

**DEVELOPMENT OF A
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS MODEL
FOR DIVISION I-A
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS**

by

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This study investigates strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments competing in Division I-A, the Football Bowl Subdivision. Specifically, this study attempts to identify the formal strategic planning processes used by Division I-A athletic departments. Formal planning processes were identified by searching for evidence of traditional strategic planning process components commonly cited in strategic planning literature – goal setting, environmental scanning, employee participation, and plan implementation tactics. In addition, this study identifies the benefits of strategic planning and the challenges that make strategic planning a difficult task for intercollegiate athletic departments. The study culminates with the creation of a strategic planning process model specifically for intercollegiate athletic departments. It is hoped that this model, combined with greater knowledge of strategic planning processes and the benefits and challenges of strategic planning, will allow Division I-A athletic departments to maximize the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the use of strategic planning by athletic departments that compete in the Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly and more commonly known as Division I-A) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). There are 119 schools in the Division I-A categorization (NCAA, 2007). The study identifies which of these athletic departments engage in strategic planning and investigates the specific processes they use to develop their strategic plans. In addition, the study identifies the benefits of strategic planning and the challenges that may prevent Division I-A athletic departments from using strategic planning as a management tool.

Intercollegiate athletic departments competing at the Division I-A level of the NCAA operate in a dynamic environment. As the leaders of these departments, Athletic Directors face the challenges of dealing with a multitude of constituents including student-athletes, the general student and faculty population, alumni, media, parents, donors, coaches, legislators, and university administrators. In addition Athletic Directors are asked to interpret complex NCAA rules and to create an environment which supports and motivates coaches so their players achieve success both on the playing field and in the classroom.

The NCAA Executive Committee (2004) clearly portrays the complex nature of intercollegiate athletics as it explains the challenges that athletic departments face:

The complexity of intercollegiate athletics has increased enormously over the past decade. The NCAA has more member schools and more student-athlete participants than ever before. We can point to increasing numbers of academic success stories, but at the same time we must acknowledge important areas in which we are not meeting our educational obligations. We have more revenue, but we also contend with higher expenses. We have public backing, as indicated by attendance and the zeal with which fans follow their teams, but we endure widespread skepticism about the link between our stated purpose and our actions. (p. 1)

This complex nature of intercollegiate athletics creates a dynamic environment in which athletic departments compete. As the environment changes, athletic departments are forced to adjust their strategies to remain effective. It is suggested in the literature that strategic planning is a management tool that can help organizations adapt to these changing environments.

The private sector, driven by a profit motive, has long recognized that a strategic fit between organizational goals and capabilities and changing environmental conditions is critical to the achievement of these goals (Kriemadis, 1997). More recently, public and non-profit organizations, including higher education institutions, have also realized the benefits of strategic planning and have used strategic planning to address and respond to their rapidly changing environments. Kotler and Murphy (1981) go so far as to state, "If colleges and universities are to survive in the troubled years ahead, a strong emphasis on planning is essential" (p. 470). Although higher education institutions as a whole may subscribe to the philosophy of strategic planning, it is unclear how pervasive strategic planning is among intercollegiate athletic

departments. In one of the few published studies measuring strategic planning by NCAA Division I-A athletic departments, Kriemadis (1997) found that, in the mid-1990's, 43.4% of these departments had formal, written strategic plans. Kriemadis concluded that "Strategic planning may help athletic departments anticipate and respond effectively to their new situations, and develop strategies necessary to achieve the athletic department's mission and objectives" (p. 238).

This study examines strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments. The research investigates the use of strategic planning by these departments and identifies specific steps in the planning process to determine how the plan is developed and implemented. Additionally, the research identifies the benefits of strategic planning and the main challenges that prevent Division I-A schools from engaging in strategic planning.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Just as Kotler and Murphy (1981) point out the essential role of planning to the survival of the university as a whole, planning is also of fundamental importance to the survival of the intercollegiate athletic department. Yow, Migliore, Bowden, Stevens, and Loudon (2000) indicate that many athletic departments are looking for ways to adapt to changing environments as they struggle to compete and, for some, to survive. After reviewing the literature on strategic planning this study examines the use of strategic planning by colleges and universities competing in the NCAA's Division I-A subdivision. Specifically, this study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do athletic departments in Division I-A engage in strategic planning?
2. For athletic departments that do engage in strategic planning, do they follow a process for plan development and implementation and what are the components of this process?
3. What do Division I-A athletic departments perceive to be the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool?
4. What challenges make it difficult for intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A to engage in strategic planning?
5. Can a strategic planning process model be developed specifically for Division I-A athletic departments?

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine how strategic planning is used by athletic departments in Division I-A of the NCAA. This study includes a review of the processes used to develop and implement plans, the benefits of strategic planning, and the challenges that make it difficult for athletic departments to plan strategically. Finally, the study attempts to develop a process model specifically for strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments.

Since the literature suggests that strategic planning is an effective tool for helping organizations deal with changing environments, improving the strategic planning capacity of Athletic Directors and their departments provides them with a valuable management tool that may be important for them to sustain long-term effectiveness in the dynamic environment of intercollegiate athletics. By enhancing the knowledge of strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments, this study can contribute to improving the effectiveness of individual athletic departments and the sustainability of intercollegiate athletics as a whole.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Intercollegiate athletics at the Division I-A level occurs in a competitive and dynamic environment. Athletic Directors must meet the demands and needs of numerous constituents including student-athletes, donors, fans, alumni, parents, university administrators, legislators, coaches and staff. In addition, Athletic Directors are challenged to increase revenues while reducing expenditures, to graduate student-athletes while winning games, to provide fair and equitable gender opportunities with restricted budgets, and to market their teams and departments while maintaining a commitment to the ideals and missions of the higher education institutions of which they are a part. These often competing demands make intercollegiate athletics a difficult and challenging environment. As such, intercollegiate athletics is an area of higher education management that might benefit from more effective use of strategic planning as a management tool.

Despite this environment that seems appropriate for strategic planning, little research exists on strategic planning in collegiate athletics. In the only comprehensive study of strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments, Kriemadis (1997) found that less than half of the athletic departments surveyed were engaged in formal strategic planning. Noticing a lack of strategic planning knowledge in athletic departments, Yow et al. (2000) produced a primer on strategic planning intended to simplify the planning process and encourage use of strategic planning by athletic directors.

This study begins with a review of the literature on the broad topic of strategic planning. The literature review then narrows its focus to strategic planning in the public sector, strategic planning in higher education, and ultimately, strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics. The study then examines strategic planning by athletic departments in Division I-A. Since these

departments compete at the highest level of collegiate sports, the pressures to succeed are also at the highest level. These pressures come from various constituents and include expectations for financial, academic, marketing, fundraising, and competitive success. As such, management tools, such as strategic planning, that can improve effectiveness and the chances for success are worth investigation.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is that it identifies how prevalent strategic planning is among intercollegiate athletic departments at the Division I-A level and develops a process model to assist athletic departments with strategic planning. Even though Division I-A athletics is a vital and very visible part of higher education, there is little research on strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics. This study hopes to enrich the limited research in the field, to identify the processes used by athletic departments that do plan, and to identify both benefits of, and challenges to, strategic planning. By identifying the challenges athletic departments face when planning it is hoped that athletic departments will be able to break down these obstacles, thereby encouraging more widespread use of strategic planning in collegiate athletics. This planning philosophy is important to the long-term success of athletic departments and intercollegiate athletics as a whole.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Division I. A classification to designate colleges and universities that make the most significant financial commitment to intercollegiate athletics. Division I members of the NCAA must sponsor at least 14 sports (7 for men and 7 for women or 6 for men and 8 for women). In addition, Division I institutions must meet specified contest and participant minimums, attendance requirements, and minimum and maximum financial aid award limits (NCAA, 2006).

Division I-A. This is a classification assigned to colleges and universities in Division I who play football at the highest intercollegiate level. This classification is also known as the Football Bowl Subdivision. These football programs are usually fairly elaborate and are required to meet minimum attendance standards set by the NCAA (NCAA, 2007).

Football Bowl Subdivision. This is another way to refer to schools competing in Division I-A. Since the football programs of these athletic departments conclude their seasons in numerous bowl games, the classification is called the Football Bowl Subdivision. This is different than schools competing in Division I-AA which conclude the season with a playoff. Division I-AA is also called the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (NCAA, 2007).

Goals. Kotler and Murphy (1981) define a goal as, “an organizational objective that is made specific with respect to magnitude, time, and responsibility.” McKelvie (1986) explains that goals come from the institution’s mission and provide a general sense of institutional direction. They are typically more specific and shorter-term than the mission.

Higher Education. Education conducted at the post-secondary level by junior colleges, colleges and universities.

Intercollegiate athletics. Sports competition conducted between colleges and universities. For the purposes of this paper, these colleges and universities are members of the

NCAA and compete at the varsity level. This study distinguishes intercollegiate athletics from club or intramural sports by considering the competition of intercollegiate athletics to be governed by a national body such as the NCAA and to include financial aid awards to the student- athlete participants.

Mission. Kotler and Murphy (1981) describe mission as the basic purpose of an organization. The mission statement expresses what the organization is trying to accomplish and how it will accomplish it. (Kotler and Murphy, 1981)

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). An organization made up of colleges, universities and conferences – the members. According to the NCAA website, the members “establish programs to govern, promote and further the purposes and goals of intercollegiate athletics” (NCAA, 2006). The NCAA does not govern intercollegiate athletics, but rather supports and implements the decisions and rules established by the member colleges, universities, and conferences.

Objectives. Kotler and Murphy (1981) state that an “objective is a major variable that the organization will emphasize” (p. 478). According to McKelvie (1986), objectives are a specific desired result that the organization hopes to achieve.

