Academic Mentoring and an Integrated Online Calendar: A Holistic Approach to Supporting Student-Athletes

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Factors of fit considered by student-athletes who are being recruited by colleges and universities often cause this group to arrive at their institution of higher education underprepared for the academic rigor expected of a student at their university (Winters & Gurney, 2012). This dissertation in practice explores the reasons why this is a common theme, the academic support structures in place to assist college student-athletes, and proposes a holistic academic support tool for academic support professionals to implement with their student-athletes. Women's basketball players from a Power Five university participated in this study that included integrating an online TeamWorks calendar to include academic assignments as well as additional daily activities required of the student-athlete. Academic mentoring meetings were used to provide structure and accountability for organization and time management. The TeamWorks calendar provides real time updates, has a platform available on the student-athlete's phone, and is accessible by all performance team members. Qualtrics surveys were distributed weekly to student-athletes and key members of the performance team for 10-weeks during the Fall semester to determine if the intervention was a worthwhile use of resources. The study concluded that 78% of student-athletes attended a weekly mentoring meeting, 90% added items to their TeamWorks calendar, 80% used the TeamWorks calendar to organize their day, and 83% of student-athletes would recommend using an integrated online calendar to their peers.

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Preface

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members for helping me through this process. Dr. Mary Margaret Kerr, Dr. Elizabeth Nagle, and Barbara Mowery, EdD, I sincerely appreciate all of your support and guidance throughout this journey.

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Last, but certainly not least, thank you to my family and friends. To my husband and children – thank you for keeping me grounded, cheering me on, and believing in my ability to manage our family and a full-time job while earning this degree. To my parents and sister – I could not have done this without your endless support, early morning phone calls, and belief in finishing one assignment so I could move on to the next.

1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction

The academic support structures that are mandated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) attempt to bridge the gap between factors of fit student-athletes balance when selecting an institution for their college education. Unfortunately, the systemic challenges in our K-12 educational system cause underprepared students to arrive on college campuses. The United States does not support a K-12 educational system where all students are afforded the same educational opportunities. Students who live in low-income areas, primarily Black and low-income students, arrive at institutions of higher education academically behind their peers who live in more affluent school districts. In intercollegiate athletics, this is mostly seen at Predominately White Institutions (PWI) among Black student-athletes in revenue-generating sports (Harper, 2018). Higher education institutions have an obligation to provide all student-athletes they admit to their institutions with an opportunity to earn a degree. However, revenue-generating sports, like football and basketball, have a disproportionate number of Black students relative to the overall student body who have a strong athlete identity; as a result, these student-athletes are not earning degrees at the same rate as their white teammates (Harper, 2018; Shropshire & Williams, 2017).

Perhaps because academic support units for athletes are relatively new operations on college campuses, no prescriptive system is in place that informs the process by which student-athletes integrate into the collegiate educational system. Understanding what strategies are the most effective in leading to meaningful degree completion is important. This dissertation in practice developed a prescriptive system to hone academic skills while stressing the importance of earning a college degree for student-athletes. As an academic support professional, my sphere of influence revolves around the student-athlete's academic experience once they arrive on our

campus. Critical to the future of the student-athlete academic model is finding ways to promote meaningful graduation success and reduction of stigmas associated with being a committed student.

Success in adopting this model among student-athletes begins the moment the student-athlete arrives on our campus. Academic support professionals can gather data prior to arrival that informs decisions to prescribe the type of academic coursework and support these students may need to make their academic experience manageable and meaningful. It is not enough to simply require student-athletes' use of the study center and sign up for tutors. Those student-athletes who have the highest need seldom advocate for themselves. Academic support units for student-athletes exist for this reason. Academic counselors foster academic development through programming. The will to provide support exists, yet the system is not specified.

My hypothesis was that if we create a model that supports and improves academic skills, then students will utilize the program and find value in the process. Tangible qualitative outcomes are difficult to predict. An improvement in GPA could have been an outcome, but there is no way to know what the student's GPA would have been without the program. Tangible positive outcome were student-athletes' compliance with the prescribed academic support program, improved confidence in academic ability and preparedness, and collaboration among other members of the student-athletes' performance support team (coaches, athletic trainers, strength and conditioning staff, sport dietician).

In an effort to bridge this gap between academic preparedness and achievement, I explored the problem that exists when student-athletes who excel at their sports arrive at their institutions of higher education academically underprepared. Once they arrive at the institution, they are pulled in multiple directions which escalates barriers in developing fundamental academic skills. Student-

athletes, even those who are invested in their academics, are being asked to make decisions to prioritize their athletic identity which stands in the way of academic demands. As an academic counselor who works with a women's basketball team, I see this reality play out in my daily work. In creating a holistic academic support environment, the support of the student-athletes' performance team is desirable. Developing a system that includes the performance team is paramount to the overall academic development of the student-athletes' educational experience. This dissertation in practice provided an avenue to collaborate with the student-athletes' performance team using an integrated online calendar while student-athletes are supported academically through a weekly mentoring program within our academic support unite.

The academic unit operates under the Office of the Provost. As pressures on student-athletes continue to grow, the affiliation with the Provost Offices remains important. The time commitment required of a student-athlete can be overwhelming. The NCAA sets a 20 hour per week limit on countable athletic-related activities. When you factor time spent in the athletic training room before and after practice, competition and travel to competition, the number of hours a student-athlete spends with their sport can easily escalate to twice the NCAA limit.

As academic counselors, we work with students to plan their weeks, providing each student-athlete with a weekly schedule to help manage their time and an academic plan for short- and long-term planning. These weekly planning meetings typically occur on Sunday or Monday. Understanding that some of our students arrive with lower high school GPAs and test scores than the average non-athlete, planning is critical to their overall success. We have found that being organized and prepared is a way that these students can find success and confidence in the classroom.

With this in mind, first-year students are required to use the study center. Hours are set in cooperation with the academic counselor who works with the support team and sport coaches. Most first year students are mandated between six and eight hours per week while study hours for upper class students are determined by previous term GPA and historic need.

Many of our student-athletes are able to get ahead or catch up with coursework while staying on campus over the summer for athletic reasons. This translates to an academic benefit. Additionally, athletic coaches are afforded the opportunity to bring first-year student-athletes to campus during the second six-week summer session to acclimate students to campus life. This is particularly beneficial for revenue generating and Fall sports teams. Revenue generating teams often have higher numbers of Black and low socio-economic student-athletes. These students traditionally have strong identities as athletes. For this group, the adjustment to college life in the summer is a benefit to their Fall semester success. We are able to educate these students in the complexities of higher education without the pressure of full practice sessions and competition. This intense learning experience builds rapport with student-athletes. One of the key factors to academic success is trust and respect between student-athlete and academic counselor.

The Academic Support Center operates three different tutoring programs – walk-in tutoring, individual tutoring appointments, and a writing center that employs graduate-level writing tutors. All tutors are students at the University and are required to attend an orientation and tutor training each year. While content tutoring and academic mentoring is typical of all academic centers, our writing center is unique. We staff the writing center during all hours of operation. Similar to the Writing Center on campus, these tutors assist with all levels of the writing process and, as master's and PhD students, carry an expertise in writing that is invaluable to our students. As an overarching goal, the Academic Support Center aims to create a welcoming atmosphere. I

would consider our approach more organic than systematic in nature. Support programs and resources are important; getting students to use them is paramount.

2.0 Chapter 2: Review of Supporting Knowledge

Universities invest millions of dollars in facilities, coaches and support staff, and marketing plans to attract fans to their stadiums and, hopefully, many students to their universities. These fans generate revenue, and the lucrative TV contracts that come along with the big-time sports often bring millions of dollars back to their universities (Clotfelter, 2011). When a coach recruits a potential student-athlete, they are drawn to the player's athletic talent first and then take a closer look at their personal character and academic aptitude. Ultimately, if a coach determines an athlete shows athletic potential to enhance their system, they may pursue recruitment of that athlete with little regard for their academic aptitude (Shropshire & Williams, 2017). While all collegiate student-athletes will be held to the same entry and progress toward degree requirements set forth by the NCAA, it is up to the university to decide if they are admissible (Olson, 2019).

When deciding to admit a student who does not meet the university's academic entry standards, universities are often caught between the student-athlete's athletic potential and academic preparedness. The following arguments are commonly seen as reasons why a potential student-athlete should be admitted to the institution: (a) the student-athlete's high school grade point average (GPA) and standardized test scores, (b) the compelling argument by those recruiting and close to the student-athlete that despite the GPA and test scores that the student is academically prepared, (c) the NCAA's initial eligibility criteria, and (d) the competitive disadvantage of sending the athlete to a competitor's school (Winters & Gurney, 2012). While most traditional college students make decisions that are based on the best academic "fit," student-athletes are looking at other factors of "fit" like the scholarship, overall competitiveness of the athletic

program, and recruitment process (Winters & Gurney, 2012). Meaningful academic experiences and the pursuit of a major that aligns with career goals become secondary considerations.

Those student-athletes who are most influenced by factors of "fit" outside of academics often participate in revenue-generating sports, mainly football and basketball (Jones, 2019). Their student-athlete experience will look vastly different from the experiences of student-athletes in non-revenue generating sports (Shropshire & Williams, 2017). Finding ways to convey value in academic *and* athletic achievement is important for the future of collegiate athletics. Solidifying academic support services for student-athletes is one way to bridge this gap and improve academic performance.

At its core, the history of the NCAA is built on an athletic foundation combining athletic and academic experiences for college students. Contradictory to the core mission of the universities who participate in collegiate athletics, considerations of including rules and regulations governing academic eligibility did not surface until the 1980s when academic misconduct was commonplace among member institutions. In 1991, the NCAA began to require that universities provide academic support and counseling for their student-athletes and, in 2003, the NCAA revised initial and continuing eligibility standards. The priorities and mission of the NCAA now focuses on improving the student-athlete experience, "opportunities to learn, complete and grow on and off the field" (NCAA, n.d.). Academics and graduation, fair and inclusive environments, and the well-being of student athletes both mentally and physically are the major concerns of the NCAA. The increased presence of academic support professionals who advocate for student-athletes and work to navigate the landscape of higher education has grown since 1991 (Meyer, 2005).

Currently, according to internal data provided by the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the average academic support staff in the ACC ranges from seven to 20 full-time staff members including positions such as director, senior academic counselor, academic counselor, learning specialist, information specialist, tutor coordinator, and career consultant. The amount of time students interact with their academic athletic advisors (AAA) should create a built-in structure which encourages academic success. However, commercialization of college sports creates an atmosphere that allows those involved to lose focus on the ultimate goal of receiving an education. Time management for student athletes involves more than just going to class, doing homework, and attending practice. The National College Players Association (NCPA) in 2019 points out that college athletes spend from 30-44 hours a week in their sport alone. The NCPA has recommended that every college "provide a realistic opportunity" for every student-athlete to graduate with a "quality education" in the degree and major of their choice along with non-athletic outside the classroom opportunities (NCPA, 2019).

The purpose of this literature review is to understand how the policies and history of the NCAA have shaped initial and continuing academic eligibility, which in turn has advanced academic support units for student-athletes into a profession. The results of this evolution combined with the overwhelming time demands placed on student-athletes have integrated academic support services into the daily schedule of NCAA Division I student-athletes. The themes highlighted in the following review include how the history of academic reform influences the current landscape of NCAA academic policies; how low income and Black students are negatively impacted by these policies; and how academic support centers must explore strategies to meet the needs of these student-athletes.

2.1 NCAA and Academics

Athletics have been woven into the fabric of the college student experience for over a century and play a role in the college decision-making process of high school seniors, both athlete and non-athlete (Clotfelter, 2011; Smith, 2010). At its core the NCAA is primarily an athletic organization, it is uniquely intertwined within university culture. The rich history of the NCAA has brought about academic reforms that continue to shape how the organization operates on each member institution's campus. The NCAA was founded in 1906 over concerns of injuries and deaths sustained by college students as a result of athletic leagues that were informally formed by students. As the competitiveness of the rivalries grew and the stakes of the games advanced, the organization evolved into what it is today: a major business in mainstream America. Universities rely on the exposure and commercialization that their athletic programs bring for student-body enrollment and revenue generation (Clotfelter, 2011; Smith, 2010).

As a bottom-up organization, the NCAA works to empower the membership to govern themselves. Universities are encouraged to regulate their own athletic programs and to advocate for the advancement of sport for their athletes, coaches, and teams. Member institutions, with guidance from the NCAA, are forced to bring about reform that levels the playing field, upholds the integrity of the league, and permits change as indicated by current and evolving situations. (Legaspi, 2016). As the organizing body for the member institutions, the NCAA functions to support the membership, manage programs that benefit student-athletes, and organize all championships (NCAA, n.d.).

The governance is far from perfect, exhibited by the scandals that have permeated the history of the NCAA ranging from paying athletes during the recruiting process, point shaving, and multiple instances of academic fraud (Clotfelter, 2011; Shropshire & Williams, 2017). The

bottom line is that the benefit of winning generates millions of dollars for the universities. As a result, coaches and administration feel pressured and stray from the standards set forth by the NCAA to put a winning product on the field. Student-athletes are caught in the middle of a system that provides benefits to all involved, but this comes at an academic cost. (Clotfelter, 2011).

2.2 Academic Reform

Historically, the NCAA has supported the academic and athletic pursuits of its student-athletes with the ultimate goal of graduating these students from their chosen universities. The interdependent relationship that exists between the student and the athlete is pushed and pulled by the demands of the sport and the academic demands of the student-athlete experience. This relationship drives the mission of the NCAA and has brought about major changes over the century-long history of the organization. The academic reforms implemented by the NCAA during its first century privileged white, affluent student-athletes. The majority of policymakers behind the reforms are white males, since they have made up the predominant NCAA leadership, currently and historically. However, student-athletes often do not fit these categories, complicating the implementation of these policies. The following is an overview of these reforms.

Petr and McArdle (2012) highlight four major academic reforms that have carried the NCAA to the modern day. From the early days of the NCAA until the 1980s, there was little, if any, research completed by the NCAA. Referred to as the "prehistory of the NCAA academic research," the research in this era was carried out on a limited basis by individual universities without the collaboration of the entire membership (Petr & McArdle, 2012, p. 28). After years of disregard for academic oversight, one academic policy instituted in 1965 required both incoming

and continuing students who participated in athletics to maintain a 1.60 GPA. This was the NCAA's first attempt at regulating the academic progress of its participants. The policy received criticism by the membership and was repealed seven years later in favor of a continuing eligibility standard of a 2.0 for students enrolled at the university (Crowley et al., 2006). These early standards laid the groundwork for the realization that initial and continuing academic eligibility standards are foundational to the NCAA.

The second period of academic reform occurred during the 1980s and was highlighted by the 1983 adoption of Proposition 48. Proposition 48 was the NCAA's first attempt at ensuring high school student-athletes were entering their institutions with needed academic prerequisite skills. Proposition 48 required high school students to complete 11 core courses while earning a minimum 2.0 grade point average. Additionally, students were required to achieve a combined minimum score of 700 on the SAT or 18 on the ACT exams. Division I athletes who met one of the two requirements were permitted athletics aid, but had to use their first year to gain eligibility by earning a 2.0 GPA in 24 academic credits. In doing so, these students lost one year of competition (Steinbreder, 1991).

This legislation was met with concern that using a predetermined bottom score in standardized testing discriminated against low income and minority students (Meyer, 2005). Proposition 48's inequities catalyzed the formation of research groups (Winters & Gurney, 2012). The Presidents' Commission established in 1984 convened an Academic Performance Study (APS) which surged the NCAA forward to the third era of academic reform and prompted the current drive for research in this field (Crowley et al., 2006).

The research concluded that high school grades more accurately predict academic success than standardized test scores, if looking at each in isolation. However, grades and test scores in

combination best predict academic success (Petr & McArdle, 2012). The gathering of this information predicated the development of the Division I sliding scale for academic eligibility. The NCAA put the sliding scale into effect in 2003, along with progress toward degree standards. Along with these academic policies emerged a second critical development in the recognition that student-athletes have unique needs over their non-athlete counterparts. In 1991, the NCAA required that all Division I institutions provide academic counseling and tutoring services for their student-athletes. These initiatives – acknowledging the inequities of first-year admissions standards, requiring students to complete courses that lead to a degree, and providing dedicated academic support – have improved the overall graduation success rate of student-athletes in recent years (Meyer, 2005).

