimum APR score of 925 may face scholarship reductions and other penalties” (para. 1) A score of 1000 is a perfect team APR score. APR data helps to provide a real-time snap shot of athlete retention and advancement in a four-year period. Results from the latest (2007-2008) NCAA Division I APR public report shows improvements in many of the sports programs at the University. The majority of the sports programs posted multi-year rates at or above 955 in addition to having seven perfect single-year scores in recent years. During that same period, all but three athletic programs at the University showed improvements from the previous year.

Interviews were conducted members of the athletic personnel and members of the faculty senate at the University consisting of three head athletic coaches, one faculty athletic representative, and three members of the faculty senate. Of the seven participants, six chose to respond via electronic mail, while one elected to participate in a face-to-face interview. The researcher

used the same interview protocol questions for both athletic personnel and faculty senate participants. The following themes emerged from the athletic personnel and faculty senate member interviews: support, budgetary issues, common vision, external influences, and a commitment to excellence.

Athletic personnel concerns focused on budgetary issues related to expanding facilities and programs to compete at a high level, while faculty senate members did not express similar concerns. The “athletic arms race” is apparent at the University as athletic personnel are seeking to expand and upgrade athletic facilities to maintain a competitive athletic program that can keep pace with schools at the same level. Additionally, athletic personnel shared that administrative support was necessary to ensure everyone is working together to achieve a common vision to accomplish the objectives of the athletic mission statement.

Faculty senate concerns focused on budgetary issues aimed at reducing intercollegiate athletics spending and increasing fundraising efforts. Faculty senate members also wanted to see more transparency in athletic budgets. Other faculty senate concerns focused on external influences and the emphasis placed on winning at the University. Faculty senate members also felt that commercial interests may have the unintended consequence of separating athletics from academics. Additionally, faculty senate members shared that winning athletic programs tend to help promote the University as a whole; however, as the cost of maintaining these programs increases, it is unclear if the cost of winning is taking its toll.

Athletic personnel and faculty senate members shared common concerns in several areas such as a balanced approach, increasing campus pride, and academic integrity. Both groups felt that a balanced approach to academic and athletic affairs was essential in order to ensure the development of each student-athlete. Athletic personnel and faculty senate members also recognized that campus pride could be improved by gaining more support from the overall campus body and community. Both groups confirmed that the University has taken the initiative to promote academic integrity in intercollegiate athletics. Faculty senate members further added that each of the mission statements at the University reflects the institution’s commitment to academic and athletic success.

### **Conclusions & Recommendations**

Identifying the issues and assumptions apparent in today’s realm of college sports is essential in order to achieve meaningful reform. This study attempted to determine the success of the diffusion of the COIA’s *Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics* white paper at an NCAA Division I member institution in the state of Texas. The results of the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) discovered that the participants in

this study at the University are not progressing to levels of concern beyond those associated with the management of the innovation. Moving beyond the management stage (Level 3) of the SoCQ is essential in order to achieve full adoption of the innovation. Additionally, athletic personnel and faculty senate perceptions will not change unless they see the potential of the innovation in helping to maintain the proper alignment of educational goals with intercollegiate athletics. If athletic personnel and faculty senate members at the institution are to preserve academic integrity and the proper alignment of educational goals with intercollegiate athletics, they must be able to internalize academic values, embracing them even when inconvenient. Meaningful collaboration among faculty and staff members can also prove beneficial in helping individuals take ownership in the adoption process. Furthermore, achieving comprehensive athletic reform is a complex task and requires a concerted effort in order to bring about meaningful change.

Recommendations for further study include expanding this study to include various institutions of size and scope. Replication of this study would provide opportunities to determine if athletic personnel and faculty senate members at public universities possess the same concerns regarding athletic reform and academic integrity as athletic personnel and faculty senate members at private institutions. Additionally, due to the small number of participants in this case study, the researcher was unable to generalize the findings to other institutions; therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated using a broader number of faculty senate members, athletic personnel, and include students. Another recommendation is to include athletic personnel from both revenue and non-revenue producing sports programs. Despite the low number of participants, the researcher was able to provide some insight and clues into what may be happening at some institutions in regards to adopting and diffusing modern athletic reform proposals and reports.

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Appendix  
Interview Protocol

**Faculty/Staff Concerns**

1. When you think about the present status of intercollegiate athletics at your campus, what are your concerns?
2. What would it take to reduce your concerns regarding the current status of intercollegiate athletics at your institution?
3. How is your institution conforming to contemporary athletic reforms developed by the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA)?
4. Do you consider there is a need for athletic reform at your campus? Why or why not?
5. How has the economy (recession) affected intercollegiate athletics on your campus?

**Campus Governance of Intercollegiate Athletics**

6. Who at your institution is responsible for oversight and supervision of intercollegiate athletics at your institution?
7. Does your institution have a structure in place for the adoption of modern athletic reform proposals and reports?
8. How often do faculty governance bodies review data about enrollment patterns and athletes' grades and compare them to general enrollment and grades?
9. What level of input do faculty members have in the fiscal expenditures of campus intercollegiate athletics?
10. How consistently aligned are the Athletic Department's budgets, revenues and expenditures with the mission, goals and values of your institution?

**Academic Integrity**

9. What initiatives has your institution taken in order to promote academic integrity in intercollegiate sports at your institution?
10. Are institutional leaders aligning athletic rules of integrity to academic mission statements?
11. How often are the Academic Progress Rates (APR) and Graduation Success Rates (GSR) reviewed by campus faculty governance members at your institution?

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