Private organization. A business entity that exists to serve the needs of customers but has profit as a primary motivating value. The survival of these organizations is dependent upon their ability to achieve a profit and capital comes from private investors or reinvestment of profits.

Public organization. An entity that exists to serve the needs of customers but is not dependent on achieving a profit for survival. These non-profit entities receive funding from public sources, such as federal, state, or local municipalities to assist with operation and survival.

Strategic management. A management philosophy that uses the strategic planning process and the resulting strategic plan as its foundation. Strategic management brings the strategic plan to life and incorporates the plan in decision-making, control, and evaluation. Vinzant and Vinzant (1996) define strategic management as “a process that focuses on the long-term health of an organization. It primarily relies on the integration of strategic planning, resource allocation, and control and evaluation processes to achieve strategic goals” (p. 140).

Strategic planning. According to Bryson (2004) strategic planning is “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (p. 6). Strategic planning typically involves a process of planning which results in the organization’s strategic plan.

Student-athlete. A term used in the intercollegiate athletics field to designate students who participate in intercollegiate athletics while also enrolled in a full-time course load at a college or university. This research considers student-athletes at the Division I level of NCAA member institutions.

SWOT analysis. A widely recognized strategic management tool that provides a systematic method of matching an organization’s strengths and weaknesses with the external opportunities and threats it faces.

Values. These are principles and beliefs that guide the organization and its decision-making. Wilkinson and Monkhouse (1994) define values as, “the beliefs that underpin the organization’s management style and ethics.” Values might be such principles as integrity, teamwork, respect, etc.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research study focuses on the strategic planning processes of intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A. These schools compete at the highest level of intercollegiate competition within the NCAA. The commitment these institutions make to intercollegiate athletics is significant. They commit more resources – human, financial, and other – to the support of their athletic departments than schools participating at the Division II and III levels. As such, it is not certain that the results of this study can be applied to Division II and III athletic departments.

Additionally, sports managers at levels other than Division I intercollegiate athletics (high school, professional, amateur, etc.) should resist the temptation to apply this research directly to their sports organizations. The results may not be applicable to sports organizations other than those at the Division I level.

Review of the data collected for this study reveals another limitation to the study. There were some conflicts between data gathered through the survey questionnaire and data collected through personal interviews. Specifically, the survey data indicated a strong commitment to plan implementation through aligning the plan to the budget, management objectives, and performance evaluations. Personal interview data, however, found very little evidence of formal, deliberate efforts to create these alignments. This conflict in the data analysis is most likely the result of a socially desirable response bias. It appears that Athletic Directors may have answered questions in the survey to reflect the way they believed strategic planning should be occurring. They presented an ideal state of strategic planning. In personal interviews, where they could be probed more deeply, Athletic Directors presented the actual state of planning in their departments. The mixed methods approach to this study is intended to minimize this bias.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this literature review is to present a framework for this study on strategic planning. The review begins with an overview of strategic planning and the literature that shapes strategic planning discourse. While research varies on the definition of planning and the steps required in a planning process, the aim of this review is not to reach consensus on these definitions, but rather to enlighten the reader as to the research and literature that currently exists regarding strategic planning. The review then narrows the focus to literature on strategic planning in the public sector and the various theories about application of private sector strategic planning to the public organization. The transition from the private sector to the public sector is important because it mirrors the path of adoption for strategic planning to become a management practice in higher education.

The literature review then moves to strategic planning in higher education and investigates how higher education institutions are using strategic planning. The review discusses differences in strategic planning and long-range planning and the important role that goals can play in moving from long-range planning to strategic planning. The literature review concludes with an overview of the research on strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments.

2.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Dooris, Kelley, and Trainer (2002) acknowledge that strategic planning is still relatively new as a management practice. The authors identify the period of time between 1950 and 1970 as the time when strategic planning emerged and note that “the last several decades have been a boom period for strategic planning” (p. 6). As strategic planning has grown in popularity, researchers have devoted more time and attention to defining strategic planning. Bryson (2004) defines strategic planning as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (p. 6). Mintzberg (1994) says the key to understanding planning is the concept of formalization. He defines strategic planning as “a formalized procedure to produce an articulated result, in the form of an integrated system of decisions” (p. 12). Wilkinson and Monkhouse (1994) define strategic planning as “a method used to position an organization, through prioritizing its use of resources according to identified goals, in an effort to guide its direction and development over a period of time” (p. 16). Talk of a “disciplined effort,” a “formalized procedure,” and “a method,” points toward the idea of a process and, as such, the discussion begins with a review of the strategic planning process.

2.1.1 The Strategic Planning Process

Much of the literature on strategic planning focuses on the idea of a system or a process for planning. Authors commonly identify the steps involved in the planning process and treat planning as a very deliberate process that culminates in an explicit plan. Bryson (2004) provides a simple structure for the strategic planning process by defining the ABC’s of strategic planning.

According to Bryson, A is where you are, B is where you want to be and C is how you get there. The vision, mission, and goals of the organization help it move from A to B. Strategy formulation connects A to C and strategy implementation connects B to C. Bryson's more complex planning process is a 10 step "strategy change cycle." These 10 steps include:

1. Initiate and agree on a strategic planning process.
2. Identify organizational mandates.
3. Clarify organizational mission and values.
4. Assess the external and internal environments to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
5. Identify the strategic issues facing the organization.
6. Formulate strategies to manage issues.
7. Review and adopt the strategies or strategic plan.
8. Establish an effective organizational vision.
9. Develop an effective implementation process.
10. Reassess the strategies and the strategic planning process. (p. 32)

Bryson (2004) cautions against the temptation organizations face to adopt planning processes precisely as they are written and he reminds readers that the strategy change cycle, like all planning processes, is a general approach and it should be tailored to fit the specific situation of the organization in order to be most effective. Marshall (2004) cautions leaders of higher education institutions that a "cookie-cutter" approach to strategic planning is not effective, noting that, "General prescriptions for 'fixing' higher education rarely work because colleges and universities are complex civic institutions with singular identities" (p. 11). Lorange and Vancil (2000) support this notion that there is no single best system for planning and suggest that the planning process must be developed specific to the organization to take into account the particular situation and unique characteristics of each organization.

Bryson and Roering (1988) use an eight step process as a framework for their analysis of strategic planning by governments – “an initial agreement or ‘plan for planning’; identification and clarification of mandates; mission formulation; external environmental assessment; internal environmental assessment; strategic issue identification; strategy development; and development of a description of the organization of the future” (p. 995). Hosmer (1982) identifies a simple outline for the strategy formulation process. According to this outline, the process begins with evaluating a range of strategic alternatives, then compares these alternatives against opportunities and threats of the environment and internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and culminates with the selection of a single strategy.

Eadie (1983) identifies a strategic planning process that also consists of five basic activities: environmental scanning; resource audit to assess strengths and weaknesses; setting strategic objectives; strategy formulation; allocation of resources and implementation. Streib (1992) discusses strategic planning in terms of its impact on strategic decision making. He details five steps in the strategic planning process:

1. A mission statement that establishes goals and objectives
2. An environmental scan
3. An organizational scan to determine strengths and weaknesses
4. Strategic objectives and implementation
5. Implementation and monitoring. (p. 341)

The literature seems to agree that effective strategic planning involves a process and that the process is important for successful implementation of the plan. Paris (2004) writes, “the process by which the campus strategic plan is developed strongly influences how fully it is implemented” (p. 122). This study, understanding the importance of the strategic planning

process, will attempt to identify processes used in strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments.

In addition to overall process, another common element in the strategic planning literature is the idea of environmental or external scanning. Most authors include the idea of environmental scanning or an environmental assessment as part of the planning process. This environmental scanning component is an important part of strategic planning and helps to distinguish strategic planning from other types of planning.

2.1.2 Environmental Scanning

While there is not complete agreement from researchers on the specific steps in the planning process, much of the literature acknowledges that planning must include a scan of the environment and an assessment of the impact of environmental changes on the organization. Trainer (2004) writes, “Environmental scanning is crucial at the beginning of any planning process....” (p. 133). Sevier (2003) states, “At its most basic, strategic planning is all about creating an alignment between an organization’s day-to-day activities and its environment” (p.18). Lorange and Vancil (2000) identify the two major functions of a planning system as developing an integrated, coordinated, and consistent long-term plan of action, and facilitating adaptation of the corporation to environmental change. Bloom (1986) states that strategic planning “involves an assessment of an organization’s position and condition with respect to its environment” (p. 254).

Mintzberg (1978) identifies three basic forces that interact to form the basis for strategy formation in organizations. One force is the environment which presents continuous and irregular change. The second is the “organizational operating system,” or bureaucracy, that

attempts to act as a stabilizing force to adapt to the changing environment. The final force is leadership, which attempts to balance the two other forces by maintaining “the stability of the organization’s operating system while at the same time insuring its adaptation to environmental change” (p. 941). Vinzant and Vinzant (1996) support this relationship between internal and external forces by indicating that successful implementation of strategic management is not possible without addressing the complex mix of internal and external factors. Additionally, the authors identify that external factors are critical because they present problems that are difficult to overcome. Whereas internal challenges may often be resolved through a commitment or reallocation of time and resources, external problems are not so easily resolved.