The fourth era of academic reform continues today. Much of the research accumulated from the 1980s to the early 2000s focused on initial eligibility of student-athletes. While this research provided an important understanding of the academic preparedness of student-athletes when they arrive on campus, the NCAA has little influence over the impact on the achievement of student-athletes prior to their start of college. During this fourth era of reform the focus has shifted to the impact that can be made once students arrive on campus. This includes the impact that race, ethnicity, gender, and sport have on the experiences of each student-athlete. Specifically, this addresses the importance of meeting the needs of student-athletes when they arrive and taking an individual approach of progressing each student to graduation (Petr & McArdle, 2012). A consequence of this philosophy is the establishment of the Academic Progress Rate (APR).

2.3 Academic Progress Rate (APR)

The APR is a fundamental metric for holding individual athletic teams and athletic departments accountable for each student's academic success. The concept of APR awards two points per student-athlete receiving athletic aid per semester, one point for retention, and one point for eligibility. The single-year APR and the four-year average determine a team's post-season eligibility (NCAA, n.d) . This metric has been valuable in the investment of academic support programs for student-athletes. The APR puts an emphasis on the team's academic success by publicly announcing scores released each spring for the previous year.

In 2020, the NCAA began to use the APR data along with the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) and the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) to distribute a portion of the revenue from the NCAA's basketball contract with CBS/Turner. This allotment will range from $50,000 per university who achieves "the academic unit" in 2020 to close to $500,000 by 2025 (Hosick, 2016). For athletic directors, the bragging rights and financial gains that come along with achieving "the academic unit" can incentivize investment in academics, reminding coaches of the importance of retaining the athletes they recruit, recruiting academically prepared student-athletes, and increasing the resources for the athletic academic advisors who support these student-athletes (Shukie, 2018).

2.4 Considerations for Advising Black Student-Athletes

Black student-athletes at a predominately White institution (PWI) deal with the stereotype that if they are Black, they are most likely an athlete (Harper, 2018). When the average percentage

of Black students enrolled at a Power Five university is 2.4% and the average number of Black students on football and men's basketball teams tops 50% (and can be up to 78%), these assumptions become easy to draw (Harper, 2018). This represents a key factor in how Black student-athletes view themselves within the university setting. At these PWIs, there is no escaping the athlete identity and this identity is often blamed for the lack of academic commitment of student-athletes (Harper, 2018). This embedded bias exists in universities across the country.

In some Black communities, sports have been viewed as a way out of poverty and a symbol of status. Unrealistically, many athletes, Black and White, aspire to become professional athletes despite the reality that only one in 10,000 high school athletes will achieve this goal (Hodge et al., 2008). More realistically, using athletic talent to earn an undergraduate degree is a more achievable milestone. Emphasizing academic achievement and using athletic ability to exploit the university's capacity to provide a student with a free or lower cost education and academic resources to support the education shifts the focus to both an academic and athletic goal (Shropshire & Williams, 2017). Black male athletes who want to be seen as more than "jocks" and are able to balance academics and athletics and achieve scholar-athlete status are referred to as "Scholar-Ballers" (Fuller et al., 2020). Scholar Ballers pursue academics and athletics (Fuller et al., 2020).

While groups of professionals encourage student-athletes to take advantage of their academic opportunities, the over commercialization of football and basketball, as well as factors such as systemic racism and classism make following through on these commitments difficult (Gayles et al., 2015). Encouraging students to become Scholar-Ballers is difficult given the historical view of role engulfment and over identification as an athlete when they arrive on campus (Adler & Adler, 1991). Many of these student-athletes have been schooled in low- income communities, have parents who did not attend or complete college, lack role models who have

college degrees, and reside in communities where the importance of the athlete identity is inflated, which exacerbates the strong athlete identification (Gayles et al., 2015). When students arrive at a college campus where they are easily recognizable and often academically in the bottom of their first-year cohort, they retreat to their identity as an athlete by taking the time they should be investing in academics and refocusing that energy on their sport.

In the first year of their collegiate experience, they need to demonstrate their investment in the athletic program to coaches and build capital with the team. Spending extra time navigating the complicated landscape of higher education is something that is easy to re-prioritize. (Shropshire & Williams, 2017). Early in the process, athletic success overshadows the need for eligibility and graduation. Supporting these student-athletes is a group of advisors whose job it is to ensure student-athletes meet progress-toward-degree eligibility requirements, create an environment which mitigates the commitment to athletes over academics, and solidify the Scholar-Baller mentality (Meyer, 2005).

2.5 Academic Clustering

A less desirable way to improve eligibility and graduation rates is pushing students to specific, less rigorous majors. Academic clustering is a way that schools are advancing high-risk, special admit students toward degrees. Academic clustering "occurs when 25 percent or more of the members of one team share a single academic major" (Goodson et al., 2015, p. 3). Auburn University has been accused of clustering football players, specifically Black student-athletes, in the Public Administration major. In Fall 2014, 37% of Auburn's Black male student-athletes

majored in Public Administration compared to two of 581 non-student athlete Black male students who had the same major. (Stripling, 2018).

Certain majors at any university are less rigorous and time consuming than others. Fountain and Finley (2009) analyzed the academic majors of football players at Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) schools and found that while academic clustering was apparent among both White and Black players, it was more prevalent among Black students. At six ACC schools, over 75% of the minority players were declared in two majors. In a few instances, Sports Management was a clustered major which is reasonable considering athletes would have an affinity for these careers. Most research contends that strong ties to athletic identity prevent academic development, which pushes this group of students into less-rigorous majors (Fountain & Finley, 2009).

A study conducted by Schneider et al. (2010), confers that academic clustering is prominent among college football programs. They argue that clustering is not always negative and present four explanations for academic clustering: comfort of the athlete, historical selection of majors within the team, timing of classes offered in correlation to the timing of practice, and lack of college preparation on the part of the student-athlete. While most research agrees that academic clustering occurs when student-athletes majoring in eligibility (Stripling, 2018), Schneider et al. (2010) present an alternate, holistic perspective that could be explored in more detail. Generally, student-athletes need to have an input into their chosen major, coaches and athletic department personnel should not intervene in the process, and majors which lead to career opportunities after graduation should be given the highest priority (Foster & Huml, 2017).

2.6 Graduation Rates and Academic Progress Rate (APR)

The academic measure of success in an athletic program comes from the retention, academic progress, and successful graduation of its student-athletes. Coaches receive bonuses from their university employment contracts tied to yearly APR scores published by the NCAA. Beginning in 2020, athletic departments earned an "academic unit" based on APR, Graduation Success Rate (GSR), and/or Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) from all sports sponsored by the university. Earning this unit comes with a financial reward which will approach $500,000 by the year 2024-2025. Institutions are able to distribute this money in a manner they deem appropriate (Hosick, 2016).

While graduation rates of student-athletes have improved over the past few decades, they are often examined using aggregate numbers and not broken down by demographic groups which can skew the data to make it look as though progress is being made. Across four cohorts of students entering college from 2007 through 2010, the following represents the six-year Federal Graduation Rate statistics: 55.2% of Black male student-athletes graduated, compared to 69.3% of student-athletes overall, 60.1% of Black undergraduate men overall, and 76.3% of undergraduate students overall (Harper, 2018).

Comparing these numbers to the four-year FGR cohort of students who entered college from 1995 through 1999, 47% of Black men graduated within six years, compared to 60% of white men and 62% of the overall student population (Harper, 2006). These numbers show a moderate improvement (8.2%) in the FGR of Black student-athletes over this eleven-year period, but a growing gap in a difference of 1.1% between Black student-athletes and their White peers. The past decade has shown improvements in graduation rates across all racial groups. However, White student-athletes are reaching this milestone at a faster rate, despite the fact that more Black student-

athletes are graduating. In general, the gap between graduation rates demonstrates that the systems are still not equal.

The NCAA uses more than one metric to analyze graduation data and has developed alternate methods to gather graduation statistics which includes student-athletes who transfer to other universities and ultimately graduate. The GSR has provided a more complete picture of graduation success. This metric tracks all athletic scholarship student-athletes over six years, both those who transfer and those who stay at their original institutions (Lapchick, 2020).

The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) annually produces a report that analyzes the GSR and APR rates for the men's basketball teams who compete in the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament. The 2020 GSR for men's basketball for White student-athletes was 94.3% while the GSR for Black student-athletes was 80%. While these numbers are significantly better than the FGR scores, there is still a 14.3% difference in the score. When TIDES began collecting this data in 2006, the GSR was 76% for White and 49% for Black student-athletes (Lapchick, 2020). Over a 14-year period, examination of both FGR and GSR data shows an overall improvement in graduation rates for all student-athletes, as well as Black student-athletes. While these improvements are progress, the graduation gap between Black and White student-athletes is still nearly 15%. PWIs have an obligation to create educational experiences that continue to bring the graduation rates to a point where Black and White student-athletes in these revenue-generating sports graduate at similar rates.

2.7 Roles and Strategies of Athletic Academic Advisors

The role of athletic academic advisors (AAA) who work directly with student-athletes is a relatively new profession which has not been extensively researched, and lacks a charted career path or work flow (Rubin, 2017). Due to the nature of the work, AAAs come from a variety of educational backgrounds and work experiences. Outsiders may perceive AAAs as those individuals who "keep athletes eligible (Meyer, 2005, p. 18)." However, the role of the AAA is much more complex than the outsider perspective (Meyer, 2005). Vaughn & Smith (2018, p. 9) surveyed the job roles of AAA and found that advisors strongly agreed that their job roles include the following:

- Assist SA with class registration
- Help with professor conflict
- Talk to coaches about grades/class attendance
- Assist the SA explore careers after athletics
- Help with learning strategies
- Arrange academic services
- Mentor SA on academic issues
- Work with SA on creating class schedule
- Talk with professors regarding SA attendance
- Communicate to administration on SA issues
- Motivate the SA to attend class
- Monitor SA athletic eligibility
- Supervise study halls

- Mentor SA on personal issues

AAAs are charged with preparing students for academics, athletics, and life with expectations that span the entire college experience. The quantity and scope of these responsibilities results in increased stress upon the AAA. These professionals must be flexible when working with coaches who are focused on athletic performance and athletes who have limited time and motivation to complete required schoolwork (Rubin, 2017). Working with Black and low-income student-athletes who experience role engulfment intensifies this relationship (Adler & Adler, 1991). Due to the rapid evolution, varied occupational background, and wide range of job responsibilities, these professionals often experience role fatigue and burnout (Rubin, 2017).

The NCAA began requiring Division I universities to provide dedicated academic support for student-athletes in 1991. The size and scope of academic support services provided to student-athletes has evolved more dramatically since APR was introduced in 2004 (Meyer, 2005). According to internal data provided by the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the average academic support staff in the ACC ranges from seven to 20 full-time staff members. This is a significant increase from the number of academic support staff members for student-athletes in 1991. In most cases, one AAA is typically assigned to a specific sport program. Football generally has three or more AAAs assigned to their sport, and men's basketball is assigned to one AAA. A common practice is for an AAA to have one sport that is considered higher-need and a secondary sport and/or job responsibility such as tutor or special events coordinator (Vaughn & Smith, 2018).

2.8 Learning Specialists

One of the most recent strategies used to improve the academic performance of academically underprepared students is the addition of the learning specialist to academic support programs. From 2012 to 2017, membership of learning specialists in the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletes (N4A) increased by 70% (Wolverton, 2016). Most Power Five schools have at least one learning specialist on their staff. An increase in testing for learning disabilities has been one reason for the increase in the need for learning specialists (Wolverton, 2016). The primary role of the learning specialist is to provide learning strategies and work one-on-one with students who have academic need or learning disabilities. The average caseload for a learning specialist is 12 students. One-on-one attention has proven to be valuable, so much so that the role of the learning specialist has grown exponentially over the past decade (Steinberg et al., 2018). This benefits all students, but has the most significant positive impact on low-income, first-generation, and Black students. Due to the recent addition of this role, limited data exists on long-term effectiveness learning specialists have on student-athlete success and graduation rates. Due to the increase in these positions, the effectiveness of learning specialists should be measured.

2.9 Integrated Advising

An approach to academic advising which most closely represents the type of relationships that are built by academic counselors is integrated advising (Martin, 2017). A model developed by Lowenstein (2013) is based on the premise of integrated advising. “Advisors appreciate that their work also includes helping students develop a much richer understanding of their curricula.

Students and advisors spend their time together discussing how the students' learning experiences fit together across a semester and over time" (Lowenstein, 2013, p. 246).

In the athletic space, a disconnect can exist between the athletic and academic focus. Students who may have a strong interest in art, music, or theater, choose majors that often reflect these interests. What is challenging is capturing the student-athletes' interest in athletics while at the same time remaining focused on majors and career goals outside of athletics. The use of integrated advising aims to look at each student as an individual, connecting educational experiences and course work to long term goals (Lowenstein, 2013; Martin, 2017). Identifying faculty members who can empathize with and mentor student-athletes, specifically Black student-athletes, can increase the value of the educational experience (Gayles et al., 2015). When an athlete's primary focus is using their athletic ability to become a professional athlete, this approach can work to adapt course selection and conversations about educational goals to personal interests (Martin, 2017).

2.10 Summary

In its over 100-year history, issues of race and gender and the technological advancements of sport played a direct role in NCAA reforms. The unintended consequences of coaches,' athletes,' and institutions' desire to win are the driving force behind much, if not all, of the academic regulations imposed by the NCAA and member institutions. The balance between athletic fit (winning), academic fit (admission's standards and academic preparedness), and preparing students for a career following their sport is constantly tested. Leveling the playing field and holding institutions accountable for their own actions and students is paramount. The academic

support structures that have been mandated by the NCAA attempt to bridge this gap, although the systemic challenges in our K-12 educational system continue to send these students to our campuses underprepared.

The United States does not support a K-12 educational system where all students are afforded the same educational opportunities. Students who live in low-income areas, primarily Black and low-income students, regularly arrive at institutions of higher education behind their peers who live in more affluent school districts. This is most primarily seen at PWIs among Black student-athletes in revenue generating sports. Higher education institutions have an obligation to provide all student-athletes they admit to their institutions with an opportunity to earn a degree. However, revenue-generating sports, like football and basketball, have a disproportionate number of Black students relative to the overall student body and have a strong athlete identity; as a result, these student-athletes are not earning degrees at the same rate as their white teammates and peers.

Perhaps because academic support units for athletes are relatively new operations on college campuses, there is not a prescriptive system in place that informs the process by which student-athletes integrate into the collegiate educational system. Understanding what strategies are the most effective in leading to meaningful degree completion is important. Strategies mentioned in this review include academic clustering, learning specialists, summer bridge programs, and integrated advising strategies.

In the past ten years, the learning specialist has surfaced as a valuable resource for student-athletes who require one-on-one academic support. Increased financial support of summer school and summer bridge programs for first year and continuing students allows for student-athletes to focus on academics during their off-season. Integrated advising offers the opportunity to view education in a larger context. Student-athletes can compartmentalize the student and the athlete

role. Spending time talking about the connections between education, sport, and life experiences gives credibility to earning a degree when the student is more focused on their sport.

While the majority of research and media attention on academic clustering seems undesirable, academic clustering creates academic communities among athletes. There are times when it makes sense to cluster these students in similar courses, specifically if these classes are in majors that students enjoy and link to career aspirations. This type of learning environment has benefits, creating a shared experience with students who have similar cultural backgrounds. Since research suggests academic clustering has a more positive affect on Black students, academic support professionals have an obligation to ensure students are making educated decisions regarding their futures. Students can and will cluster due to shared interests but should not be clustered because of perceived abilities or interests based on stereotypes.

The commercialization of collegiate athletics increases pressures on every person involved with sports at the Division I level. Critical to the future of the student-athlete model is finding ways to promote meaningful graduation success and reduction of stigmas associated with being a Scholar-Baller (Fuller et al., 2020). The implementation of APR is one of those models. Using the CBS/Turner NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament profits, the NCAA is working to emphasize academic achievement by monetizing retention and graduation. The financial implications to individual athletic departments for earning the "academic unit" has the potential to significantly influence the future of academic support models in a positive way.

Research on the most effective strategies to interact with student-athletes is limited, specifically culturally relevant models for Black student-athletes in revenue generating sports. The social injustices seen in mainstream America are magnified in the sports realm, where Black athletes are overrepresented at PWIs to great profit for universities and the NCAA. Future research

should focus on specific methods to bridge the gap in graduation rates between White and Black student-athletes.

3.0 Chapter 3: Theory of Improvement & Implementation Plan

3.1 Aim Statement

During the 2021 fall semester, women's basketball student-athletes used a TeamWorks integrated calendar monitored by academic mentors/academic counselor to improve organization and time management skills.

3.2 Overview of Change Idea

A group of women's basketball student-athletes participated in a systematic academic support program facilitated, monitored, and assessed by the academic support unit for student-athletes. To facilitate systematic programming, this study implemented the following components:

- Integrated advising practices including weekly meetings with an academic counselor or academic mentor. During these meetings, student-athletes updated their integrated online academic assignment calendar and completed an optional task list (see Appendix E). The calendar digitally synchronizes with their academic course schedules through PeopleSoft, the University's student-information system, and incorporates practice and competition schedules added by the women's basketball coaching staff/director of basketball operations as well as additional athletic commitments added by other athletic department staff members. If the student chose to use a task list, the paper copy comprised all academic work that required their attention during the upcoming week.

The online calendar included all assigned course work with a due date (tests, quizzes, projects, papers, discussion posts, etc.). The software that was used for the online calendar is an athlete engagement platform called TeamWorks (TW). The TW system is funded through a long-term contract negotiated by the athletic department for scheduling, communication, file sharing, and athletic compliance. TW is accessible from a computer or the TeamWorks application for Apple or Android products.

- An optional task list was used in collaboration with the TW calendar to develop a plan to complete weekly assignments. Students had the opportunity to use the task list if they found that writing down their academic activities was a helpful supplement to using the integrated calendar. The details included on the task list were included in the "details" section of the *study hours* items within their TeamWorks calendar.
- Weekly Qualtrics surveys were distributed to women's basketball student-athletes for ten weeks to determine if assignments were completed on time, task lists were being used effectively, and the academic assignment calendar was incorporated into the TW online calendar system.
- Weekly Qualtrics surveys were distributed to key stakeholders (strength and conditioning coach, athletic trainer, sports dietician, associate head coach, director of basketball operations) to gauge their investment in the intervention.
- At the end of the term, all participants completed a Qualtrics survey evaluating the overall intervention. Support staff members participated in a semi-structured interview where they were able to provide feedback on the intervention and recommendations for future iterations. Protocol for the semi-structured interview is found in Appendix K.

Monitored weekly activities were gathered, monitored, and analyzed by the researcher with relevant information reported to the student-athlete's sport coaches. Many of these change ideas are currently available to students who use the academic center. Some were used with regularity and others were seldom used, were implemented in hindsight, or were available but not used in a way that incorporated academics and athletics. Student-athletes had never been required to use the services in this way; an integrated online athletics and academic calendar was never tested, nor had the progress been measured.

3.3 Selection of Mentors

Academic mentors are graduate and undergraduate students at the university and can be employed as mentors in one of two ways. The first is through the university's work study applicant pool. The second is a scholarship program offered to former student-athletes who have exhausted their athletic eligibility and are pursing graduate degrees at the university. While we do not specifically require mentors to be pursing degrees related education, psychology, or social work, applicants are vetted for qualities that would lead to positive experiences working with student-athletes, both for the mentor and the student-athlete. The ability to listen, plan, problem solve, and recommend resources are critical. However, persistence in purpose and the ability to give constructive feedback are even more important. While some mentors have experience with academic mentoring and/or tutoring, all mentors attend in person mentor training at the beginning of each year and receive ongoing support/training from the full-time staff who supervise tutors and mentors. Mentors for this study were hired using our standard selection process and selected for

their availability to meet with students on Sunday. They were specifically trained on how to use the TW platform since using the TW platform was not part of their mentor training.

3.4 Selection of Participants

Participants in this study included all fourteen members of the women's basketball team. This group ranged from a first-year women's basketball student-athlete to a graduate student. Many of these student-athletes had been identified as academically underprepared for college level work based on high school grades, attendance patterns, and/or standardized test scores. There was a mixture of what Adler & Adler (1991) referred to as Scholar Ballers as well as student-athletes who identify strongly as athletes and had an academic history that required academic support services to achieve personal academic success. The racial demographics of the participants included one White, five international, and eight African American student-athletes. Of the five international students, four identify as Black.

3.5 Research Questions

1. Will the participating student-athletes keep an up-to-date comprehensive online calendar?
2. How will completing an online calendar influence the student-athlete's ability to improve academic performance while establishing comprehensive organization and time management skills?

3. Will key stakeholders be committed to using the TW calendar to engage with student-athletes?
4. How does using an integrated calendar assist key stakeholders with overall planning and execution of academic and athletic activities?

3.6 Weekly Timeline

Women's basketball student-athletes complied with this intervention for ten weeks following the weekly schedule listed below:

- *Sunday or Monday*: Student-athletes met with an academic mentor or academic counselor to review weekly deadlines, confirm previous week deadlines were met, and create a weekly academic plan. If the student chose to use a task list, copies were kept on file. The TW calendar is accessible online.
- *Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday*: Student-athletes executed the plan created by mentor/academic counselor (met with content tutors as assigned, logged hours in Academic Center, attended to athletic and academic obligations, and met with support staff).
- *Friday or Saturday*: Women's basketball student-athletes and key stakeholders completed Qualtrics survey.

3.7 Participant Compliance with Intervention

As members of their sport team, women's basketball student-athletes are required to use the Academic Center for student-athletes. The Academic Center is located in the same building as the student-athletes' practice facility. Compliance with required academic support activities was monitored by the academic support staff and reported to coaches on a weekly basis. As the academic counselor who coordinated and monitored the academic activities of the women's basketball team, I was able to facilitate compliance and coordinate this intervention. Additionally, I met bi-weekly with the key stakeholders who completed the weekly Qualtrics survey. The women's basketball performance team were considered the key stakeholders for the intervention – associate head coach, strength and conditioning coach, athletic trainer, sports dietician, director of women's basketball operations, and academic counselor.

3.8 Predictions

Three important leading measures included routine, staffing, and use of time. Having worked in this role for six academic cycles, I have a grasp on how student-athletes respond to the mandatory use of academic support resources – perception and presentation dictate acceptance. To gain acceptance, the routine must be established early in the term and be supported by the coaching staff in conjunction with the academic counselor. Reactive measures generally do not have a positive effect on improvement of grades or academic skills. If the student-athlete is held accountable for the routine early, it becomes an expectation. The routine is not viewed as punishment.

Staffing is critical to program success. Full-time staff need to be invested in the process. The screening process by tutor coordinators who hire tutors should consider academic skill, interest in being a tutor/mentor, ability to explain content, and stamina for working with students who may need additional time to master skills. Full time staff members need to make themselves consistently available as resources and not rely on mentors or tutors to fill gaps in learning.

Scheduling student-athletes' time may predict the success of the program. Tutoring appointments and structured study time were scheduled with the help of the student at times when they learn the best and when they want to be studying. Many college student-athletes spend in excess of 20 hours per week training. It is essential to their mental and physical health that they rest. Creating a weekly schedule that was manageable for the semester with some flexibility to reschedule appointments when conflicts arise gave the student-athletes control. In my experience, many student-athletes feel like they lose control of their time. However, being available to complete academic tasks was something that must take priority. Holistic weekly planning increased the student-athletes' ability to schedule their own time in advance.

A specific concern related to the intervention was keeping the TW calendar updated if due dates change. The only person who could change the date in the TW calendar was the person who created the calendar item. All staff associated with the women's basketball team have access to TW calendar and can view the calendar. It would have been helpful if more than one person could update calendar items, but that feature was not available. The student-athlete was accountable for adding calendar items related to academic obligations. Overall, I predicted that the women's basketball student-athletes would gain a clearer understanding of academic deadlines by using their TW calendar.

Key stakeholders needed to keep in mind the additional details provided in the TW calendar prior to making an appointment, scheduling a time to meet, or requesting a student put in extra time in the gym. This was a change in how they had operated in the past when they created the appointment and then looked at the calendar or did not add the appointment to the calendar at all. Per NCAA rules, athletic activities have always been required to be added to the TW calendar. Women's basketball support staff were early adopters of the TW calendar and had a higher degree of comfort with the platform prior to the start of this intervention.

3.9 Methods and Measures

I used a mixed methods data collection approach to assess this intervention. Quantitative data were collected using two different weekly Qualtrics surveys. One was distributed to the women's basketball student-athletes and the other to key stakeholders/performance team. As outlined in the attached Gantt chart (Appendix C), both surveys were distributed weekly for 10 weeks. Other quantitative data were collected using the University's student success platform, Pathways. Progress reports were distributed electronically via Pathways at the midpoint of the term and captured some grade and attendance information if it was reported by the faculty. Weekly academic center study hour usage was tracked through a swipe card system and tracked in Pathways.

Qualitative data were used to support quantitative data. The TW calendars were monitored for completeness and accuracy. Summaries from mentoring and tutor reports were added as meeting summaries in the Pathways program.

Protocol questions for the student-athlete Qualtrics survey include the following Likert scale questions and align with research questions one and two. A full list of questions and responses is included in Appendix G:

- All of my academic deadlines were added to my TW calendar.
- I created a task list to plan my weekly academic work.
- To the best of my knowledge, I turned in all of my assignments on time.
- I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor.
- I used my TW calendar to organize my daily activities.
- I had to plan my academics around a home basketball game this week.
- I had to plan my academics around an away basketball game this week.
- How comfortable are you using the TW technology to add appointments to your own TW calendar – specifically the computer-based calendar tool?
- I would recommend the following improvements for next week's academic planning session.

Protocol questions for the key stakeholder Qualtrics survey include the following Likert scale questions and align with research questions three and four. A full list of questions and responses is found in Appendix H:

- Prior to scheduling an appointment with or for a student-athlete, I referenced the student-athletes' availability using the TW calendar.
- I added appointments I scheduled for student-athletes into the TW calendar.
- I feel more connected to the student-athletes I work with knowing I am able to see their academic commitments alongside their athletic schedule.

- I have found that since the student-athletes and our team are using the TW calendar, I am also using the TW calendar to plan my day (instead of another online calendar).
- How comfortable are you using the TW technology to add appointments to your own or others' TW calendar - specifically the computer-based calendar tool?
- I would make the following recommendations for improving this process in the upcoming week.

3.10 Research Safeguards

On 9/7/2021 the Research Protection Office concluded that my project would not meet the definition of human subject "research" and would instead be a Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement project. No IRB submission was deemed necessary.

3.11 Data Analysis

The purpose of collecting data was to understand if my intervention had a positive effect on my research questions; qualitative and quantitative data were used to show if the intervention was worthwhile. Being able to use the comprehensive online calendar together with the mentor meeting summaries and weekly Qualtrics surveys provided a clear picture of the efficacy of the study. Using the research question guided the data collection and demonstrated the study was effective.

Quantitative data provided from Qualtrics surveys and study hour data exported from Pathways were tracked using an Excel spreadsheet. Three Qualtrics surveys were used to gather data. A full list of questions and responses are found in Appendices G, H, and I. Quantitative data were analyzed using charts and graphs and the descriptive statistics provided through the data analysis tools in Qualtrics. Using content analysis coding (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017), individual interviews were qualitatively examined to understand patterns and experiences of the performance team.

Student-athletes who participated in this intervention should feel prepared to complete their academic work and have time set aside in their day to accomplish daily tasks. Working with key stakeholders, both the student-athlete and the support staff were aware of daily academic and athletic demands. This cooperation allowed for improved performance in the classroom and on the basketball court. Table 1 provides specific data collections methods and how the data collections methods relate to each research question:

Table 1. Research Questions and Alignment with Data Collection Methods

Research Questions	Data Collection	Sample Protocols	Other Considerations
Will the participating student-athletes keep an up-to-date comprehensive online calendar?	Qualitative data collected through check of weekly TeamWorks (TW) calendar monitoring. The researcher had the same access to the TW calendar as the student-athletes. Quantitative data collected through a weekly Qualtrics survey.	Calendars were monitored for accuracy and completeness. Optional use of the task list was tracked. The Qualtrics survey demonstrated the effectiveness of calendar usage. Example Qualtrics survey questions (Likert scale questions): • All of my academic deadlines were added to my TW calendar. • I created a task list to plan my weekly academic work. Qualtrics data points support that the student-athletes followed the protocol over the 10-week period and the intervention resulted in a change in behavior. End of intervention Qualtrics questions assessed effectiveness of intervention.	Keeping calendars up to date - changing calendar dates when professor changes due date. The only person who can change the date in the TW calendar is the person who created the calendar item. We have access to TW developers. It would be worthwhile to see if there could be multiple collaborators on the same calendar item.

Table 1 (continued)

How will completing an online calendar influence the student-athlete's ability to improve academic performance while establishing comprehensive organization and time management skills?	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of student-athletes. Quantitative data collected through faculty progress reports. This data included grades and attendance. Qualitative data collected and coded from tutor and mentor summaries using content analysis coding (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).	Example Qualtrics survey questions (Likert scale questions): • To the best of my knowledge, I turned in all of my assignments on time. • I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor. • I used my TW calendar to organize my daily activities. Progress reports demonstrated how student-athletes are utilizing the intervention to impact academic performance. End of intervention Semi Structured Interview questions will assess effectiveness of intervention.	The mentor appointment should have included checking on past week assignments. Tutor/mentor summaries were written after each session via Pathways. Summaries can be exported into Excel for analysis.
Will key stakeholders be committed to using the TW calendar to engage with student-athletes?	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of key stakeholders in the student-athlete's athletic and academic experience (Strength and Conditioning Coach, Athletic Trainer, Sports Dietician, Associate Head Coach).	Example Qualtrics survey questions (Likert scale questions): • Prior to scheduling an appointment with or for a student-athlete, I referenced the student-athletes' availability using the TW calendar. • I added appointments I scheduled for student-athletes into the TW calendar.	Key stakeholders will have to keep in mind the additional details provided in the TW calendar prior to making an appointment, scheduling a time to meet, or requesting a student put in extra time in the gym. This is a change in how they have operated in the past. Per NCAA rules, athletic activities have always been required to be added to the TW calendar.

Table 1 (continued)

		• I feel more connected to the student-athletes I work with knowing I am able to see their academic commitments alongside their athletic schedule. Qualtrics survey data points will demonstrate how the intervention is improving communication flow and time management between staff and student-athletes.	
How does using an integrated calendar assist key stakeholders with overall planning and execution of academic and athletic activities?	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of key stakeholders in the student-athlete's athletic and academic experience (Strength and Conditioning Coach, Athletic Trainer, Sports Dietician, Director of Basketball Operations, Associate Head Coach).	Example Qualtrics survey questions (Likert scale questions): • Prior to scheduling an appointment with or for a student-athlete, I referenced the student-athletes' availability using the TW calendar. • I added appointments I scheduled for student-athletes into the TW calendar. • I feel more connected to the student-athletes I work with knowing I am able to see their academic commitments alongside their athletic schedule. End of intervention Semi Structured Interview questions will assess effectiveness of intervention.	Key stakeholders needed to be mindful of the academic commitments in the TW calendar prior to making an appointment, scheduling a time to meet, or requesting a student put in extra time in the gym. This was a change in how they have operated in the past. Per NCAA rules, *athletic* activities are required to be added to the TW calendar.

4.0 Findings

This section describes the quantitative and qualitative data collected as well as information about the participants. In total, 18 participants completed data collection measures in pursuit of the research questions. The breakdown of the measures used and the number of participants completing each measure appears in Table 2.

Table 2. Measures and Participants

Measure	Participants Completing the Measure
Online TeamWorks calendar	14 women's basketball student-athletes
Meeting with an academic mentor	13 women's basketball student-athletes
Weekly Qualtrics survey	14 women's basketball players and 5 women's basketball support staff
Semi structured interviews	4 women's basketball support staff
Qualtrics follow-up survey	13 women's basketball players

The following research questions directed the data collection and have been used as a guide to examine the findings:

1. Will the participating student-athletes keep an up-to-date comprehensive online calendar?
2. How will completing an online calendar influence the student-athlete's ability to improve academic performance while establishing comprehensive organization and time management skills?

3. Will key stakeholders be committed to using the TW calendar to engage with student-athletes?
4. How does using an integrated calendar assist key stakeholders with overall planning and execution of academic and athletic activities?