Ruocco and Proctor (1994) suggest that an environmental analysis is a critical step in the planning process that must be performed to gather all the information necessary to develop appropriate strategies. The authors support the use of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis as an effective and systematic way of matching the organization’s strengths and weaknesses with the opportunities and threats that exist in the environment. Trainer (2004) also endorses SWOT analysis and suggests it “lies at the heart of strategic planning” (p. 133). Vinzant and Vinzant (1996) also discuss opportunities and threats and present the notion that the analysis of opportunities and threats is not only an important part of the planning process but the existence of these external forces is a catalyst for planning. Organizations are more likely to initiate and maintain strategic management systems because of the motivating factor presented by the existence of these opportunities and threats in the environment. The authors suggest that threats are in fact “often the only motivator powerful enough to generate sustained change on a large scale in complex organizations” (Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996, p. 144).

Environmental scanning is an important part of the strategic planning process because it allows organizations to anticipate what opportunities and threats may exist in the future. Organizations that plan effectively are then able to match these opportunities and threats with their own strengths and weaknesses. This “matching,” and the ability with which organizations can adapt to maximize their strengths and improve their weaknesses, given very specific opportunities and threats, is an important determinant of the long-term, sustainable success of an organization. Interestingly, while most researchers agree that environmental scanning is an important part of the strategic planning process, some have gone even further to suggest that environmental (or external) change is the catalyst that motivates organizations to engage in strategic planning. Environmental scanning, therefore, is not simply part of the process, but perhaps even the reason the process exists.

Evidence of environmental scanning can be considered a key indicator for determining whether strategic planning exists in an organization. If environmental scanning does not occur, it is likely that the organization does not engage in strategic planning. As such, as this study attempts to identify the extent of strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments, it will search for evidence of environmental scanning by these departments.

2.1.3 Strategic vs. Long-range Planning

It is important to note that the environmental component of the strategic plan is one way that researchers distinguish strategic planning from long-range planning. Poister and Streib (1999) characterize long-range planning as a “closed-system” orientation and contrast this with the “big picture” approach of strategic planning that “emphasizes the importance of external trends and forces as they are likely to affect the agency and its mission” (p. 309). Bloom (1986) indicates

that long-range planning systems analyze past activity to predict change, while strategic planning processes capitalize on new opportunities that are presented by a changing environment. Eadie (1983) writes, “The focus on understanding and interpreting an organization’s environment is a basic characteristic of strategic planning” (p. 448). He goes on to state that long-range planning and strategic planning actually have little in common. Eadie identifies that the focus of long-range planning is on the projection of current activities into the future which results in an extension of existing operational plans. Strategic planning, on the other hand, looks outward and focuses on organizational change.

Eadie’s conclusions serve to expand even further the importance of environmental scanning to the strategic planning process. As discussed previously, environmental scanning is a component of the process, a catalyst of the whole process, and now it is identified as the component that distinguishes strategic planning from long-range planning. This distinction is an important one in a study of strategic planning. In both the private sector and in higher education (including intercollegiate athletics) it can be argued that, for many years, long-range planning was considered to be sufficient. Organizations could look at their current operations and their own strengths and weaknesses and move forward with a neglect for the world outside their own walls. These organizations would simply extend their operational plans by projecting them into the future and moderately tweaking them based on the identified strengths and weaknesses. Eventually, the private sector was faced with a changing environment – increased competition (both foreign and domestic), economic pressures, changing political regimes, and others – which caused these organizations to look outside at external forces when planning for the future. Suddenly, it was important to view these external forces in terms of opportunities and threats and to determine how these fit with the organization’s strengths and weaknesses. With this view to

the outside, these organizations were able to develop strategic plans that caused them to make real, substantive changes in their strategies for capitalizing on the opportunities they identified during the planning process. It was no longer enough to simply expand on the existing operations; survival in the new environment would not allow such a simplistic approach.

Higher education institutions, and the intercollegiate athletic departments operating within these organizations, face many of the same pressures that caused the private sector to adopt a more strategic approach to planning. Certainly, economic pressures are a reality due to rising costs and limitations on revenue growth. Social and political pressures exist from the many, and often time competing, stakeholders in higher education. Competition in intercollegiate athletics has increased with regards to facilities development, recruiting, fundraising, and marketing. These environmental changes are a catalyst for intercollegiate athletic departments, much as they were for private sector organizations, to adopt new planning processes and to add strategic planning, with its environmental scanning component, to their repertoire of management tools.

2.1.4 People and the Planning Process

Another common theme in strategic planning literature deals with the role of people in the planning process. Generally, the literature acknowledges that people are an important part of the process and critical to successfully implementing strategic management (Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996; Bloom, 1986; Eadie, 1983; Streib 1992). Streib (1992) acknowledges that it is difficult to define the components of a successful strategic effort, but he identifies four management functions that he deems critical to the success of any strategic planning effort: leadership, human resources, managerial skills, and external support. The importance of people in the strategic

planning process is evident in the fact that three of the four critical functions specifically address people and their role in planning. Eadie (1983) states the importance of people to the planning process by writing, “And the human factor looms large in strategy implementation, as well as in formulation and selection of strategies” (p. 448). Hosmer (1982) describes strategic management as an organizational task. She writes, “Strategic management is an organizational task and requires an integrated effort by all members of the organization for successful completion” (p. 55). Bloom (1986) states that the “failure to involve interested parties in the planning process can reduce the chances for implementation” (p. 254). He goes on to acknowledge the relationship between ownership of the plan and accountability and suggests that involvement in the planning process leads to greater accountability for results of decisions.

Lorange and Vancil (2000) look at the specific role of the corporate planner and suggest that planning must be done by line managers because it is likely to fail if it is not a people-interactive process. The authors acknowledge the existence of and need for corporate planners but view the corporate planner as an organizer who facilitates the process of planning. Bryson and Roering (1988) acknowledge a similar role that they refer to as a process champion. In their study of strategic planning in government, they identify that a strong process champion was present everywhere that strategic planning was implemented. In her study of planning by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Paris (2004) notes the use of “point people” that are assigned to specific priorities identified in the plan. These point people can communicate across the university and break down the silos to get people focused on the institution’s common goal. Paris identifies a point person’s responsibilities as “developing the overall strategy, coordinating the whole, clarifying the roles and responsibilities, creating linkages, and monitoring and reporting on progress” (p. 124).

Specifically, leadership has been identified as critical to the planning process because knowledgeable and committed leadership is important for balancing the internal and external forces that affect the organization (Mintzberg, 1978; Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996). Additionally, an active and supportive leader builds managerial support for the planning process which results in greater support for implementation of the plan (Bloom, 1986). Hosmer (1982) clearly identifies the critical importance of leadership to the planning process by writing:

Leadership is important; it is not an outmoded concept from a less scientific and more romantic age, and there is a need for leaders, properly defined, within an organization to make strategic planning something more than ‘muddling through’ or an ‘incremental process.’ (p. 47)

It seems conclusive then, that people play an important part in the planning process – both as leaders (or champions) and as participants. Much of the literature agrees that strong leadership that is committed to strategic planning is important for successful implementation of the plan. If the leader makes strategic planning a priority, it follows then that the organization is more likely to make strategic planning a priority. The challenge, however, comes from the idea that the people in the organization are more likely to be accountable for the plan if they are involved in the development of the plan. This, intuitively, is very easy to comprehend. In practice, however, it is more difficult because the strong leader, the one necessary to champion the planning process, may also be the leader who does not like to relinquish control of the process. With participation and involvement comes, necessarily, some loss of control. As a result, the strong leadership that the literature calls for and the participatory process that the

literature encourages may be competing interests that can make implementing the strategic plan a difficult challenge. Despite this challenge, the literature acknowledges that people play an important role in the planning process and for strategic planning to be effective, organizations must have the participation and support of leaders, process champions, and employees who will implement the plan.

2.1.5 Opposing Views

As strategic planning gained in popularity, critical analysis of planning as a management tool increased. Much of the criticism has focused on the very process that proponents of strategic planning deem so important. Dooris (2002) specifically notes that, “Strategic planning initiatives were disparaged for being too linear, for relying too heavily on available hard information, for creating elaborate paperwork mills, for being too formalized and structured, for ignoring organizational context and culture, and for discouraging creative, positive change” (p. 27).

Other criticism stems from organizations placing too much emphasis on developing the plan and not enough on implementation of the plan. Trainer (2004) indicates that much of the criticism of strategic planning is that “planning has focused too heavily on the process of developing a plan rather than on implementation or outcome of the plan” (p. 129). Sevier (2003) supports the use of a process but notes that what you do with the plan is more important than the plan itself. He cautions against focusing so much on the process and the development of the plan that actions are forgotten. Sevier writes, “The goal is *not* the creation of a strategic plan. Rather, the goal is a sense of direction and institutional coordination created by an effective strategic planning process. In other words, the plan is a guide to *action*” (p. 18).

Furthermore, not all of the literature on strategic planning supports the idea that strategic planning is a nice, neat process that results in clear and identifiable strategies for the organization to follow. Bryson (2004) reminds readers that strategic planning is “simply a set of concepts, procedures, and tools. Leaders, managers, and planners need to engage in strategic planning carefully because their success will depend at least in part on how they tailor the process to their situations” (p. 13). Strategic planning is not a simple cookie-cutter that guarantees success. Mintzberg (1978) argues that planning processes are overly general and that telling management to state goals, assess strengths and weaknesses, identify explicit strategies, and stick to the planning schedule is an oversimplification of how organizations must deal with the changing environments they face. In his study, Mintzberg looks at how strategies are formed in organizations. He identifies a flaw in definitions of strategy in that they normally carry a common theme that strategy is deliberate and intended. Mintzberg writes, “All these definitions treat strategy as (a) explicit, (b) developed consciously and purposefully, and (c) made in advance of the specific decisions to which it applies. In common terminology, a strategy is a plan” (p. 935). Mintzberg introduces the idea that strategies may also evolve and that not all are intended, deliberate, and developed in advance. These unintentional, or emergent strategies, form gradually as decisions are made one by one. This is an important distinction because much of the literature treats strategic planning as a deliberate and explicit process and fails to acknowledge the notion that some strategies evolve through daily decision making. Bryson (2004) echoes this sentiment as he supports the use of strategic planning to help organizations develop and implement effective strategies but also encourages them to remain open to unexpected or unanticipated opportunities. Bryson writes, “Too much attention to strategic

planning and reverence for strategic plans can blind organizations to unplanned and unexpected – yet incredibly useful – sources of information, insight, and action” (p. 16).