All participating student-athletes were asked to keep an up-to-date comprehensive online calendar. Each women's basketball player added their own study hours, academic commitments and deadlines, and any other personal appointments that impacted their day. Appointments could be scheduled as private if the student-athlete wanted to block time without disclosing the specific details. Included on the calendar were:

- Academic schedules uploaded from the PeopleSoft system
- Practice, meals, and game times added by the women's basketball Director of Operations
- Tutoring and mentoring appointments added by the academic support staff
- Other basketball commitments including medical treatment and player-specific appointments added by other members of the staff.

A Qualtrics survey link was distributed every Friday for ten weeks via a team text message. Participation in the Qualtrics survey was high, 78% participation rate for student-athletes and 100% for support staff, due to buy-in on the part of the women's basketball staff and the commitment of the student-athletes who participated in the intervention.

When student-athletes met with their mentor each week, which generally occurred on Sundays, they reviewed academic deadlines using the student-athlete's knowledge of assignments, the syllabus, and the university's course management system. Mentoring meetings were scheduled on 30-minute intervals and lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. During these meetings, the mentor

and student-athlete reviewed the previous week's deadlines and planned for the next two weeks adding due dates, study hours, and tutoring appointments to the calendar. If there were regular weekly assignments such as discussion board questions or tutoring appointments, they were added as reoccurring items.

4.1 Will the Participating Student-Athletes Keep an Up-to-Date Comprehensive Online Calendar?

The data collected that specifically addressed this research question were provided by both weekly analysis of the TeamWorks (TW) calendar for completion and accuracy and the specific Qualtrics survey questions. The two Qualtrics questions that targeted use of the calendar are listed in Figures 1, 2 and 3. Figure 1 reflects the composite data over 10 weeks. Ninety percent of student-athletes indicated they added academic deadlines to their calendar while Figure 3 shows that 80% used their TW calendar to organize their daily activities. The 20% who chose not to use their TW calendar to organize their day were the two participants who prefer an alternate method of planning. Their alternate methods include using the calendar feature on the course management system.

Figure 2 shows that 80% of student-athletes regularly checked their TW calendars for academic and athletic activities while 18% only checked the calendar for practice times. Figure 3 reinforces that the student-athletes not only planned their week; they executed the plan. Eighty-one percent of the student-athletes responded that they turned in their assignments on time. Figure 4 affirms that the student-athletes met with a mentor 78% of the time. Measuring outcomes related to this research question revealed student-athletes and support staff did keep an up-to-date

comprehensive online calendar for the duration of the change idea. The results of this research question support the aim statement discussed in Chapter 3.

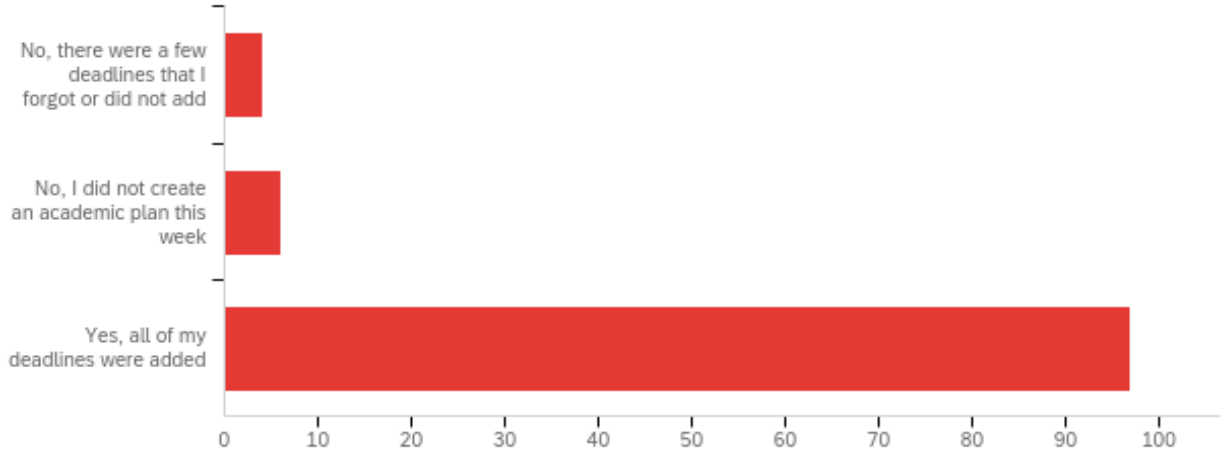


Figure 1. Student-Athlete Weekly Self Report of Deadline and Due Dates

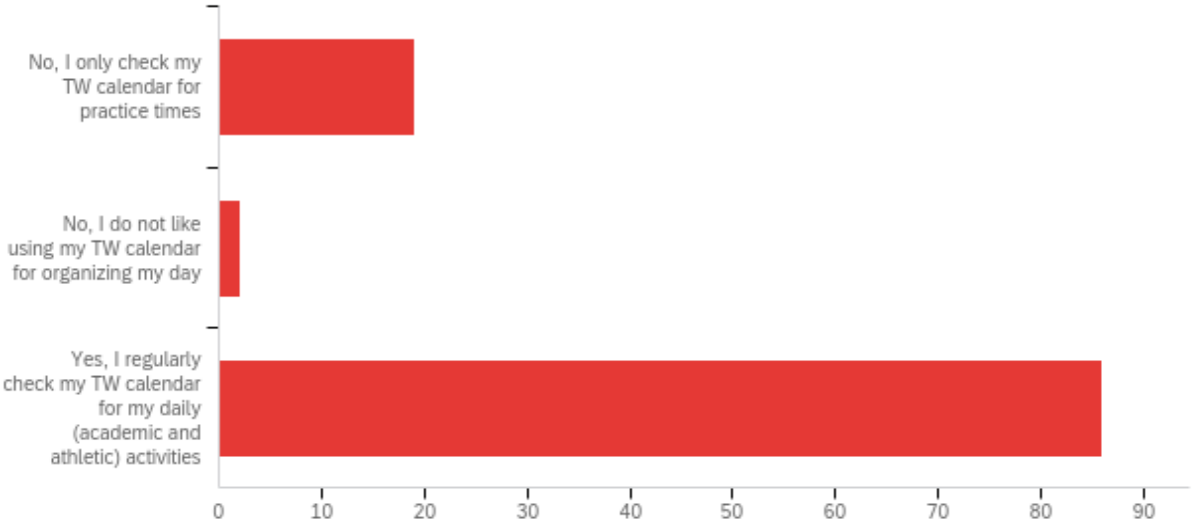


Figure 2. Student Self Report of Using TW Calendar

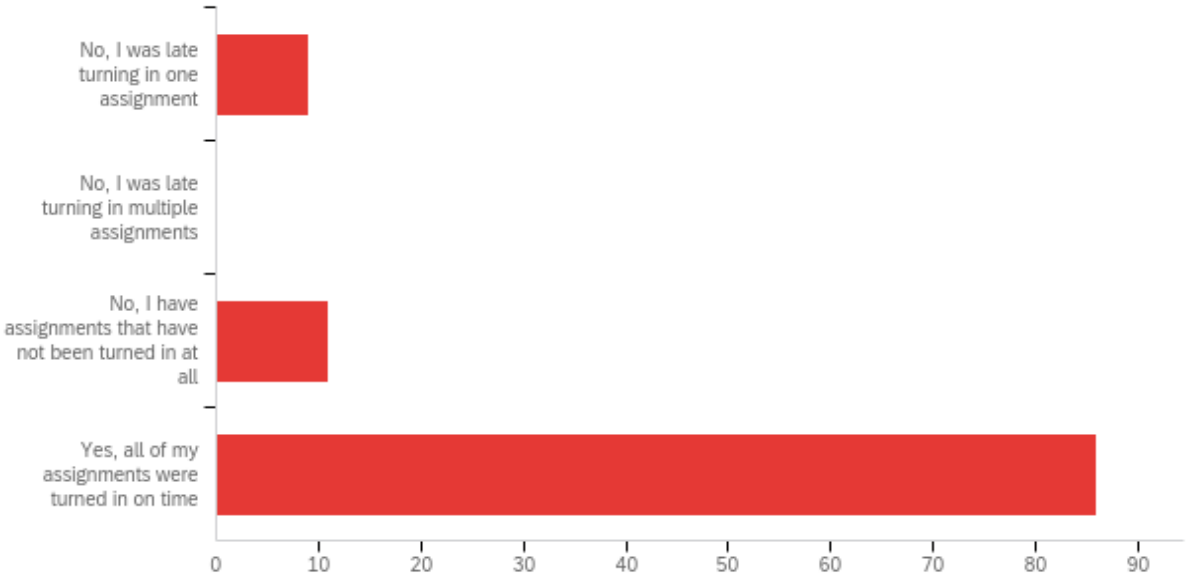


Figure 3. Student-Athlete Self Report on Turning in Assignments

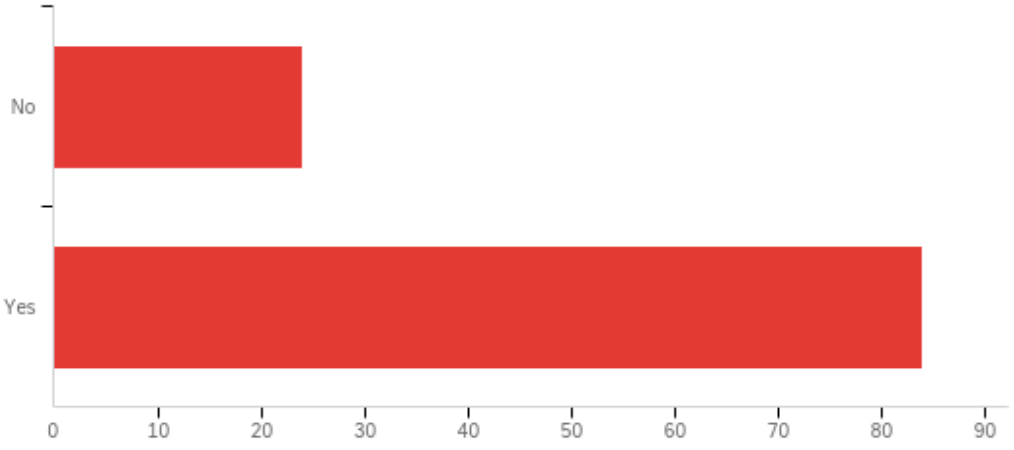


Figure 4. Student-Athlete Self Report of Mentor/Counselor Meetings

4.2 How Will Completing an Online Calendar Influence the Student-Athlete's Ability to Improve Academic Performance While Establishing Comprehensive Organization and Time Management Skills?

Results of this question were informed by using both the Weekly and the Follow-Up Qualtrics surveys. Data collected over 10 weeks demonstrates student-athletes were aware of academic deadlines and met those deadlines 80% of the time. Figure 1 shows deadlines added to the TW calendar. It does not necessarily mean that the deadlines were met. When asked if the TW calendar increases your awareness of what you needed to accomplish each week (Figure 5), 83% participants indicated it helped to keep them organized and would recommend the integrated TW calendar to other student-athletes for holistic academic planning (Figure 6). The team's semester GPA was similar (within 0.1 overall GPA) to other semesters. [However, given the changes in grading policies and the variability of instructional delivery methods due to Covid-19, I do not think that a GPA comparison is a measure for this study.]

Comparing behaviors prior to the start of this intervention, Figure 7 shows the results of a question in the Follow-Up survey asking how these students planned their weeks prior to the start of Fall 2021. Answers include four students who used the calendar found in Canvas, seven who used a combination of Canvas and a planner Canvas, one who used a planner, and one who used an alternate method. The alternate method was an excel spreadsheet of due dates.

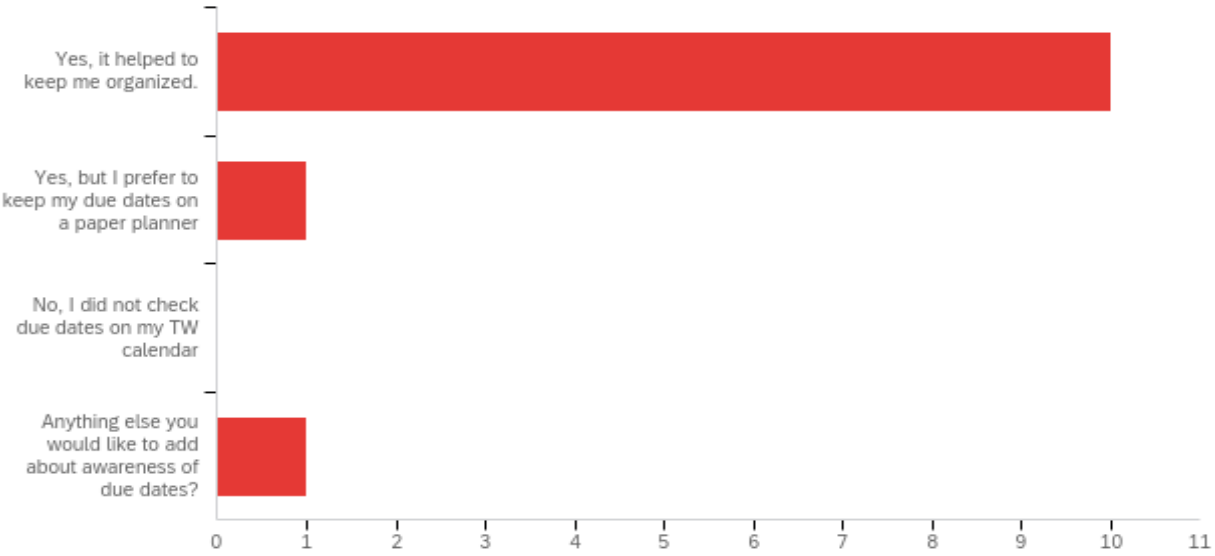


Figure 5. Student-Athlete Self Report on TW Increasing Awareness of Assignments

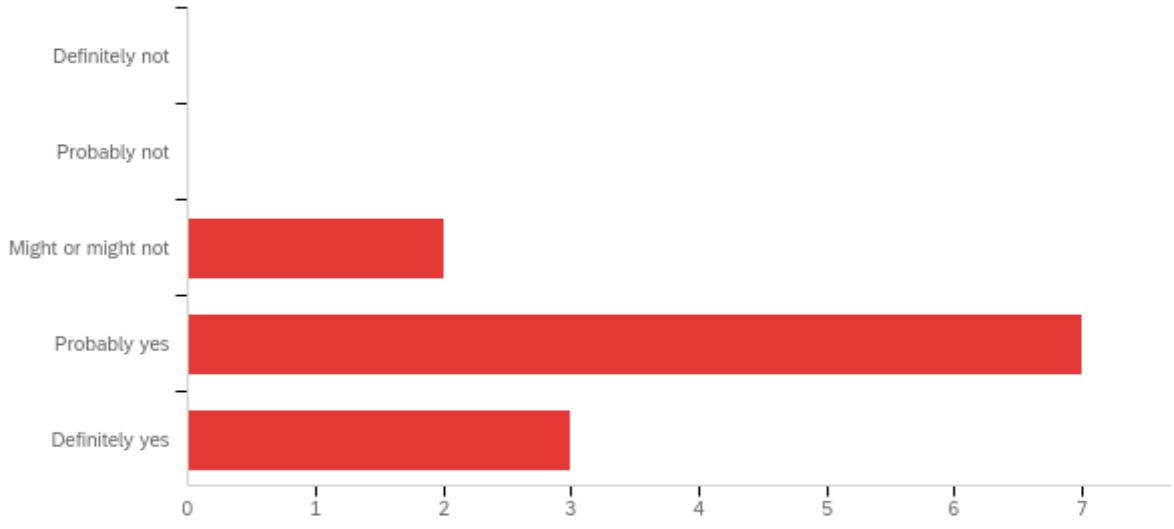


Figure 6. Student-Athlete Self Report on Recommending TW Calendar to Others

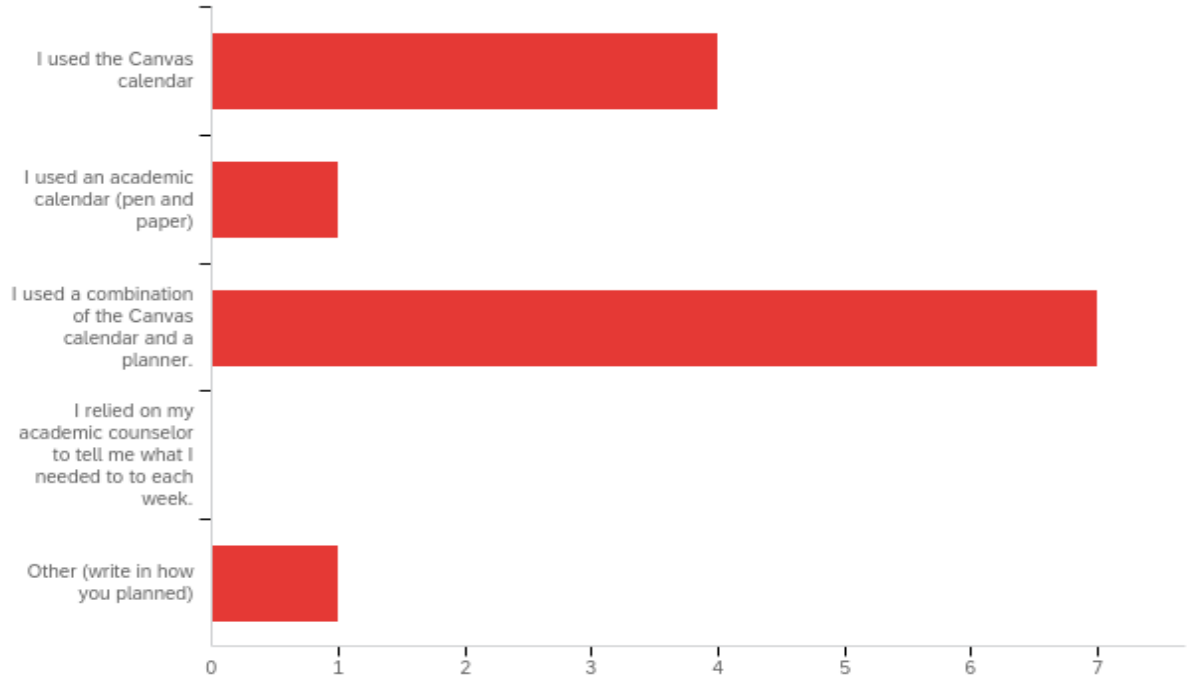


Figure 7. Student-Athlete Self Report on Strategies Prior to Adoption of TW

Student-athletes were asked two open-ended questions in the Follow-Up Survey about their use of the TW calendar prior to Fall 2021 semester. The first question asked how often they checked their TW calendar prior to Fall 2021. All participants responded they checked the calendar often, all the time, or every day for athletic commitments. A second open-ended question asked if they added their own appointments to the TW calendar. Of the 11 respondents, 82% indicated they did not add their own appointments prior to Fall 2021 and 36% indicated they did not know they could add their own appointments.

The Follow-Up Survey asked participants to remark on one positive takeaway from working with a mentor and/or organizing their academic plan using a TW calendar. There was a variety of answers including:

- I guess one positive could be that they ask some questions you may have missed or overlooked.
- Kept me up to date.
- It helped plan my upcoming weeks.
- Using TW gave me a compact view on what I needed to do for that week
- I was able to become more organized. School is always my first priority; however, I tend to procrastinate. This helped me to get my work done on a better schedule.
- I think it helped keep me organized.
- Easier to keep track of due dates.
- Keeps me organized.
- It reminded me of the work I had due.

Equally, the Follow-Up Survey asked respondents to provide one negative takeaway from working with a mentor and/or organizing their academic plan using a TW calendar. There were a variety of answers including:

- If the coaches would actually use it.
- Sometimes I would still procrastinate since I could change when I did my homework. I think I need to follow it more strictly.
- I think it could be plans added could be more realistic.
- Providing alerts of due dates days in advance.
- Knowing which days I'm doing what work.
- It could be improved by implementing ways we could improve notetaking in classes.

4.3 Will Key Stakeholders be Committed to Using the TW Calendar to Engage with Student-Athletes

The key stakeholders who participated in the Qualtrics survey were four women's basketball support staff members and one women's basketball coach. A Qualtrics survey link was distributed every Friday for ten weeks via a group text message. There was a 100% survey completion rate with this group. Eighty percent of support staff members consider themselves highly engaged with the TW calendar.

The Follow-Up Qualtrics survey asked a question about the student-athlete's perception of staff involvement using the TW calendar to plan team activities (Figure 8). This question asked for multiple responses, but only received 17 answers. Most respondents selected one answer. Twenty-nine percent of the student-athletes indicated the staff was more involved in using the TW calendar and that the staff added scheduled appointments to the student-athletes TW calendar. Eleven percent agreed that the staff checked their TW calendar before asking to meet with them. Seventeen percent thought that the staff's use of the TW calendar did not change from previous semesters.

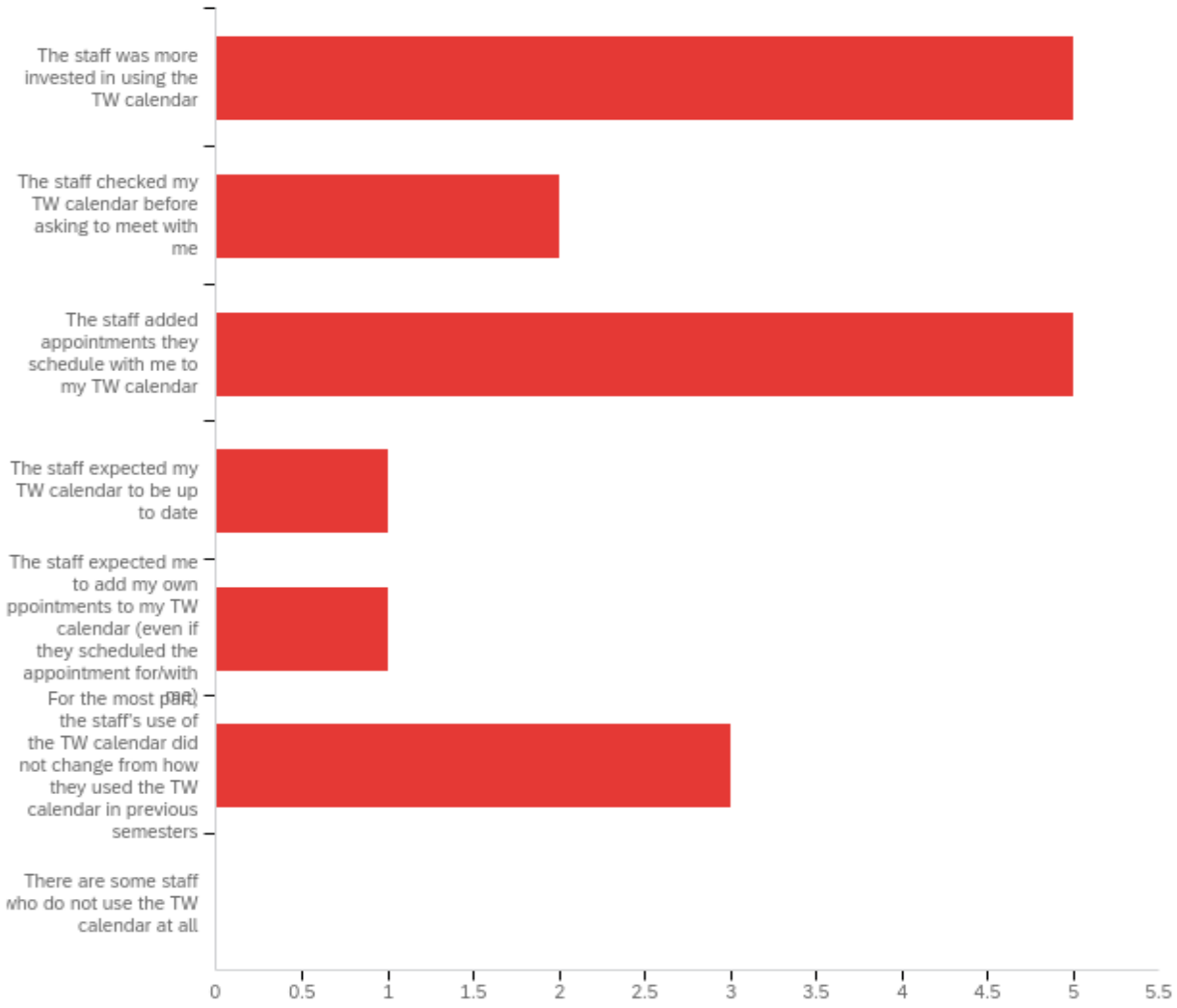


Figure 8. Student-Athlete Self Report on Perception of Staff Involvement with TW

A question from the 10-week Performance Team Qualtrics asked if the support staff members added appointments they scheduled for the student-athlete into their TW calendar. Fifty-eight percent of the time, the support staff member added appointments to the student-athletes TW calendar; 11% did not add the appointment due to not having a phone or a computer with them when they discussed the meeting time; and 18% asked the student-athlete to add their own appointment to the calendar. Measuring outcomes related to this inquiry question, the results

revealed support staff members showed consistency in using the TW calendar when they were planning to engage with student-athletes.

4.4 How Does Using an Integrated Calendar Assist Key Stakeholders with Overall Planning and Execution of Academic and Athletic Activities?

All women's basketball players have academic and athletic commitments throughout their day. Adding these commitments to one calendar gives a complete picture of how a student-athlete manages their day. Of the five support staff members who participated in this intervention, four are considered in direct support of the team and one is a coach. The four in direct support of the team schedule student-athletes' time outside of the practice time block. It is important to note which staff members should be mindful of time that has not been predetermined by the team's practice schedule. Scheduling time outside of the practice block requires consideration of additional commitment of the student-athlete.

The women's basketball support staff who completed the Performance Team Qualtrics form were asked if they feel more connected to the student-athletes they work with knowing they can see academic commitments alongside the athletic schedule. This group was overwhelmingly supportive of this statement (Figure 9). Over the 10-week period, 90% of the responses indicated that the integrated calendar helped them work with student-athletes on a more holistic planning process.

When asked whether they referred to student-athletes' availability on the TW calendar prior to scheduling an appointment with or for a student-athlete, the support staff's responses varied. Forty-seven percent of the time, the support staff referenced the TW calendar for

availability, another 24% did when they had access to their phone or computer, while 21% relied on the student-athlete to know their own availability (Figure 10).

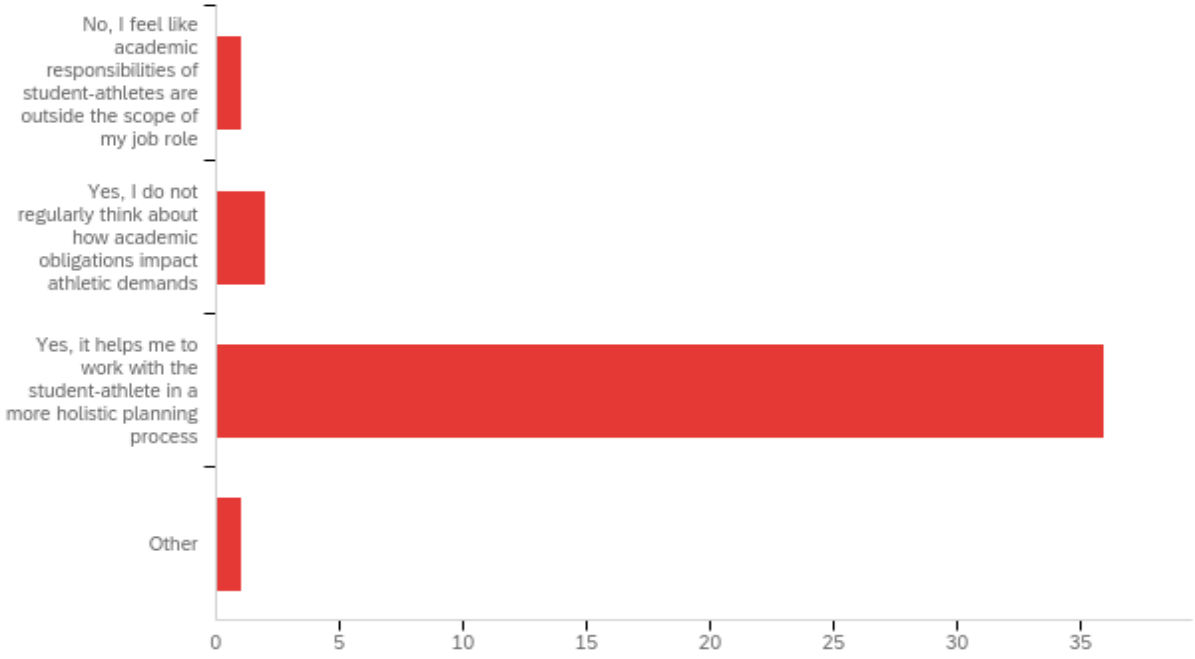


Figure 9. Staff Self Report on Connectedness to Student-Athletes Using TW

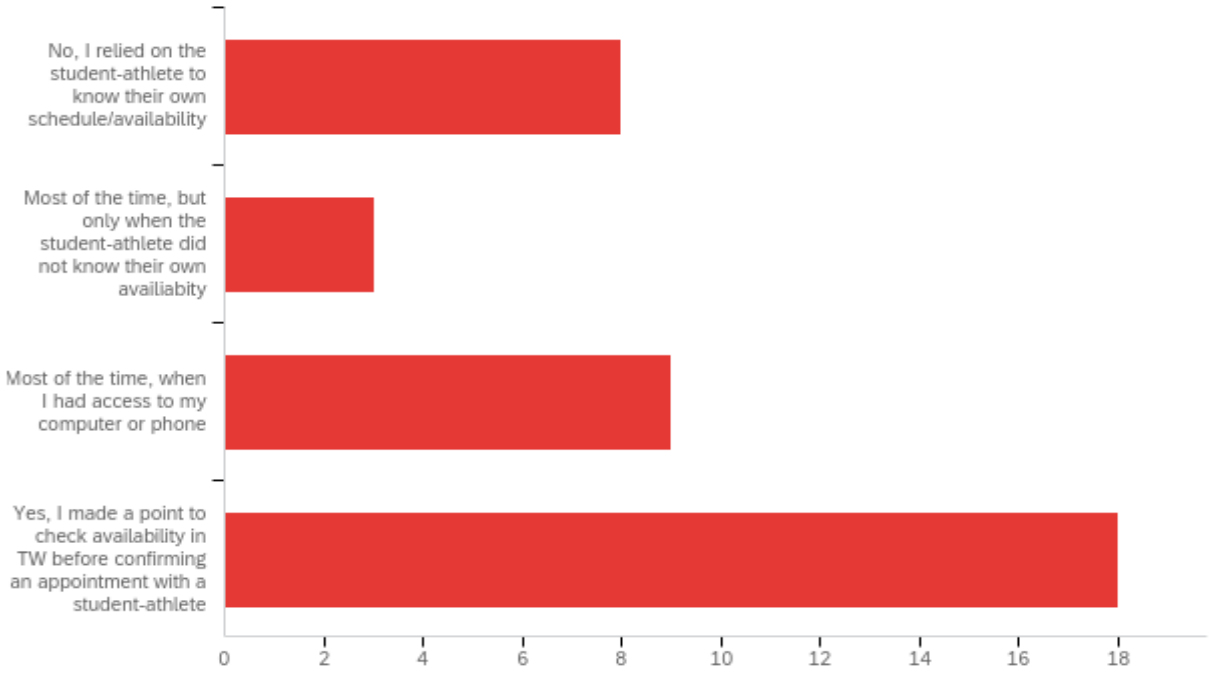


Figure 10. Staff Self Report on Use of TW Calendar to Schedule Appointment with Student-Athlete

In addition to the weekly questionnaire, the performance team engaged in semi-structured interviews to review their attitudes towards using TW calendar. The following are the answers to a question asked in the interview: would you recommend other student-athletes and sports' staffs utilize an integrated TW calendar for holistic athletic and academic planning?

- Support Staff 1: "It's really helpful obviously not just to see the basketball or strength and conditioning side of their schedule. It's a holistic thing and it keeps my head on a swivel, so I am not completely blindsided if someone says that they got two hours of sleep because they were trying to finish like a paper or something like that."
- Support Staff 2: "I'm really glad that you were able to do this because I think moving forward it'll keep women's basketball consistently using TW because it went well. It

just keeps things more organized and in flow and less scattered and everybody is able to really do what they need to do."