It is somewhat ironic, that strategic planning has become so process oriented that organizations run the risk of missing the same opportunities and threats that strategic planning was created to identify. Strategic planning was developed, at least partially, because of the need to look outside the organization to the external environment so organizations could adapt to changing opportunities and threats. As a result of researchers’ seemingly insatiable desire to model, to process, and to structure, and planners’ adherence to these specific processes, strategic planning may suffer from the same myopic limitations that were a catalyst for its development in the first place.

2.1.6 Strategic Planning Summary

Most of the literature agrees that a formal strategic planning process is important for successful development and implementation of a strategic plan. While the processes outlined by various authors may differ, the conclusion is that the use of a process aids in the development of a strategic plan. Additionally, many researchers (Bloom, 1986; Lorange & Vancil, 2000; Mintzberg, 1978; Ruocco & Proctor, 1994; Sevier, 2003) suggest that effective strategic planning processes include an environmental scanning component. It is generally agreed that strategic planning attempts to match an organization’s strengths with the opportunities that exist in the changing environment. Similarly, matching of the organization’s weaknesses with external threats can help organizations to anticipate future challenges and to develop strategies to protect against these challenges. In fact, this environmental component that requires departments to anticipate changes in order to capitalize on opportunities is what differentiates strategic planning

from more traditional long-range planning. Long-range planning, once considered a sufficient planning tool, involved simply extending current operations into the future and adjusting them moderately based on an internal assessment of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Significant changes to the environment, however, motivated organizations to add an environmental scan to the planning process which led to the adoption of strategic planning.

The role of individuals in the planning process was also discussed in the literature review. Much of the literature agrees that leadership is an important part of a successful planning initiative. If a leader is committed to strategic planning then the organization is likely to be committed as well. It was also identified that leadership in the planning process is not simply delegation of the planning function to the organization's planning unit. Many researchers suggest that planning is more effective when employees, or those who will be asked to implement the strategies, are involved in the development of the plan. Leaders are encouraged to involve members at all levels of the organization in the planning process. Research suggests that these employees are then more motivated to make the implementation of the plan effective and successful.

This section ended with a cautionary note about the heavy reliance on a defined process for planning. Reliance on a specific planning process can mean that organizations miss opportunities and threats that exist outside of that process. Contrary to much of the literature, Mintzberg (1978) identifies that some strategies are not clearly defined; they emerge, rather, as decisions are made and organizations change. These emergent strategies may not be defined in the planning process, because they are unknown at the time, but still may have an important effect on the success of the organization. The challenge for planners is to remain open to

strategies that may emerge, and opportunities and threats that may exist, even though they were not identified through the planning process.

2.2 TRANSITION FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Many researchers identify the early 1980's as the period of time when strategic planning was adopted by the public sector (Berry, 1994; Bryson, 2004; Eadie, 1983; Eadie & Steinbacher, 1985; Poister & Streib, 1999). There is debate, however, about the reasons that caused public organizations to adopt private sector strategic planning. Bryson (2004) credits the numerous and difficult economic and social challenges faced by public organizations as the reason for their reliance on strategic planning. Bryson writes, "Not surprisingly, we have seen sustained attention to governmental and nonprofit organizational design, management, performance, and accountability as part of the process of addressing these and other concerns" (p. 3). Berry (1994) identifies the economic recessions of 1981-83 and 1991-92 as the catalyst behind the adoption of strategic planning in the public sector. As the recession sent state budgets into the red, government leaders looked to the private sector for answers and found ideas such as contracting out services, private-public partnerships, and management tools such as Total Quality Management and strategic planning. Berry provides evidence of the prominent adoption of strategic planning by noting that at least 264 state agencies initiated strategic planning between 1980 and 1991. Eadie and Steinbacher (1985) attribute the growing popularity of strategic planning and management in public organizations in the 1980's to a "planning vacuum" that existed (p. 424). The authors note that long-range planning in the public sector was traditionally internally focused and the resultant plans were merely extensions of operational, unit level plans.

These plans did not address the significant environmental changes that impact strategic decisions. By recognizing this flaw in the planning process, public organizations were motivated to evaluate the planning processes used in the private sector. Eadie (1983) attributes the growth of strategic planning in the public sector to pressures that result from “resource scarcity and service demands” (p. 447). Birnbaum (2000) also identifies pressure as a catalyst for higher education to adopt strategic planning. He notes the pressure that higher education institutions face to become more efficient and more productive and writes, “In response, many have attempted (either voluntarily or under mandate) to adopt new management systems and processes that were originally designed to meet the needs of (presumably) more efficient business and governmental organizations” (p. 1).

Wilkinson and Monkhouse (1994) recognize public sector organizations’ efforts to improve their outputs and provide increased value for money as their reason for turning to strategic planning. These themes, in particular, sound familiar to members of the higher education community and intercollegiate athletics. Athletic departments also are dealing with efforts to improve outputs and the quality of the products they produce (graduating student-athletes, competing for championships, etc.) and at the same time contain costs to increase the value of the athletic department to the higher education institution. Much as traditional public organizations, governmental and non-profits, turned to strategic planning, higher education institutions and their athletic departments also adopted strategic planning, at least partially, to address these similar pressures.

Birnbaum (2000) moves beyond the reasons for adopting strategic planning as he attempts to document the path, or “life cycle,” of strategic planning (and other management fads). He notes that as the news of the “successful implementation of a management innovation”

begins to spread beyond the original sector, organizations in different sectors adopt the innovation with hopes of achieving the same success that was realized in the original sector. Birnbaum stresses that individuals play a significant role in the adoption process because they are important for spreading the news of the successful implementation in the original sector and linking new sectors to the management innovation. Birnbaum describes this by writing:

This suggests that a major vector of management innovation in higher education may be boundary spanning individuals with homophilous identities in both the nonacademic and academic sectors. These might include business leaders or legislators serving on higher education boards of trustees, college presidents and other academics appointed to business boards of directors, members of professional associations formed at least in part to maintain linkages between higher education and external groups, academics who read journals in multidisciplinary areas, such as business or human resource management, and consultants who solicit clients in both the education and noneducation sectors. (p. 9)

2.2.1 Applying Strategic Planning to Public Organizations

While strategic planning has become popular in the public sector, there is debate on whether strategic planning in its private sector form can be applied to public organizations. Bloom (1986) depicts this divide as he writes, “Although no one appears to rule out the applicability of strategic planning, some suggest that the differences between the public and private sectors are

significant enough that any strategic approach to public sector planning requires extensive adaptation” (p. 256). Some of these differences include: the political environment of the public sector, the involvement of external constituents, the difficulty of implementing plans, and the lack of organizational autonomy (Bloom, 1986). Bryson and Roering (1988) identify that “the more numerous stakeholders, the conflicting criteria they often use to judge governmental performance, the pressures for public accountability, and the idea that the public sector is meant to do what the private sector cannot or will not do, all militate against holding government strategic planning practice to private-sector standards” (p. 1002). Eadie (1983) echoes this question of applicability by identifying that “successful application is a matter of careful tailoring to the unique circumstances of a particular public organization” (p. 447). He goes on to write, “A boilerplate approach, in short, is likely to prove inadequate, if not fatal, and the organization that knows itself well and adapts its planning approaches accordingly is far more likely to experience success in planning” (p. 447).

Vinzant and Vinzant (1996) address the issue of organizational autonomy and its effects on the planning process of private and public organizations. Organizational autonomy is generally considered an important condition in strategic management implementation because organizations having significant autonomy are able to implement successful change when necessary. Private and public organizations typically differ in their level of organizational autonomy which affects the planning process. Since public organizations tend to be restricted in their autonomy by statutory and fiscal constraints, these organizations face unique challenges when engaging in strategic planning. Wilkinson and Monkhouse (1994) support this position as they acknowledge that it is not uncommon for executives in public sector organizations to have their powers constrained by statute and regulation. Intercollegiate athletic departments, which

operate within higher education institutions, face additional constraints particular to higher education. Higher education institutions typically incorporate a principle of shared governance which limits organizational autonomy of colleges and universities even more significantly than governmental and other public organizations. The restricted autonomy and the involvement of more individuals in processes and decisions, makes strategic planning challenging in the higher education setting.

Streib (1992), after identifying the importance of leadership to the strategic planning process, questions whether the public sector possesses the level of leadership necessary to succeed. Streib attributes this, at least partially, to the difficulty in maintaining a shared vision among elected and appointed officials who change frequently due to elections and staff changes. Streib and Poister (1990) discuss public sector limitation in terms of strategic capacity and question whether public organizations are able to compile the information necessary for the completion of a strategic plan. While continuity of leadership certainly can help an organization maintain a consistent vision which would, in turn, help the strategic planning process, one could argue that the authors' questioning of leadership and strategic capacity within public organizations is too general and fails to acknowledge individual levels of leadership and strategic capacity. It is safe to assume that just as there are strong and weak leaders in the private sector, there are also strong and weak leaders of public organizations.