- Support Staff 3: "I think it's just easier to see everything in one place. Plus, it's user friendly and easy to learn."
- Support Staff 4: "I think it's been very positive, and it helps keep everyone organized and know where someone is if they may be running late, you can kind of check to see . . . Oh, they had tutoring or something like this. I just kind of think it keeps everyone more organized in the know together, so I think it's a great thing."

5.0 Discussion

Winning in college athletics has driven universities to push the limits when choosing student-athletes to represent their athletic programs (Clotfelter, 2011). The recruiting process is profoundly dependent on athletic ability and driven by the coaching staff. The attention to athletics leads student-athletes to select schools based on factors outside of academics and schools bend admissions standards to acquire top recruits (Olsen, 2019). For this reason, many student-athletes arrive at their institutions of higher education in a position where they are not prepared for or informed of what will be required for academic success (Winters & Gurney, 2012). In 1991, the NCAA recognized the unique circumstances of student athletes and required all Division I institutions to provide academic support to their student-athletes (Meyer, 2005). Through the evolution of collegiate athletics an entire discipline has emerged, athletic academic advisors (AAA). There is not a linear career path to become an AAA nor are there best practices on integrating balance between academics and athletics (Vaughn & Smith, 2018). This dissertation in practice proposed a holistic planning method that weaves the role of the AAA and the student-athlete's academic demands alongside their athletic expectations.

In recent years, the number of support staff in a college sport program has increased significantly. Thirty years ago, a head basketball coach had two assistants (internal data) and an athletic trainer who potentially supported more than one program. In 2022, a Power 5 women's basketball staff employs approximately eight members not including the strength and conditioning coach, athletic trainer, physical therapist, sports dietician, sports psychologist, mental health professional, sports scientist, and academic counselor. Figure 11 illustrates the number of athletic support staff who are involved in the day-to-day management and support of the student-athlete.

It is not reasonable for the student-athlete to manage these relationships and schedules on their own while maintaining their focus on academics.

For the mental and physical health of the student-athlete, support can be more easily coordinated if everyone involved is able to view academic and athletic commitments in one location. Ultimately, the support staff is invested in the success of the athletic program and the student-athletes who represent it. Athletic and academic success support each other. While only one of the support staff members directly supervises academics, every support staff member should be invested in the collective success, academic and athletic, of the student-athletes. Knowing this, a holistic approach to supporting the time demands required of student-athletes is a benefit to all involved. This change idea developed out of my personal observations of a need for holistic planning and the aim of the change idea was designed to test if the results would yield a positive outcome. To recap, the aim statement is included here: During the 2021 fall semester, women's basketball student-athletes used a TeamWorks integrated calendar monitored by academic mentors/academic counselor to improve organization and time management skills.

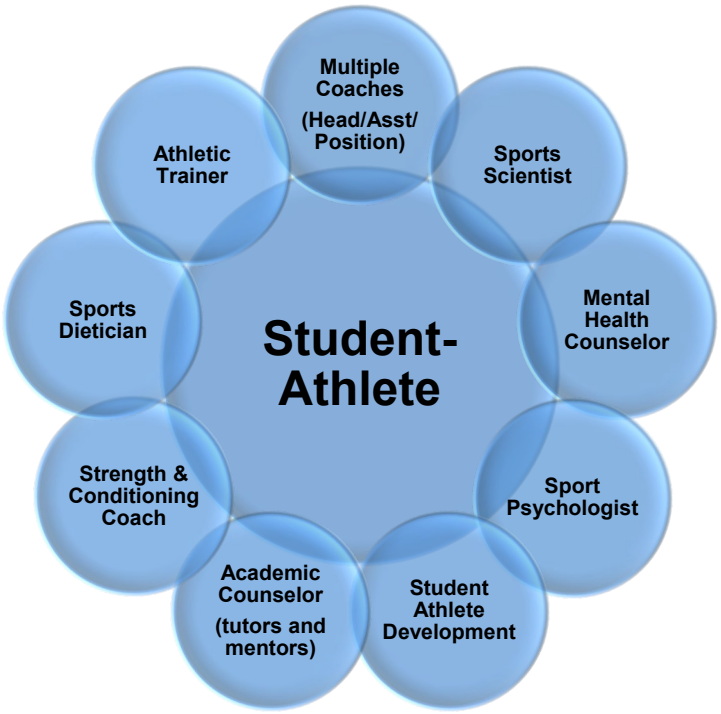


Figure 11. Athletic Department Staff Involved in Daily Operations and Support of the Student-Athlete

5.1 Key Findings and Strengths

Prior to the start of this intervention, three leading measures were proposed that would lead to success – staffing, routine, and use of time. After completing the intervention, I would conclude that these three leading measures were the key to accomplishing the desired outcomes. Student-athletes endorsed using the TW calendar from the outset of the study due to combined efforts of the coaching and academic staffs. TW was a platform everyone was familiar with and comfortable using since this platform had been used for three previous seasons for the basketball practice and game schedule. The coaching staff and other performance team members referred to the TW calendar for scheduling and the majority of the group added calendar items that related to their

sphere of influence. These leading measures created a sense of community among the coaching staff, academic staff, and players. We worked together with a common goal of creating synergy between academic and athletic commitments. The results of this intervention built metacognitive skills within not only the student-athletes, but also the support staff.

A critical component to the execution of the holistic calendar was the use of the academic mentor. A weekly mentoring appointment was scheduled for each student-athlete, which held the student-athlete accountable for adding academic deadlines to their calendars. The overall conception adding the academic deadlines to the TW calendar would not have been as successful without the consistency of the mentor meeting.

During these sessions, the mentor and student-athlete reviewed the completion of the previous week's assignments. A checklist that was used for mentoring sessions can be found in Appendix J. These appointments were scheduled in 30-minute intervals on Sundays which allowed for consistency in reviewing weekly activities, updating the TW calendar, and planning for the upcoming two weeks. Planning the week's academic activities did not take longer than 30 minutes. The student-athlete's time is valuable and, if they felt like the planning was wasting their time, they would have avoided attending these appointments. The weekly mentoring meetings established routine while promoting time management and cultivating organization skills. Weekly mentoring meetings occurred 78% (Figure 4) of the time and were generally with the same mentor each week. The level of consistency of the mentoring meeting facilitated a positive change in behavior toward the meeting and established a relationship with the mentor.

While this intervention was aimed at students who required the accountability of a mentor and needed assistance with time management, all women's basketball student-athletes were included and benefitted from the structure. Based on findings, 83% of student-athletes who

completed the Follow-Up Survey said the TW calendar increased their awareness of what they need to accomplish each week (Figure 5). Individuals were not singled out for historically lower academic performance. As indicated by the results of the Follow-Up Survey, the higher achieving student-athletes did not look at the additional time management structure as a burden.

The driver diagram (Appendix B) included three primary drivers – student-athlete, academic counselor, and sport coach – who were key to the overall aim of the project. For this intervention, the three primary drivers worked together to achieve the goal of creating a systematic academic support program. Staying true to the leading measures, the staff created a consistent routine while using the student-athletes' time efficiently. Figure 1 indicated that 90% of student-athletes added their academic deadlines to their calendar. This was principally due to the weekly mentoring meetings and the fact that the student-athletes were aware that I was checking their calendars. The measure of turning in assignments on time was 80% (Figure 3). The discrepancy between the calendar item being added and turning the assignments in could be attributed to the lack of a second mentoring meeting toward the end of each week. The Sunday planning session laid out the plan. The student-athlete needed to execute the plan independently using their study hours, writing center, and check-ins throughout the week with me.

The team developed a habit of checking their TW calendar as indicated by Figure 2 which shows that 80% of student-athletes used their TW calendar to organize daily activities.

The following anecdote highlights the value of this intervention: On an away trip, the coaching staff changed the itinerary. The team was given a paper itinerary that was slightly different from what was added to TW. The entire team showed up 15 minutes late to the film session. When the coaches asked why everyone was late, the team responded, "We are not late.

This was the time in the TW calendar." It was then the coaches knew the TW calendar had become part of the team's routine.

5.2 Weaknesses

The timing of mentoring appointments created issues. Women's basketball practiced on Sunday during the fall semester. Everyone on the team was available when practice was over. Consequently, 14 members of the team would come to the study center at the same time, and all wanted to meet with their mentor. We had three mentors scheduled in 30-minute intervals which took about two hours to move through the group. Some student-athletes used this time to complete assignments, but others wanted to meet with their mentor and leave. Since they knew they were part of this study, they complied with the request to meet with their mentor. Moving forward, we will try to have more mentors available to create a schedule where every student-athlete can meet with their mentor without waiting so long or stagger appointments between Sunday and Monday.

While not every student-athlete felt like they needed to meet with a mentor, going through the motions of meeting with the mentor proved to be valuable in uncovering assignments that may have been missed and improved their ability to plan their week. With the data collected through this study and the addition of the learning specialist to our staff, we have seen a 40% increase in the number of mentoring appointments scheduled from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022. Other student-athletes have seen students meeting with mentors and asked how they can get a mentor, too.

Limitations related to the Qualtrics survey were observed in questions where respondents were asked to provide multiple answers. Specifically in the Follow Up Survey, Figure 8 asks the student-athletes their perception of the staff involvement using the TeamWorks calendar to plan

team activities. This question should have solicited multiple responses, but only received 17. Due to the attention placed on the TW calendar, the staff was very engaged with the student-athlete use of the calendar, and I would have expected to receive multiple answers from each participant. In future iterations, the wording of the question should be updated to reflect the need for multiple answers at the start of instead of the end of the question.

5.3 Why Use TeamWorks?

TeamWorks is an industry standard student engagement platform. More than 300 NCAA Division I athletic departments use TW to engage with their student-athletes. The calendar is one of many features this comprehensive platform delivers. The TeamWorks website states capabilities including athlete engagement, organizational workflows, team culture and accountability, centralized scheduling, roster management, and brand building. User groups are established when new student-athletes and staff members are coded by the Compliance staff and maintained as people are deleted from teams. TW has an application programming interface (API) with PeopleSoft, the university's student management system. TW receives class schedule information from PeopleSoft each night which ensures class schedules are accurate on the calendar without manual input.

The NCAA requires that coaches make their weekly schedules available to student-athletes and the athletic department. The TW calendar is where the athletic department requires that the weekly practice and game schedules are visible. TW is part of the athletic department, and the calendar feature is accessible to all who are assigned to the sport by the Compliance staff. While other online calendars could provide similar features, TW shares information across specific

groups and is used for more than just the calendar feature. Appendix F provides screen shots of the computer-based calendar view and the phone application. Calendar items can be added using either platform, can be added as one-time or reoccurring, and can have multiple reminders. One drawback is that the user that creates the calendar items is the only one who can make changes to it. I would recommend the ability to add calendar collaborators which would allow others to make changes to items when appropriate.

5.4 Next Steps

The planning and execution of this holistic academic support intervention has made an impact on the way we are working with student-athletes in the academic center. In September, we added a learning specialist to our staff. She and I have worked together to build out the mentoring program to include use of the TW calendar. Collectively, we see tremendous value in the holistic planning approach in connecting the student with their academic and athletic commitments. Mentoring appointments and the TW calendar will become part of our standard operating procedure for first-year student-athletes when the incoming class of first-year students arrives in the summer. We will target students with the highest academic need while recognizing the challenges that all student-athletes confront as they transition to higher education. Holistic academic planning will be offered to all student-athletes and required for specific groups. Considering the disparity in the quality of education and the increase in mental health concerns over the past two years (due to Covid-19), we expect to see an increased need for academic mentoring in areas of time management, organization, and study skills.

A way the athletic department transitions first year and transfer student-athletes to the university is by encouraging them to enroll in a three-credit course designed to teach skills to cope with the athletic, academic, social, and mental health demands of being a student-athlete. The holistic use of the TW calendar has been introduced as a weekly assignment to this course. Enrolled students upload a screenshot of their calendar each week. The TW calendar is the preferred method of planning, but students can use a paper planner if they prefer. As the academic support unit continues to expand the use of the TW calendar, we are hopeful more students will find value in using TW as their time management and organizational tool.

A specific improvement came from a suggestion that was made by women's basketball players in the Follow-Up Survey that the time spent in the study center should be more structured, which was the goal. TW allows for details to be added to the calendar items. We asked the mentors to add details to the calendar (see Appendix G), but there were limited details added to the calendar items. Moving forward, I would suggest working backward on assignments; deciding what is due and then developing a written plan in the details portion of the calendar item to complete the task. This feature of the TW calendar will be discussed in greater details during the mentor training sessions at the start of the fall term. While we hire and train new mentors, we retain mentors who are not graduating. Building a staff of veteran and newly hired mentors will help to expand the program and gain feedback from mentors who have completed a year working with our student-athletes.

Planning, execution, and communication are critical skills to personal success; student-athletes are no exception. Society has placed tremendous pressure on student-athletes to manage their roles as college students and high-profile athletes. With the number of support staff involved in the daily athletic operations (see Figure 11) of these young people, it is unreasonable to put

academics and athletics commitments in two silos. Planning both simultaneously brings the student-athlete to terms with the following metacognitive questions and skills:

- What does my week look like?
- What academic work needs to be accomplished?
- How can I manage my academic and athletic commitments?
- Creating a plan
- Executing the plan
- Evaluating if the plan was followed

In the short term, this early intervention strategy builds an academic toolbox – incorporating academic time management and organizational skills into the athlete's day. The holistic calendar allows for transparency and collaboration in scheduling between the athlete and their athletic support staff. The data collected over the Fall 2021 semester demonstrates that 83% of the student-athletes who used this intervention recommend this planning method to their peers (Figure 12). Future research should examine the long-term outcomes of using this strategy. Is it possible for student-athletes to develop academic independence, confidence, and leadership skills as they learn to manage their own commitments and execute their day?

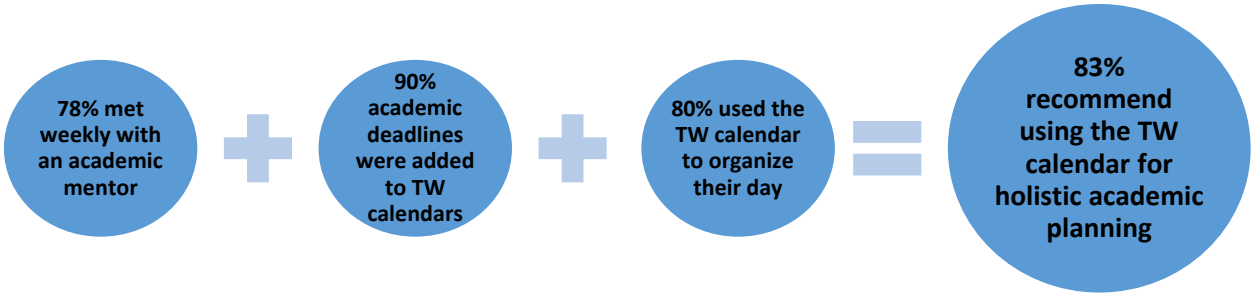


Figure 12. Summary of Findings to Support Use of the TW Calendar for Academic Planning

This mixed-methods study exemplified how holistic planning can improve time management and organization and create a sense of community among student-athletes and women's basketball support staff. The TeamWorks calendar provided a smart phone and computer-based platform to coordinate all aspects of the student-athlete experience. The inclusion of the sport performance team created a sense of community and simplified scheduling processes. Moving forward, our academic support unit will continue to use the TW calendar as a holistic planning tool expanding the program to include additional sports teams.