2.2.2 Public Sector Summary

As public organizations began to use strategic planning in the early 1980's, many authors noted that adopting strategic planning straight from the private sector would lead to ineffective use of strategic planning. Just as general strategic planning literature cautions that plans must be

tailored to individual organizations, the literature on planning in the public sector suggests that adaptations to the private sector planning model are necessary if strategic planning is to be effective. Specifically, the political environment of public organizations, the relative lack of autonomy of public organizations compared to private organizations, and the numerous stakeholders are all characteristics that mark differences between typical public and private organizations. These differences make it challenging for public organizations, including higher education institutions, to adopt a private sector strategic planning model. For effective implementation of a strategic plan in public organizations, it is suggested that a private sector model be adapted to account for restrictions of autonomy (including shared governance), the numerous and diverse group of stakeholders, and the political environment that surrounds public organizations.

This study addresses these factors by looking specifically at the planning processes used by intercollegiate athletic departments. These processes will be compared to traditional strategic planning processes identified in the literature review to determine if adaptations are made to tailor strategic planning for use in intercollegiate athletic departments.

2.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Ward (2003) makes a compelling case for the use of strategic planning in higher education as he states:

In many ways, colleges and universities are some of the most venerable institutions in the United States. But they, too, are being whipsawed by dynamic market forces and will not remain

venerable for very long if they remain static. Change and innovation must lie at the center of each institution if it is to remain on the cutting edge of new knowledge and good teaching practice. And the key to innovation and change, particularly for higher education institutions, is research-driven strategic planning. (p. 19)

Despite this eloquent argument in support of strategic planning, Ward notes that strategic planning still is “an alien concept to many colleges and universities” (p. 19).

Sevier (2003) notes that strategic planning is a phrase that elicits a “group groan” when mentioned on most college or university campuses. He supports this notion by writing, “The fact is, most colleges and universities look at strategic planning as a path to pain, rather than a path to plenty. As a consequence, the universal response to the completion of a strategic plan is, ‘Whew, finally! Now I can get back to work’ ” (p. 18). At least part of this response is due to the amount of time required to develop a strategic plan and the fact that, as Richardson and Gardner (1983) point out, “the increased time administrators must spend in planning results in a reduction of the time available for managing the day-to-day delivery of services” (p. 181). Richardson and Gardner suggest balance as the best approach to meet planning needs and also to accommodate the delivery of services to students.

This less than enthusiastic reaction to strategic planning, however, is cause for concern considering the volumes of research that stress the importance of strategic planning to the success of higher education institutions. As stated in the introduction, Kotler and Murphy (1981) clearly identify the importance of strategic planning to higher education when they write, “If colleges and universities are to survive in the troubled years ahead, a strong emphasis on planning is essential” (p. 470). McKelvie (1986) also talks of survival when writing about the

importance of setting a clear path for the institution, “To survive the difficult years ahead the institutions of higher education must reassess the value of clarifying their own institution’s goals” (p. 162).

Kotler and Murphy (1981) then proceed to identify a significant challenge for higher education institutions due to the fact that they are not set up with a strategic planning capacity. The authors contend that colleges and universities are good at operations and developing efficiencies through repetition of the same acts day after day. The problem with this proficiency is that these “patterns of operation” were established under a set of environmental conditions that are certain to change. As the environment changes, however, colleges and universities continue to conduct the same patterns of operation even though they may not be effective in the new environmental conditions. The resulting *modus operandi* then becomes one of crisis management in which goals, strategies, and organizational systems only change as a reaction to crisis rather than a proactive approach in anticipation of environmental changes (Kotler & Murphy, 1981).

Kotler and Murphy (1981) define a process for strategic planning in higher education that is similar to the processes identified in more general strategic planning literature. Their process includes: an environmental analysis, a resource analysis, goal formulation, strategy formulation, organization design, and systems design. The environmental analysis serves to identify threats and opportunities and should include a thorough analysis of the internal, market, competitive, public, and macro- environments. The resource analysis is focused internally on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and evaluates these components of the institution: personnel, funds, facilities, and systems. Once these external and internal assessments are complete, the institution can move to goal formulation and identify the mission, objectives, and

goals that it chooses to pursue. Strategy formulation identifies the most cost effective strategies that will allow the institution to achieve its goals. The organization design phase of the planning process is necessary to address changes to the institution's organization structure that must be made if the strategy is to be implemented successfully. Issues in this phase might deal with the organization structure, the people, and the culture of the institution. The last step in the process is systems design which deals with the institution's systems for disseminating information, developing and implementing planning, and control or monitoring the implementation of the planning strategies.

In Kotler and Murphy's process, designed specifically for higher education, two unique steps are identified that did not appear in the literature for more general strategic planning. These steps are organization design and systems design. Similarly, Watson (1995) adds an organizational plan and a human resources plan as two steps to his strategic planning process for higher education. It is probable that unique steps appear in a higher education planning process because they acknowledge specific nuances of higher education institutions. Organization design, for example, is an important addition to the planning process because the organization structure of higher education is much less rigid and hierarchical than that of the private sector. A lack of clear reporting lines and the high degree of independence given to faculty is a significant difference than what exists in the private sector. As such, the organization design phase of the planning process for higher education is important for defining the structure of the higher education institution and the roles of the individuals in the organization. Similarly, systems design is a part of the planning process because of the challenges colleges and universities face in disseminating information among their many and varied autonomous units (or departments), developing and implementing planning systems, and monitoring and controlling implementation

of the strategic plan. These adaptations to the planning process and the distinctions between private and public organizations emphasize the importance of developing a planning process that is tailored to the specific organization. Strategic planning will likely be ineffective if a “cookie-cutter” approach is applied and the process is not adapted to fit the organization’s needs, culture, and structure.

2.3.1 Goal Setting and Strategic Planning

At a broad level, the mission statement serves to define the direction of the institution and the strategic plan helps the institution to move in that direction. In her study of best practices in strategic planning, Aloï (2005) discovers the importance of maintaining a “mission focus” during the strategic planning process. In the study involving three distinct institutions, Aloï identifies one institution where faculty, staff, and administrators are “highly aware and supportive of the three elements of their mission statement and believe that using the university’s mission as a guideline enables the institution to allocate its limited resources to accomplish annual and long-term goals” (p.4).

At a more specific level, goals are the tools that help to bind the institution’s mission and the strategic plan together. Sevier (2003) stresses that goals are the foundation for an effective plan that moves beyond paper to action, “A successful strategic plan – a plan that guides action – is built on clear goals that are themselves built on solid data” (p. 19). This move to action, to work, is important or the plan will not be effective. Drucker (1974) captures the essence of this idea as he states, “The best plan is only a plan, that is, good intentions, unless it degenerates into work” (p. 128). Goals are the catalyst for this degeneration.

McKelvie (1986) discusses strategic planning in terms of goal setting and the need for institutions to set clear goals in the face of economic and financial constraints. McKelvie states that “Strategy involves outlining the institution’s goals, their plans for achieving these goals, and the deployment of resources to attain these goals” (p. 155). She identifies that strategic planning must have, as a foundation, a sound knowledge of the institution’s mission. McKelvie identifies the results of strategic planning grounded in the institution’s mission as: clarification and determination of the institution’s long-range goals, selection of effective courses of action, and deployment of the appropriate allocation of resources necessary for the achievement of these goals.

Like McKelvie, Fincher (1972) also emphasizes the importance of goals to an institution’s strategic planning efforts. Fincher identifies that planning in higher education began as simple projections of past trends. Fincher suggests a shift from this planning based on past trends to planning by objectives. Planning with a focus on goals and objectives moves the institution toward deliberate goals as opposed to the simple expansion of existing programs that results from planning based on past trends. Fincher outlines the important role of goals in the planning process by writing:

There is the further implication that unless planning is conducted in terms of objectives that have been systematically formulated, the planning process will necessarily fall back on projected trends that cannot easily continue. It would seem, therefore, that the sophistication of planning is limited by the adequacy of planning goals. It is not enough to know how we plan; it is necessary to know what we are planning for. (p. 757)

Fincher (1972) discusses the overall goals of higher education in terms of the expectations that the public has for higher education institutions. He identifies two expectations for higher education – effectiveness and efficiency. Birnbaum (2000) echoes this expectation by writing, “Institutions of higher education are always under pressure to become more efficient and effective” (p. 1). Watson (1995) supports the need for efficiency by writing, “Change must address the need to become more efficient, and it should shift the focus of the department from internal to external focus, to the customers and competing universities” (p. 188). Fincher believes the public expects higher education institutions to become more effective and to make more efficient use of the resources and facilities they have. It could be argued that this too is a way in which higher education differs significantly from private sector organizations. While the public does have expectations of private sector organizations, the pressure to meet these expectations is fueled more by a profit-motive that is only fulfilled if customer’s needs are met. Private businesses are driven toward efficiency for the attainment of higher profits – producing at a more efficient (lower) cost results in greater profits. Private organizations are motivated to find more efficient, lower cost methods of production and to realize the tangible (financial) benefits of doing so. Higher education is a labor intensive industry and the products, graduating students and producing research, for example, are subject less to process than service by faculty and staff. As a result, lowering cost and becoming more efficient in higher education often means a change in the human resources of the institution. Therefore, in higher education, the pressure to meet public expectations of effectiveness and efficiency often result in increased frustration of the employees. To be more efficient (graduating a higher quality student while lowering costs) higher education institutions often must assign additional workloads to faculty and staff, reign in compensation increases, or reduce benefits to employees. Furthermore, Fincher suggests that

traditional planning in higher education has focused on more efficient use of resources but has neglected more effective academic programs. Fincher writes, “not only should we plan for more efficiently operated programs, organizations, and institutions, we should plan for more effective academic courses, programs, and curricula” (p. 767). Fincher concludes that these expectations – efficiency and effectiveness - can only be met with more systematic planning in higher education. This increased effectiveness will lead to “the behaviors, skills, competencies, values, outlooks, and perspectives that we have long professed to be developing in higher education” (p. 767).

2.3.2 Planning in the Higher Education Institution

Kotler and Murphy (1981) suggest that strategic planning should be conducted at all levels of the institution. For strategic planning to be successful, it is important for these significant levels to engage in the planning process – presidents and vice-presidents for the university as a whole, deans for their specific college, and department chairs for their departments. Lockwood (1972) agrees that planning should be participative and suggests that most members of the university should be involved in some aspect of planning. He claims that participation improves the quality and effectiveness of planning by broadening the range of experience and ideas that are part of the planning process.

These notions support the ideas conveyed earlier that leadership commitment to the planning process is important for its success. Here, the authors identify more specifically that in addition to being the champion of the planning process, leaders communicate their goals and vision for the organization so that detailed strategies move the institution closer to the desired state. As importantly, leaders also are wise to implement an open planning process that invites

participation from a wide range of faculty and staff so that new ideas and strategies are developed for the institution. In the higher education environment, this participative approach is even more important as there is an expectation among faculty and staff that they be involved in major initiatives on campus. If they are excluded, the message is sent that the planning exercise is either not important or that they have been unfairly excluded. As the importance of strategic planning to higher education institutions has already been clearly identified, neither of these messages would be appropriate to send.

2.3.3 Adaptations for Higher Education Planning

The unique structure of higher education institutions and the environment in which they operate is not always conducive to strategic planning. Paris (2004) identifies a number of aspects of higher education that mitigate against implementing an organizationwide plan: decentralized structures, specialization, the independent and entrepreneurial culture of the academic department, a tradition of discrete silos, and abhorrence of private sector business jargon. (p. 123)

Due to the differences between private organizations and institutions of higher education, Kotler and Murphy (1981) identify that adaptations to the private sector approach are also necessary in higher education. The authors suggest that planning in higher education is more democratized than planning in the private sector due to the high concentration of professionals and the significant amount of organizational inflexibility in higher education institutions. This democratized environment that requires shared governance means that planning is more effective when it is participatory and involves more stakeholders of the institution. This participative

process, which requires input from many individuals so that they feel involved, may mean the process takes longer than it would in a private organization with more organizational autonomy and a hierarchical structure. In addition to dealing with a potentially longer process, higher education institutions face the challenge of building consensus around the strategies in the plan. With more “hands in the cookie jar” it is more difficult to reach agreement on what the appropriate strategies are for effective planning. A process with open communication is one way to reach consensus and an important way in which the higher education planning process may differ from the private sector. Additionally, the authors identify two unique steps to the higher education planning process – organization design and systems design. As identified earlier, these steps are added to help higher education institutions more clearly define the structure of the organization as it relates to planning and also to identify systems that are necessary for dissemination of information and for monitoring and controlling the implementation of the strategic plan.

Chiarello, Reed, and Russell (1991) identify three lessons learned during their attempt to apply a corporate model of strategic planning at Bowling Green State University. The authors list lesson number one as “Watch Your Language,” which reminds planners in higher education that the language of corporate metaphors that accompanies traditional strategic planning processes may not be well received by faculty and staff in higher education. The authors experienced significant push-back to the strategic plan even though much of the resistance focused on the language of the plan rather than the plan itself. Lesson two, as identified by Chiarello et al., is to “Anticipate Undesirable Side Effects.” Specifically, the authors discuss the difficulty created by using a very participatory, inclusive planning process. Although this was effective for developing consensus around the plan, such broad-based participation slowed down

the approval process and caused delays in moving the plan to implementation. As the authors describe it, “in employing a broad-based decision-making process, we traded substance and credibility for consensus. Had we anticipated these side effects, we might have been less reluctant to risk using a management-oriented approach” (p. 38). The third and final lesson determined by Chiarellot et al. is “Create a Need to Know.” While corporations in the private sector have an inherent sense of urgency, fueled by the profit motive that is their reason for existing, higher education institutions, do not always have a sense of urgency when it comes to planning for a long-term future. Without this sense of urgency, many higher education institutions do not consider strategic planning to be worth the time and effort it involves. Creating a need to know, a sense of urgency around strategic planning, helps the plan to be adopted and more widely accepted by members of the institution.

The unique structure and culture of higher education institutions and the environment in which they operate, requires that specific adaptations be made to the traditional (private sector) strategic planning processes that were developed 30 or more years ago. When adapted appropriately, however, Kotler and Murphy identify the most important benefit of strategic planning for higher education decision makers as forcing “them to undertake a more market-oriented and systematic approach to long-range planning” (p. 488). The authors acknowledge that the future does indeed hold many threats for colleges and universities but promote the use of strategic planning as a means of making these threats less imposing.

2.3.4 The Effectiveness of Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Measuring the effectiveness of strategic planning as a management practice in higher education is a difficult task. The dynamic nature of the higher education environment makes it nearly

impossible to attribute gains in efficiency or effectiveness exclusively to the strategic planning effort. Dooris et al. (2002) capture the sizable nature of this challenge by writing:

Strategic planning in a college or university occurs in a complex, dynamic, real-world environment, not readily amenable to controlled studies, or even to quasi-experimental designs. It is difficult to parse out the measurable effects of strategic planning from the influences of such other important factors as institutional leadership, demographic change, fluctuations in state and federal funding, politics, the actions of competing organizations, social and cultural forces and the like. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, the present empirical evidence about whether strategic planning does or does not work in higher education is less than conclusive. (p. 9)

This formidable challenge is the main reason that no studies measuring the effectiveness of strategic planning in higher education institutions could be found. Birnbaum (2000) found very little evidence of attempts to measure the effectiveness of any of the management fads he researched. He writes, “There are few published examples in the academic sector of attempts to assess the institutional consequences of a management fad through data that provide evidence either of organizational outcomes or of the satisfaction of users” (p. 10). Birnbaum attributes this lack of quantifiable analysis, at least partially, to the differences in the higher education and private sectors. Businesses in the private sector, Birnbaum notes, are data-driven and accustomed to measuring effectiveness through quantitative data and statements of profit and loss. Higher education, on the other hand, is more loosely coupled and quantitative measures are

not valued the way they are in the private sector. This means that data moves more slowly in higher education where narratives and “counternarratives” play a more important role.

Given the lack of empirical evidence that exists to support a claim of effectiveness, conclusions about strategic planning’s effectiveness in higher education can only be based on observations of its use by higher education institutions. Dooris (2002) notes that by the late 1990’s, strategic planning had “in many respects become mainstreamed in higher education” (p. 28). Further, he added, strategic planning’s inclusion in the expectations of accrediting organizations is an indication that strategic planning is considered effective. Dooris uses as an example the Council for Higher Education Accreditation’s 1998 Recognition Standards which indicate an expectation for “evidence of policies and procedures that stress planning and implementing strategies for change” (p. 28).

Dooris (2002) conducted a thorough, albeit unscientific, analysis of two decades of strategic planning at Pennsylvania State University. Upon review of Penn State’s planning efforts, Dooris concludes,

No one can prove whether this university (or, ultimately, any organization) is more or less successful because of strategic planning than it would have been without it. Nonetheless, the evidence of Penn State’s experience does suggest that the university’s long-term commitment to strategic planning—clearly defined in its broad parameters, but flexible and adaptive in its details—has been productive. (p. 31)

Echoing the importance of people to the planning process, as identified earlier in this paper, Chiarello et al. (1991) stress that a plan’s effectiveness is directly related to the people

involved in the planning process. The authors conclude that “a strategic plan can be effective only when key individuals truly understand the nature of strategic planning and do not allow day-to-day demands to take precedence over actions required to carry out the plan” (p. 38).

Aloi (2005) conducted a study of best practices by higher education institutions attempting to link assessment and planning. In her study, Aloi identified 10 best practices she witnessed in the institutions she studied:

1. Maintain a mission focus.
 2. Build a culture of continuous improvement.
 3. Acquire or develop personnel with expertise in planning and assessment.
 4. Integrate planning and assessment into existing organizational and operational structures.
 5. Create expectations for planning and assessment as part of job performance.
 6. Include all interested constituencies in crucial phases of planning and assessment.
 7. Allow adequate time for deliberative planning and assessment.
 8. Ensure that the processes and results of planning and assessment are transparent and highly visible.
 9. Routinely make and explain data driven decisions.
 10. Communicate often and through multiple channels.
- (p. 4)

While studying the planning process and implementation tools used by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Paris (2004) identifies eight “infusion strategies” that help make strategic planning a prominent part of the institution. While there is no guarantee that these strategies lead to effective implementation of the plan, Paris finds them to be useful tools for increasing the likelihood that strategic planning will move the university in the direction of its goals and mission. The infusion strategies are:

1. Identify point people to champion the priorities.
2. Create key positions around some of the priorities.
3. Report according to the plan.
4. Allocate discretionary funds in line with the plan.
5. Consider plan priorities when facing budget reductions.
6. Spotlight plan at high-visibility campus events.
7. Provide academic leadership training and development to support plan.
8. Tie academic program reviews to plan. (p. 124)

Marshall (2004), during his time as President of Wheaton College, developed and implemented two strategic plans. His writing emphasizes the importance of tailoring the strategic plan to the needs and culture of the institution. Marshall offers this advice to increase the effectiveness of the planning process: “assess the context of the campus culture; refine your strategic plan as your institution evolves; nurture a sense of ownership among the faculty and staff; let the plan shape the budget and fundraising; allow sufficient time; process matters; recognize the stages in a president’s career; ignore bad advice” (p. 12). In the end, Marshall concludes, “Healthy institutions use strategic planning to adapt and grow, evolving to fit the changing landscape and the campus context” (p. 12).