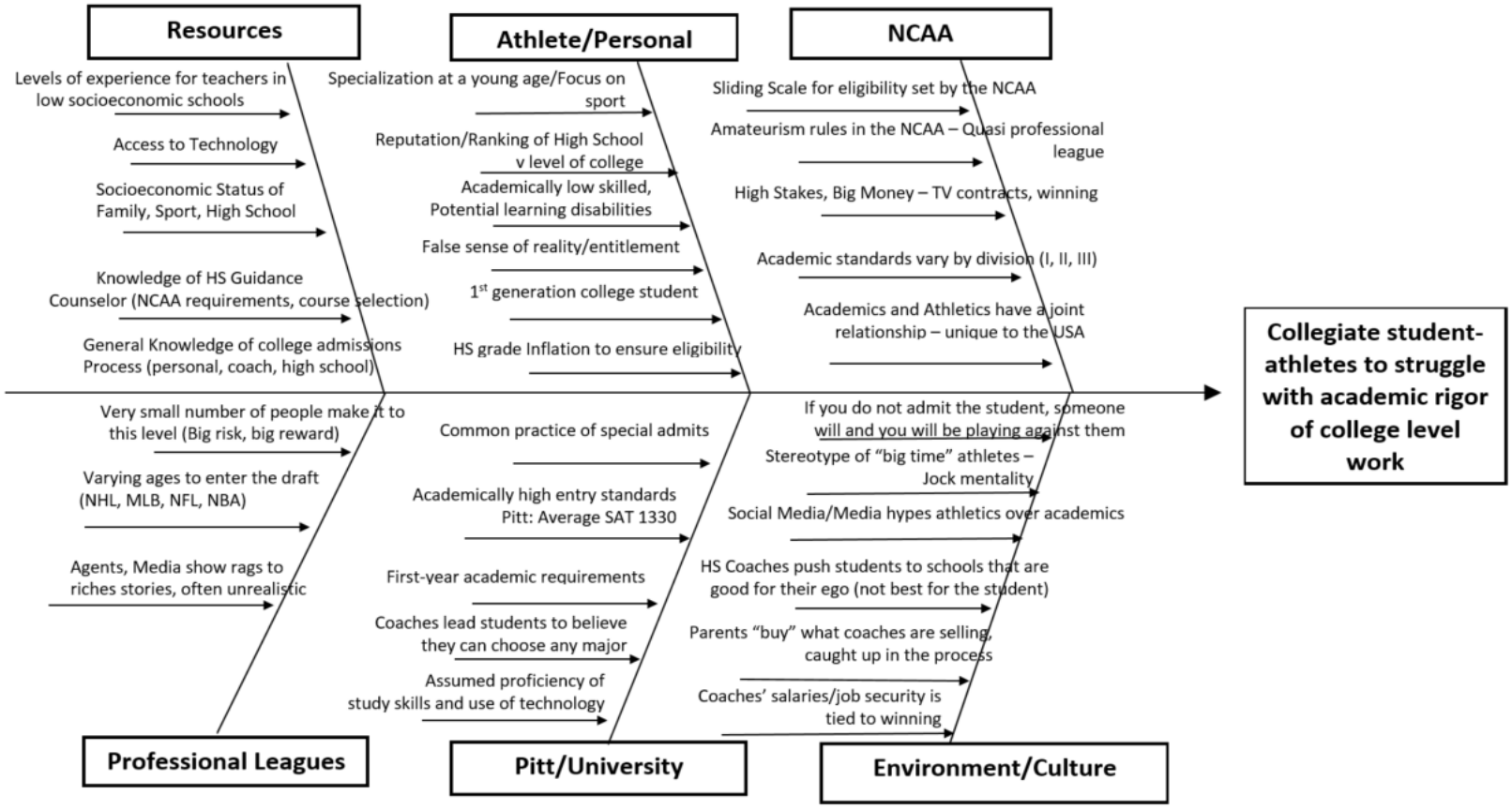
5.5 Conclusions

Not only does this study have merit at this university, it also supports the work of academic advisors and student-athletes nationwide. For example, other universities using TW could network and share findings. This would lead to discussions regarding their use of TW while evaluating different approaches using collaborative tools as well as mentors to encourage accountability. These conversations could occur at the university level and shared with colleagues at conference meetings and The National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A). Secondly, lessons learned from this study could form the beginnings of a handbook for advisors who advise collegiate student-athletes. This handbook could be useful since there are clear NCAA requirements for coaches to publish countable athletic related activities and for athletes to academically progress toward earning a degree, but no established best practice on accomplishing these objectives simultaneously. Student-athletes, coaches, and support staff could benefit from specific examples of efficiently manage the many demands on the student-athlete's

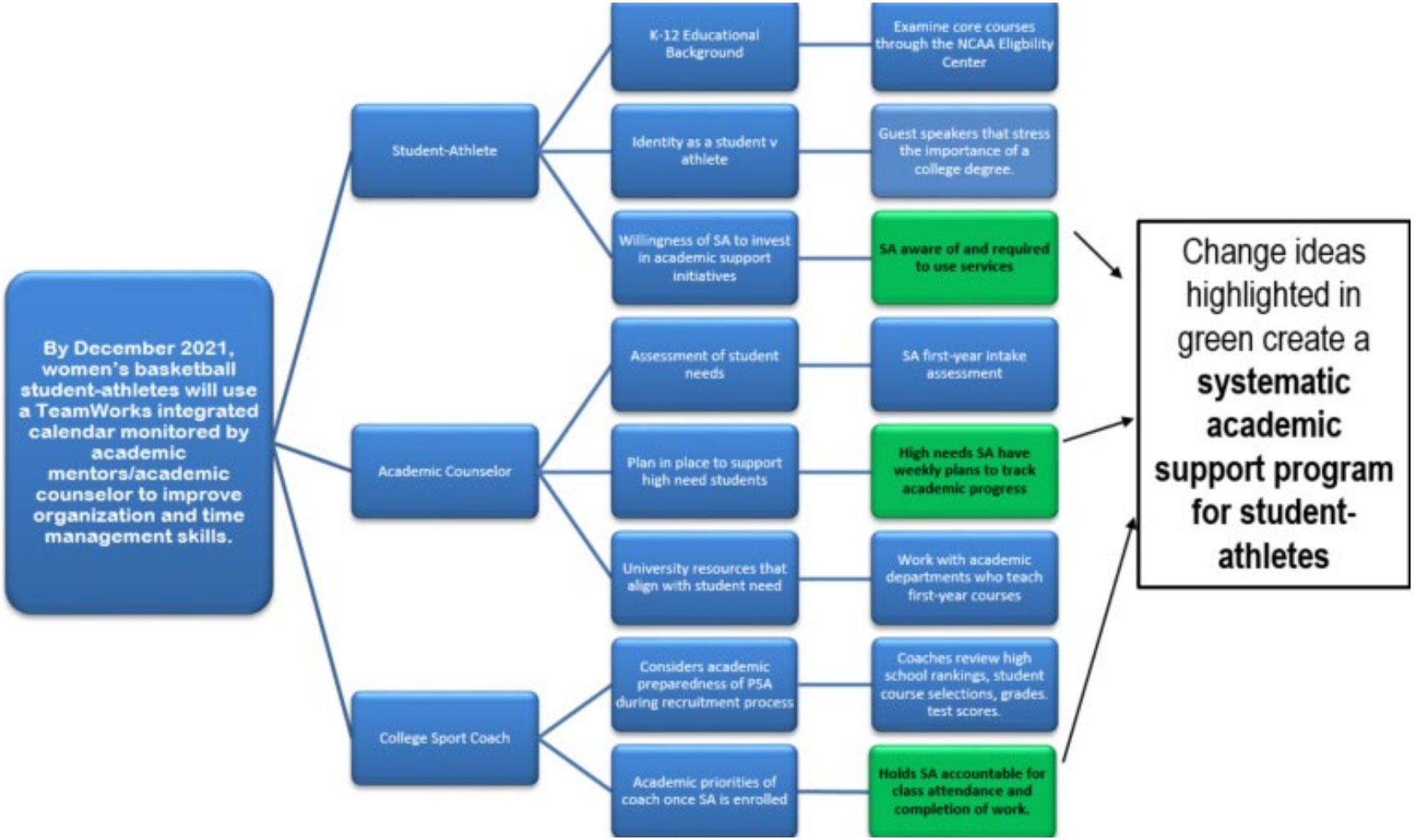
schedules. Over time, collaboration around these procedures and technology tools could inform changes in NCAA programming.

Future research should investigate how recent changes to name, image, and likeness legislation will impact student-athletes' ability to manage their time and stay focused on earning a degree. In conclusion, this study forged a path for researchers and athletic academic advisors to examine the demands on student-athletes' time and discover ways to help them manage their schedules to pursue their academic and athletic goals.

Appendix A Fishbone Diagram



Appendix B Driver Diagram



Appendix C Gantt Chart

Academic Support Intervention for WBB Student-Athletes

University of Pittsburgh ASSSA
Christina Tilly Sheets

Sun, 8/22/2021

1

TASK	PROGRESS	START	DAYS	END
PLAN				
Review Overview with Committee Member, Babs Mowery	0%	8/22/21	7	8/29/21
Revise/Submit Overview	0%	8/29/21	2	8/31/21
Schedule Proposal with Committee	0%	8/31/21	4	9/4/21
Present Overview to Committee	0%	9/13/21	10	9/23/21
IRB Approval	0%	9/23/21	3	9/26/21
Identify and Inform Participants and Key Stakeholders	0%	9/26/21	3	9/29/21
Schedule mentor appointments and study hours	0%	9/26/21	3	9/29/21
DO				
Obtain informed consent	0%	9/29/21	3	10/2/21
Conduct WBB Pre Survey (Is this needed?)	0%	10/2/21	1	10/3/21
Add all key assignment dates to Teamworks (TW) calendar	0%	10/3/21	5	10/8/21
Confirm TW calendar dates are accurate (Sunday/Monday, 10 weeks)	0%	10/3/21	70	12/12/21
WBB SA attends weekly mentor appointment (10 weeks)	0%	10/3/21	70	12/12/21
WBB SA completes weekly to-do sheet (Sunday/Monday, 10 weeks)	0%	10/3/21	70	12/12/21
WBB SA attends weekly scheduled study hours (10 weeks)	0%	10/3/21	70	12/12/21
WBB SA completes weekly Qualtrics survey (Friday/Saturday, 10 weeks)	0%	10/8/21	70	12/17/21
Key stakeholders complete weekly Qualtrics survey (Friday/Saturday, 10 week	0%	10/8/21	70	12/17/21
Progress Report - Week 5 of term	0%	9/27/21	4	10/1/21
Progress Report - Week 10 of term	0%	11/1/21	4	11/5/21
STUDY				
Code Data	0%	1/10/22	15	1/25/22
Analyze Data	0%	1/25/22	10	2/4/22
Consult with committee member on data	0%	2/4/22	4	2/8/22
Draft summary of data analysis	0%	2/8/22	10	2/18/22
Share summary with committee members for feedback	0%	2/18/22	10	2/28/22
ACT				
Consider adjustments for future iterations	0%	3/1/22	7	3/8/22
Summarize and Conclude	0%	3/8/22	15	3/23/22
Submit Final DiP to committee for review	0%	3/23/22	7	3/30/22
Revise based on committee recommendaitons	0%	3/30/22	5	4/4/22
Schedule Defense	0%	3/30/22	5	4/4/22
Defend DiP	0%	4/4/22	18	4/22/22
Final Revisions	0%	4/22/22	10	5/2/22
EDT Formatting and Publication	0%	5/2/22	15	5/17/22

Appendix D PDSA Form

PDSA Form

Test Title:	Student-athlete academic planning using an online calendar and weekly to-do sheet and an academic mentor	Date:	
Tester:	Tilly Sheets	Cycle #:	1
What Change Idea is being tested?	Developing student-athlete academic success using online calendars with academic mentors	Driver:	Systems in place to support underprepared student-athletes
What is the overall goal/hypothesis you are testing?	Student-athlete academic performance will improve as a results of incorporating an integrated calendar into weekly academic mentor meetings while informing key stakeholders involved with the student-athletes academic and athletic success.		

1) PLAN **Details: Describe the who/what/where/when for the test. Include your data collection plan.**			**2) DO** Briefly describe what happened during the test, surprises, difficulty getting data, obstacles, successes, etc.
Participants in this PDSA intervention are women's basketball student-athletes who have been identified as academically underprepared for college level work based on high school grades, attendance patterns, and/or standardized test scores and/or upperclassmen who identify strongly as athletes and require academic support services to achieve personal academic success. The identified student-athletes will use an online calendar through a platform called TeamWorks to track assignment dates in conjunction with class, practice, travel and games; complete weekly to-do sheets to track how that work will be completed; and meet weekly meeting with an academic mentor and/or academic counselor who will support and coordinate academic activities. The online calendar is shared with the student-athletes performance team (coaches, trainers, and other support staff).			
Questions: Questions you have about what will happen. What do you want to learn?	**Predictions:** Make a prediction for each question. Not optional.	**Data:** Data you'll collect to test predictions.	**What were your results?** Comment on your predictions in the box below. Were they correct? Record any data summaries as well.
Will required student-athletes regularly complete weekly to-do sheets and keep an up-to-date comprehensive online calendar?	Student-athletes will only complete weekly tasks if required to by their academic counselor and mentor. If messaging is consistent, all of the required student-athletes will complete the online calendar.	Qualitative data collected through check of weekly TeamWorks (TW) calendar monitoring. I have the same access to the TW calendar as the student-athletes. Quantitative data collected through a weekly Qualtrics survey.	
How do student-athletes completing a weekly to-do sheet impact academic performance and establish an academic routine?	If the academic counselor and mentor are persistent in checking the weekly to-do sheet, the integrated calendar will improve organization, time management and overall communication with the student-athlete, coaches, and their support staff.	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of student-athletes. Quantitative data collected during weeks 5 and 10 through faculty progress reports (grades and attendance).	
Are key stakeholders committed to using the TW calendar to engage with student-athletes?	This will require a shift in thinking. Key stakeholders often plan and then add to the calendar rather than consult the calendar, consider options, and then schedule the appointment.	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of key stakeholders in the student-athlete's athletic and academic experience (Strength and Conditioning Coach, Athletic Trainer, Sports Dietician, Associate Head Coach).	
Does using an integrated calendar assist key stakeholders with overall planning of academic and athletic activities?	If the student-athletes support team (key stakeholders) uses the integrated calendar, the student-athlete will feel like academic have a place in the student-athlete experience.	Quantitative data collected through weekly Qualtrics surveys of key stakeholders in the student-athlete's athletic and academic experience (Strength and Conditioning Coach, Athletic Trainer, Sports Dietician, Associate Head Coach).	

4) ACT Describe modifications and/or decisions for the next cycle; what will you do next?	**3) STUDY** What did you learn?
	To be determined

Appendix E Template Task List

TASK LIST Week:_____ NAME: _____

MONDAY

Course	What will I accomplish today

TUESDAY

Course	What will I accomplish today

WEDNESDAY

Course	What will I accomplish today

THURSDAY

Course	What will I accomplish today

FRIDAY

Course	What will I accomplish today

SATURDAY

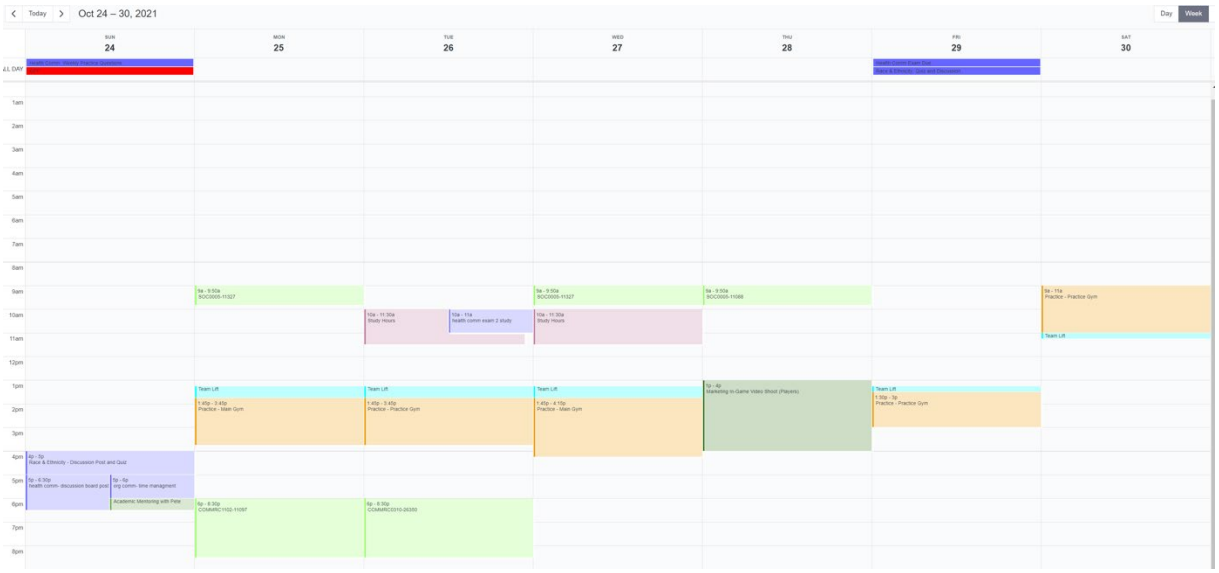
SUNDAY

REMINDERS:

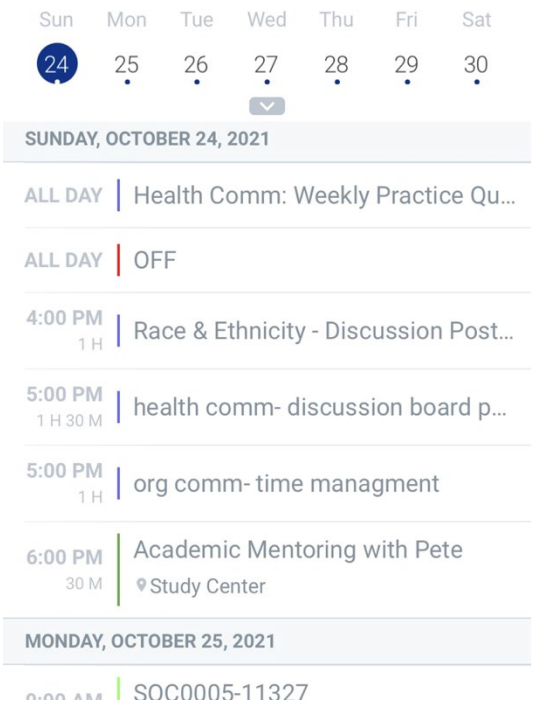
MAKE-UP WORK:

Appendix F TeamWorks Calendar Screen Shots

Desktop View:



Phone View:



Appendix G Student Athlete Weekly Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: TW Questions

Q1 You are being asked to participate in a research study that aims to improve organization and time management skills for student-athletes while increasing communication between student-athletes and support staff. The primary tool used in this intervention is the online integrated calendar feature in TeamWorks.

Please be honest when answering this questionnaire.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks expected for your participation in this study.

BENEFITS: The results of this study will be used to make future recommendations for using this integrated online calendar tool. Your perspective is very valuable and will help us to provide student-athletes and support staff with targeted academic support programming.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Using Qualtrics insures your anonymity. You will not be asked any questions that can be linked to your identity.

Page Break

Q2 I met with an academic mentor or academic counselor to plan my week.

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Q3 All of my academic deadlines and due dates were added to my TW calendar.

- No, there were a few deadlines that I forgot or did not add (1)
- No, I did not create an academic plan this week (2)
- Yes, all of my deadlines were added (3)

Q4 I created a separate task list on paper to plan my weekly academic work.

- No, I did not use a task list. (1)
- No, I added assignment details in my TW calendar (2)
- No, I did not add assignment details in my TW calendar or create a task list (3)
- Yes, I used a task list in addition to my TW calendar (4)

Q5 To the best of my knowledge, I turned in all of my assignments on time

- No, I was late turning in one assignment (1)
- No, I was late turning in multiple assignments (2)
- No, I have assignments that have not been turned in at all (3)
- Yes, all of my assignments were turned in on time (4)

Q10 I used my TW calendar to organize my daily activities.

- No, I only check my TW calendar for practice times (1)
- No, I do not like using my TW calendar for organizing my day (2)
- Yes, I regularly check my TW calendar for my daily (academic and athletic) activities (3)

Q6 I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor.

- No, I had to modify my academic plan due to athletic demands (2)
- No, I had to modify my academic plan due to personal demands (3)
- Yes, my academic plan was followed as planned (4)

Q14 How comfortable are you using the TW technology to add appointments to your own TW calendar - specifically the computer based calendar tool?

- Extremely uncomfortable (1)
- Somewhat uncomfortable (2)
- Neither comfortable or uncomfortable (3)
- Somewhat comfortable (4)
- Extremely comfortable (5)

Display This Question:
If I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor. = No, I had to modify my academic plan due to athletic demands

Q7 If you needed to modify plans due to athletic demands, please explain what athletic demands led to your change in plans.

_____

Display This Question:
If I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor. = No, I had to modify my academic plan due to personal demands

Q8 If you needed to modify plans due to personal demands, are you able to elaborate on the personal demands that led to your change in plans.

_____

Display This Question:
If I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor. = No, I had to modify my academic plan due to athletic demands
Or I followed the academic plan created by me and my academic mentor. = No, I had to modify my academic plan due to personal demands

Q9 If you had to change your weekly plan, did you ask for assistance in reorganizing your calendar?

- No, I made changes on my own (1)
- Yes, a coach or other athletic staff member helped me update my calendar (2)
- Yes, an academic counselor helped me update my calendar (3)
- Yes, my academic mentor who helped me update my calendar (4)

Q15 I had to plan my academics around a home basketball game this week?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Display This Question:
If I had to plan my academics around a home basketball game this week? = Yes

Q17 Did game day preparations or playing in this game disrupt your ability execute your academic plan?

- No, game day preparations or the game did not disrupt my academic plan (1)
- Yes, my PREPARATION for the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (2)
- Yes, PLAYING in the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (3)
- Yes, PREPARING for the game AND PLAYING in the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (4)

Q16 I had to plan my academic around an away game this week?

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Display This Question:
If I had to plan my academic around an away game this week? = Yes

Q18 Did travel, game day preparations, or playing in this game disrupt your ability to execute your academic plan?

- No, travel, game day preparations or the game did not disrupt my academic plan (1)
- Yes, TRAVEL to the competition site disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (5)
- Yes, my PREPARATION for the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (2)
- Yes, PLAYING in the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (3)
- Yes, TRAVEL, PREPARING for the game, AND PLAYING in the game disrupted my ability to execute my academic plan (4)

Page Break

Q11 I would recommend the following improvements for next week's academic planning session.

_____

End of Block: TW Questions

Appendix H Performance Team Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 You are being asked to participate in a research study that aims to improve organization and time management skills for student-athletes while increasing communication between student-athletes and support staff. The primary tool used in this intervention is the online integrated calendar feature in TeamWorks.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks expected for your participation in this study.

BENEFITS: The results of this study will be used to make future recommendations for using this integrated online calendar tool. Your perspective is very valuable and will help us to provide student-athletes and support staff with targeted programming.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Using Qualtrics insures your anonymity. You will not be asked any questions that can be linked to your identity.

Page Break

Q2 Prior to scheduling an appointment with or for a student-athlete, I referenced the student-athletes' availability using the TW calendar.

- No, I relied on the student-athlete to know their own schedule/availability (1)
- Most of the time, but only when the student-athlete did not know their own availability (2)
- Most of the time, when I had access to my computer or phone (3)
- Yes, I made a point to check availability in TW before confirming an appointment with a student-athlete (4)

Q5 I added appointments I scheduled for student-athletes into their TW calendar.

- No, I asked the student-athlete to add their appointment (1)
- I had good intentions of adding the appointments, but I forgot (2)
- Yes, I added all appointments I scheduled (3)
- I did not schedule any new appointments this week (4)

Q4 I feel more connected to the student-athletes I work with knowing I am able to see their academic commitments alongside their athletic schedule.

- No, I feel like academic responsibilities of student-athletes are outside the scope of my job role (1)

- Yes, I do not regularly think about how academic obligations impact athletic demands (2)
- Yes, it helps me to work with the student-athlete in a more holistic planning process (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q6 I have found that since the student-athletes and our team are using the TW calendar, I am also using the TW calendar to plan my day (instead of another online calendar).

- No, I do not use an online calendar. I plan my day using mental notes. (1)
- No, I put all of my calendar items on an Outlook or Google calendar (2)
- Yes, I plan my day using the TW calendar (3)

Q7 How comfortable are you using the TW technology to add appointments to your own or others TW calendar - specifically the computer based calendar tool?

- Extremely uncomfortable (1)
- Somewhat uncomfortable (2)
- Neither comfortable or uncomfortable (3)
- Somewhat comfortable (4)
- Extremely comfortable (5)

Page Break

Q5 I would make the following recommendations for improving this process in the upcoming week:

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix I Student Athlete Follow Up Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q2 Thank you for your participation in my project throughout the Fall semester. As part of my Doctorate of Education program, I am conducting a follow up questionnaire for those who participated in the intervention related to using a TeamWorks calendar and a mentor. This survey will be reported without using individual names and there are no wrong answers. I value your opinion and I am interested in understanding how I can better support your academic needs.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks expected for your participation in this study.

BENEFITS: The results of this study will be used to make future recommendations for using this integrated online calendar tool. Your perspective is very valuable and will help us to provide student-athletes and support staff with targeted academic support programming.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Using Qualtrics insures your anonymity. You will not be asked any questions that can be linked to your identity.

Page Break

Q3 These first few questions will focus on your behaviors BEFORE the start of the Fall 2021 semester. AGAIN...This about what you did BEFORE we started using the TeamWorks (TW) calendar. I am looking for more than one-word answers.

Focusing on academics, how did you plan your week prior to the start of Fall 2021 semester? (you may have more than one answer)

- I used the Canvas calendar (1)
- I used an academic calendar (pen and paper) (2)
- I used a combination of the Canvas calendar and a planner. (3)
- I relied on my academic counselor to tell me what I needed to each week. (4)
- Other (write in how you planned) (5)

_____

Q4 In previous semesters, how often did you check your TW calendar?

_____

Q5 In previous semesters, did you add your own appointments to the TW calendar? If you did, can you provide some examples? If no, is there reason why you did not?

_____

Page Break

Q6 The next few questions will pertain to your academic planning for the FALL 2021 semester and your attitudes toward using the TeamWorks calendar. Give as many details as possible.

Q7 Did your meeting with your academic mentor help you plan your week? (you may have more than one answer)

- Yes, my mentor was very helpful (1)
- Yes, but I could plan the week on my own (2)
- No, my mentor was not helpful (3)
- Anything else you would like to add about your mentor appointment? (4)

_____

Q8 Did you and your mentor discuss how to implement your weekly plan? (you may have more than one answer)

- Yes, we created a weekly plan. (1)
- We sometimes created a plan for my week. (2)
- No, we just added my dates to my calendar. (3)
- Anything else you would like to add about your weekly plan? (4)

_____

Q9 Did the use of the TeamWorks calendar increase your awareness of what you needed to accomplish each week? (you may have more than one answer)

- Yes, it helped to keep me organized. (1)
- Yes, but I prefer to keep my due dates on a paper planner (2)
- No, I did not check due dates on my TW calendar (3)
- Anything else you would like to add about awareness of due dates? (4)

_____

Q10 Members of the women's basketball staff were involved in this research. What is your perception of the staff involvement using the TeamWorks calendar to plan team activities? (which of these statements do you agree with, check all that apply)

- The staff was more invested in using the TW calendar (1)
- The staff checked my TW calendar before asking to meet with me (2)
- The staff added appointments they schedule with me to my TW calendar (3)
- The staff expected my TW calendar to be up to date (4)
- The staff expected me to add my own appointments to my TW calendar (even if they scheduled the appointment for/with me) (5)

- For the most part, the staff's use of the TW calendar did not change from how they used the TW calendar in previous semesters (6)
- There are some staff who do not use the TW calendar at all (7)

Q11 Would you recommend other student-athletes utilize an ACADEMIC MENTOR to organize and plan their weekly activities?

- Definitely not (1)
- Probably not (2)
- Might or might not (3)
- Probably yes (4)
- Definitely yes (5)

Q12 Would you recommend other student-athletes and sports' staffs utilize an INTEGRATED TeamWorks CALENDAR for holistic athletic and academic planning?

- Definitely not (1)
- Probably not (2)
- Might or might not (3)
- Probably yes (4)
- Definitely yes (5)

Q13 Write at least one POSITIVE takeaway from working with a mentor and/or organizing your academic plan using a TW calendar?

_____

Q14 Write at least one way that working with a mentor and/or organizing your academic plan using a TW calendar could be IMPROVED?

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix J Mentoring Appointment Checklist for Organization and Time Management

- **Open Canvas and TeamWorks (pitt.teamworksapp.com)**
- **Review previous week**
  - If anything has not been completed, make a note in Pathways report and/or notify counselor and add to TW calendar to be completed ASAP.
- **Organization and Time Management**
  - You can either add everything directly on the TW calendar or you can write down tasks on the Task List and transfer them to the TW calendar
  - Academically, plan for the current week and for the week after
  - Calendar should be completed by the end of the mentoring session
  - Time should be scheduled from the time the student plans to wake up until the plan to go to bed
  - Not every minute needs to be accounted for, but time should be scheduled so all class work is completed – in the study center or the student's structured academic space, i.e.: not in bed
  - You can add recurring events if they are weekly or daily
  - Items to include on the TW calendar (practice and class pre-loaded)
    - ✓ **Tutoring/Mentoring appointments (add in purple/Academic)**
    - ✓ **Study Time including location (add in purple/Academic)**
      - **In the DETAILS section**
        - **What should be accomplished during the study time – for example: read chapter; make notes for discussion questions; have writing tutor review discussion question; submit discussion question; etc.)**
    - ✓ **Study hours in the Academic Center should be accounted for on the calendar**
      - **SA should know how many hours they have**
    - ✓ **Assignments (all due dates, add in purple/Academic)**
      - **Either on the top of the day or at the time the task is due**
    - ✓ **Additional appointments or meetings you plan to attend (add in tan/General)**
    - ✓ **Additional athletic activities – meetings with coaches or other staff (add in tan/General)**
- **Skill Building**
  - If you finish before the 30 minutes is up and you feel like the students has no concerns completing tasks on their own, you can let them go.
  - If you have extra time and feel like it would be helpful, work on drilling down on academic preparedness
    i. Examples: exactly how to study for an upcoming exam; locating review questions for exams; printing readings or PPT slides that would be useful; notetaking skills; ask review questions for upcoming exam, etc.
  - If you are unsure, ask a counselor.
- **Pathways Summary**
  - Complete a Pathways Summary for each ***scheduled*** appointment

Appendix K TeamWorks and Mentoring Follow-Up Semi Structured Interview

(Adapted from Boyce and Neale, 2006)

Below is a protocol for a semi-structured interview of collegiate women's basketball players assessing their experience using a TeamWorks calendar to integrate their academic and athletic commitments throughout the Fall 2021 semester. These student-athletes participated in a research project where they met with an academic mentor each week for ten weeks to identify and plan their academic commitments for the upcoming two weeks, as well as review the previous week's deadlines. This interview is a follow up to their experiences participating in this research project. Are you willing to participate in this interview? Do you consent to having this interview recorded? (If yes, turn on the recording here).

Hello. Thank you for taking time to talk to me today and for your participation in my project throughout this semester. As part of my Doctorate of Education program, I am conducting follow up interviews for those who participated in the intervention related to using a TeamWorks calendar.

This interview will take less than fifteen minutes. I plan to record our conversation so I can review the answers to your questions after our talk and I do not want to miss any of your valuable feedback. This conversation will be reported without using individual names and there are no wrong answers. I value your opinion and I am interested in understanding how I can better support your academic needs. If I ask a question you do not feel comfortable answering, you may skip that question.

At this point, do you have any questions?

Please feel free to ask questions as they arise.

Questions:

These first few questions will focus on your behaviors prior to the start of the Fall 2021 semester:

1. In previous semesters, how often would you check your TeamWorks (TW) calendar?
    a. Before Fall 2021, did you have a position that required you to use the TW calendar?
    b. In what ways did you use the calendar?
    c. Did you add appointments to the calendar?
        i. If yes, can you provide an example?
        ii. If no, is there is reason you did not add appointments?
2. From a holistic planning standpoint, did you think about the multiple time demands placed on student-athletes?

The next few questions will pertain to planning for the Fall 2021 semester and your attitudes toward using the TW calendar.

1. The student-athletes were asked to keep an up-to-date TW calendar. When you scheduled individual or group sessions, did you consult the TW calendar to inform your decisions?
    a. Can you provide an example?
2. Do you add appointments to individual or group TW calendars?
    a. If yes, explain your role in adding appointments.
    b. If no, how are appointments you create added to the calendar?
3. If you met with a student-athlete, did you consult their TW calendar to discuss what they had scheduled for that day or week?
    a. Can you provide an example?
4. Did you receive any positive or negative feedback from the student-athletes regarding their use of the TW calendar?
    a. Can you provide an example?
5. Would you recommend other student-athletes and sports' staffs utilize an integrated TW calendar for holistic athletic and academic planning?

Can you think of anything you would like to add?

This concludes the interview.

Thank you for your time.

Turn recording off

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