While the literature stops short of proclaiming strategic planning to be an effective practice for higher education, most of the literature supports the idea that this management practice can help institutions adapt to changing environments and move toward a desired state or vision. Sevier (2003) acknowledges the challenges with strategic planning but still concludes that strategic planning “remains a powerful tool for advancing a college or university’s vision” (p. 19). Dooris et al. (2002) conclude their research on strategic planning in higher education by claiming to be proponents of planning and stating it “is not that strategic planning does not work;

instead, we believe that a more defensible conclusion is that planning can be done poorly or it can be done well. Strategic planning can produce successful results, or it can be ineffective” (p. 10).

2.3.5 Higher Education Summary

The strength of many higher education institutions is operations and the day-to-day functioning of a large organization. This same strength presents a challenge to strategic planning efforts as strategic planning requires acknowledgement of a changing environment that could deem current operational plans ineffective. Higher education institutions would benefit from a move beyond this short-term, operational approach to a strategic approach that helps anticipate opportunities and threats presented by the dynamic environments in which they exist.

Goal focused planning can help to move higher education institutions past this dependency on operational strength. By developing strategic plans that are based on goals and objectives, institutions are forced to focus on desired future states and are not able to simply rely on a continuation of the operational tactics that are a part of long-range planning. These goals and objectives are communicated from leaders of higher education institutions and form the direction toward which specific strategies attempt to move the organization.

While a strong leader who champions the strategic planning process is important for creating a culture that encourages planning, participation at all levels of the organization is important for effective strategic planning in higher education. The highly democratized environment of higher education institutions requires a participative approach to strategic planning that includes input from all levels of the organization. This input is important for generating new and different ideas that lead to more effective strategies for the institution. A

participatory planning process also tends to enhance faculty and staff understanding of the institution's direction and philosophy which, in turn, helps them to make decisions that support this direction (Richardson & Gardner, 1983). In addition, this participative approach communicates the importance of strategic planning to the entire institution and creates a culture of openness that tends to lead to more effective implementation of the strategic plan.

While research suggests that all organizations – those in the private sector as well as those in higher education – can benefit from a participative planning process, this participation is even more critical in the higher education environment that is highly democratized and grounded on the principle of shared governance. As such, adopting a traditional, private sector approach to strategic planning may not be effective in higher education. It is important that adaptations be made to this traditional process in order to improve effectiveness of higher education institutions. Some of the adaptations identified in the literature review include greater participation in the process, emphasis on organization design, and a review of systems design. Watson (1995) emphasizes the importance of adapting the planning process to the institution as he writes:

A planning process is a roadmap for change and improvement, and like any map, does not provide the vehicle. Building public trust and enhancing higher education is not suited to a “one size fits all” solution – each institution must decide the vehicle and the destination. (p. 190)

Much like the larger institutions of which they are a part, intercollegiate athletic departments are also very operationally driven. They often are consumed by the daily exercises that lead to the next competition. As such, goals are an important part of the strategic planning

process and evidence of goals and objectives serve to suggest that the athletic department is focused on moving towards a desired state and is not content to continue with operational tactics that lead to more of the same, or at best, an expansion of the same. This study will identify the role of goals in the planning process of athletic departments as a means of evaluating whether the planning is strategic or simply long-range planning.

2.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

The literature supports the use of strategic planning as a management tool in the dynamic environment of intercollegiate athletics. Sutton and Migliore (1988) convey this concept well by writing, “Intercollegiate athletic programs present a logical application target for strategic long range planning because of the necessity of the athletic administrator to be future focused in terms of acquiring, managing, and allocating resources in a changing environment” (p. 233). It is quite puzzling then that while the field of sport management has produced a broad array of literature since the early 1980’s, this area of study has been especially void of studies concerning strategy and strategic planning (Thibault, Slack, & Hinings, 1994). In fact, this research found only four studies that analyzed strategic planning by athletic departments belonging to the NCAA. The first was a study by Wright et al. (1995) that examined strategy from the perspective of a single program – intercollegiate basketball. This study is limited in its applicability to an entire athletic department since the strategies of a single program are much more simplistic than the complexities required of planning for a multiple sport athletic department. The second, a study by Kriemadis (1997), examined the extent to which strategic planning was being used by Division 1 athletic departments and identified barriers that discouraged athletic departments from

engaging in strategic planning. The third study, conducted by Yow et al. (2000), was a comprehensive study of strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments and resulted in the seminal work on this topic. The final study, by Cunningham (2002), compared the strategic type of the athletic department with the organizational effectiveness of that department.

The Yow et al. (2000) study offers the most comprehensive literature on strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics. Yow et al. found that strategic planning by intercollegiate athletic departments has many of the same virtues as planning in the private and public sectors and in higher education. The authors outline the value of planning in college athletics:

Planning has many advantages. For example, it helps athletics department administrators to adapt to changing environments, take advantage of opportunities created by change, reach agreements on major issues, and place responsibility more precisely. It also gives a sense of direction to staff members as well as providing a basis for gaining their commitment. The sense of vision that can be provided in a well-written plan also instills a sense of loyalty in those associated with the athletics department. (p. 6)

2.4.1 The Purpose of Planning

Yow et al. (2000) identify the primary purpose of strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics “is to ensure that current programs can be used to increase the chances of achieving future objectives and goals” (p. 7). This purpose clearly agrees with the long-term focus espoused by most strategic planning literature. The purpose as stated by Yow et al., however, fails to acknowledge the role of the external environment and the dynamic changes that affect the

achievement of long-term goals. Additionally, the purpose places a heavy reliance on the existing and current programs and does not emphasize the opportunities for growth and change that are so critical in strategic planning literature. This purpose tends to align more with the long-term planning literature, and the projection of past trends technique, than it does with strategic planning.

Athletic departments, and the intercollegiate athletics industry as a whole, are driven by the next event, the next game, or the next match. There is a singular focus that is necessary to produce successful events. Just as players and coaches talk about “taking one game at a time” so as not to be distracted and lose focus, staff personnel also approach daily operations with this focus that permits them to succeed. The result, however, is that the planning focus may also be limited to one game or one season at a time, rather than focusing on the bigger picture. Yow et al. (2000) note that most planning by intercollegiate athletic departments is focused on the short-term. By neglecting the long-term, athletic departments fail to move toward the goals and objectives of their preferred future. This study will attempt to assess a short-term versus long-term approach to planning by athletic departments. It will be difficult to characterize a department as implementing strategic planning if they do not have a long-term approach to planning.

2.4.2 Planning Groups

Research by Yow et al. (2000) indicates that larger athletic departments established groups or committees to implement the planning effort. The authors found that athletic departments organized planning committees for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Planning takes time.

2. Planning takes coordination.
3. Planning takes expertise.
4. Planning takes objectivity. (p. 8)

Yow et al. then go on to discuss the responsibilities of the planning group:

First, it assists the department in developing goals, policies, and strategies for the athletics program. The group facilitates the planning process by scanning and monitoring the department's environment. A second major responsibility of the group is to coordinate the planning of different levels and units within the department. Finally, the planning group acts as an organizational resource for athletic administrators and other staff who lack expertise in planning. (p. 8)

The planning group plays an important role in the planning process in intercollegiate athletics. It is important for the planning group to carry out these basic responsibilities in order to conduct an effective and efficient planning process.

2.4.3 Barriers to Planning

Yow et al. (2000) identify three main reasons that athletic departments struggle to plan and it is the responsibility of the planning group to lessen these obstacles and encourage planning. First, Athletics Directors lack training and do not know how to plan. This lack of knowledge prevents them from planning and from expecting others in the department to plan. Second, some Athletics Directors do not think planning is necessary and see the process of planning as

additional work without significant reward. These administrators fail to see the benefits of planning. Third, Athletics Directors see problems with the implementation of plans. These managers may know how to plan and may know well the benefits of planning but don't believe implementation can be effective. In one of the only studies conducted to determine the extent to which a strategic planning process was being used by NCAA Division I-A athletic departments, Kriemadis (1997) researched the key factors that discourage athletic departments from planning and identified these as: insufficient finance, insufficient time, personnel resistance, communication, insufficient training, planning policy, and planning value. In addition, Kriemadis (1997) found that 43.4% of athletic departments could be categorized as strategic planners. While many departments were found to have components of a plan in place, to be categorized as "strategic planners," the department must have produced formalized, written long-range plans; assessed the external and internal environment; and identified specific strategies. The majority of athletic departments responding developed operational plans or informal plans based on the experience of administrators.

While there are challenges to planning in intercollegiate athletics and a tendency for short-term planning, Yow et al. (2000) do suggest that there is a new type of athletic administrator in many athletic departments. This administrator understands management and is intent on using the arsenal of leadership and management tools available. This leader understands the value of planning and expects the staff to implement a systematic planning process to help achieve the department's goals.

2.4.4 The Importance of Planning

Yow et al. (2000) encourage the use of planning and clearly state its importance by offering this recommendation, “Planning not only should be done, but must be done, in order for an athletics program to achieve optimum success” (p. 11). To encourage the use of planning by athletic departments, the authors identify results they have observed in athletic departments that plan:

1. A sense of enthusiasm in your athletics department.
2. A five-year plan in writing to which most everyone is committed.
3. A sense of commitment by the entire department to its overall direction.
4. Clear job duties and responsibilities.
5. Time for the leaders to do what they can most effectively do for the athletics program.
6. Clear and evident improvement in the effectiveness of each staff member.
7. The ability to measure very specifically the growth and contribution made by the leaders and other staff members at the close of their careers in the department.
8. Guaranteed leadership of the athletics program because a plan is in place in writing and is

understood. Even more important, a management team and philosophy will be in place to guide the department into its next era of growth. (p. 12)

These results suggest that planning is an important tool to be used by athletic administrators to develop a more effective and efficient department.

2.4.5 The Planning Process for Intercollegiate Athletics

Much like the strategic planning literature reviewed earlier, the literature on strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics, albeit limited, supports the use of a planning process (Sutton and Migliore, 1988; Yow et al., 2000). The process, as defined by Yow et al. (2000) begins with defining the purpose or mission for the organization. The development of a purpose statement identifies the vision for the athletic department. Yow et al. expect a mission statement for an athletic department to include such points as: the recruitment of academically capable student-athletes; the provision of academic support services to assist student-athletes with their academic goals; the need for fiscal integrity; the commitment to fielding competitive teams; an expectation of compliance with rules and regulations; and a commitment to customer service.

The second step in the planning process for college athletics, according to Yow et al., is environmental analysis. This analysis includes both an internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses and an external assessment of opportunities and threats.

With this SWOT analysis complete, the third step in the process is establishing objectives. These objectives are important because they outline the desired results of the planning effort and also because they serve as a measure of effectiveness for the planning process. Yow et al. leave no doubt as to the importance of setting objectives as they write, “The

success or failure of an athletics program is often based on its ability to set specific and measurable goals, as well as on having tools with which to measure progress” (p. 47). As important as objectives are, the authors identify a number of reasons why athletic departments fail to set them, including, avoiding the accountability that comes with specific, measurable objectives; lack of objective-setting skills; and the challenge of finding time to devote to planning and goal creation. Yow et al. identify a number of areas that are natural for setting objectives, such as, revenue by sport, championships, wins/losses, graduation rate, public attendance at games, budget, and community service. Sutton and Migliore (1988) add to this list by including conference standing, press and media coverage and interest, and scheduling.

Step four in the planning process is developing strategy. Sutton and Migliore discuss strategy in terms of a “game plan”. They identify strategy as the “thinking” stage of the plan in which the method of achieving the organizational goals and objectives is outlined. According to Yow et al., “Strategy may be defined as the course of action taken by an organization to achieve its objectives” (p. 67). As suggested by this definition, strategy is specific to an organization and cannot be developed effectively by applying a general strategy to all organizations. Specific characteristics of the athletic department, such as, available resources, leader and staff competencies, development of the department, and strategies used by competitors, all influence what strategies can be deployed effectively by a single department. Thibault, Slack, and Hinings (1993) also support this concept of situational strategizing as they write, “In essence, there is no *one* best way to strategize in sport organizations; the strategy developed should reflect the organizational situation. Hence, different organizational situations will yield different strategies” (p. 41).

In step five, Yow et al. make the distinction between strategy and operational plans, noting that operational plans are developed by functional units of the department and are intended to support the overall strategy. Sutton and Migliore (1988) suggest that the operational planning stage is the action or doing stage of the process. They write that this “facet of the plan involves accomplishing, implementing, gathering, funding advertising, and installing” (p. 253). According to Sutton and Migliore, an intercollegiate athletics program would include operational plans in the areas of ticketing, sports information, marketing/promotions, facility management and planning, business/finance office, athletic development, and a plan for each of the individual sports programs.

Yow et al. identify the final step in the planning process as evaluation and control. The authors note that although the objectives and strategies are complete, no plan is finished until the controls are identified and parameters for monitoring performance against the plan are put in place.

The process identified by Sutton & Migliore (1988) evolves from their identification of a concept they call, Strategic Long Range Planning and Management. They define this concept as a “philosophy of management based upon identifying purpose, objectives, and desired results, establishing a realistic program for obtaining these results, and evaluating the performance” (p. 234). The nine step process used to support the Strategic Long Range Planning and Management philosophy includes:

1. Defining the purpose and reason for being of the athletic department.
2. Monitoring the environment in which the athletic department functions.

3. Realistically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the athletic department.
4. Making assumptions about unpredictable future events that could have an impact upon the athletic department.
5. Prescribing written, specific, and measurable objectives in the principal result areas that contribute to the organizational purpose. This requires:
 - a. negotiating and bargaining at every level from top management positions to staff.
 - b. recognizing a performance contract embracing the agreed upon objectives.
6. Developing strategies for allocation of resources to meet objectives.
7. Designing long and short range plans to meet objectives.
8. Constantly appraising performance to determine if it is keeping pace with the attainment of objectives and if it is consistent with the defined purpose. This requires:

- a. willingness to change or modify objectives, strategies and plans when conditions change.
 - b. evaluating progress at every stage so that needed changes can be effected smoothly
 - c. making sure that rewards are thoughtfully considered and are appropriate for accomplishment. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of the extrinsic and intrinsic reward system.
9. Reevaluating purpose, environment, strengths, weaknesses and assumptions before setting objectives for the next performance period. (p. 234)

Sutton and Migliore (1988) encourage the involvement of people at all levels of the organization when using the nine step process to develop the strategic plan. They make a strong statement about the role of communication by writing, “Effectiveness of the entire strategic planning process is dependent not only upon understanding and acceptance but upon the communication process involved” (p. 256). The authors support an interactive communication system (versus a directive one) that allows for dialog with and feedback from all levels of the organization. Additionally, Sutton and Migliore emphasize that the strategic planning process is not just about developing a plan. The real success of this process comes from using the plan as a management tool to make more effective decisions and run a more efficient organization.

Use of a strategic planning process will help athletic departments deal with the dynamic environment in which they operate. Yow et al. (2000) point out that strategic planning is a

powerful tool that can positively change the culture of an athletic department and can help the department become comfortable with change. In intercollegiate athletics, this is a critical characteristic for any department. Yow et al. describe the importance of dealing with change by writing:

If an athletics department (or any organization) is not prepared for the change, it will be engulfed by it. If an organization is prepared for change it will be propelled forward by it. The intense competition for the entertainment dollar in our economy and the complex nature of growth in our business require a fleet-footed, responsive athletics organization – one which anticipates change well, one which continuously improves customer service to both internal and external customers, and one that skillfully builds on its strengths as an organization. (p. 91)

2.4.6 Intercollegiate Athletics Summary

The literature on strategic planning in intercollegiate athletics, albeit sparse, concurs that strategic planning is important for athletic departments and can help them navigate the changing environment in which they operate. The literature supports the more general strategic planning literature and also literature on strategic planning in the public sector and higher education by suggesting that athletic departments can benefit from a formal planning process. Additionally, the literature agrees that a participative planning process that involves employees at all levels of the athletic department improves the likelihood of plan implementation and helps to overcome challenges to planning. Specific barriers identified in this literature review include, lack of

training or knowledge about planning, failing to realize the benefits of planning, difficulty in implementing the plan, the cost of planning, the time involved in planning, and resistance of staff to the planning effort.

This study of intercollegiate athletic departments seeks to find evidence of formal strategic planning processes in Division I-A athletic departments. Where these processes exist, the study will attempt to find evidence of specific components that are common in the literature – environmental scanning, goal setting, employee participation, process champion, and a budget process that is linked to the strategic plan. In addition, the study attempts to identify specific benefits of and challenges to strategic planning by testing for existence of the barriers identified in this literature review.

2.5 REVIEW OF LITERATURE SUMMARY

The review of literature is intended to provide a framework upon which this study of strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments is based. The review reveals certain themes that are important to any study of strategic planning – the importance of process, the environmental scanning component, the role of leadership, having a process champion, employee participation, goals, linking the budget to planning, and barriers to planning. It is these themes that provide the framework for this study.

More specifically, the literature describes the importance of having a process for strategic planning. This study will use the process developed by Yow et al. (2000) as the benchmark for planning processes in intercollegiate athletics. Results of the research will be compared to this process when determining the extent of strategic planning by athletic departments.

Strategic planning literature suggests that environmental scanning is an important component of the strategic planning process as it helps to distinguish strategic planning from long-range planning. In addition to an internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses, environmental scanning involves an evaluation of the external opportunities and threats facing the organization. This external focus is one of the characteristics that distinguishes strategic planning from long-range planning.

Much of the strategic planning literature indicates that leadership is important for creating a planning culture and making planning a priority for the organization. Likewise, a process champion is necessary for keeping the planning process moving and on track. This champion also helps the organization with implementation of the plan. Plan implementation is also affected by employee participation. The literature generally supports the idea of a participative planning process in which employees are involved in developing the strategic plan. This participation is believed to lead to more effective implementation of the plan.

This review identified how goals, as part of the planning process, help organizations to look forward to a desired future state and then to develop strategies to achieve that state. Without goals, organizations tend to do more of the same which results in long-range planning rather than strategic planning.

Implementation of the plan is affected by the resources in place to support the strategies identified in the plan. This theme of budget and its link to the plan is important to help determine the degree of plan implementation that occurs in Division I-A athletic departments.

Lastly, the barriers to planning identified by Yow et al. (2000) provide a basis for measuring the obstacles that prevent Division I-A athletic departments from planning. The study inquires as to the existence of these barriers: the training and knowledge of athletic department

staff, the perception that planning is not necessary and simply additional work, and problems with implementation. If these, or other, barriers can be identified, it then becomes possible to develop ways around these challenges which may lead to greater use of strategic planning as a management tool.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was collected by combining the quantitative method of a survey questionnaire and the qualitative method of personal interviews. The questionnaire was administered to all 119 colleges and universities (Appendix A) competing in Division I-A of the NCAA. After survey data was analyzed, interviews were conducted in person or via the telephone with 16 Athletic Directors (or the department's chief planner) to allow for more in-depth analysis of the strategic planning processes used in intercollegiate athletics. According to Mertens (2005), the order of quantitative then qualitative data collection qualifies this as a sequential mixed methods design. Mertens points out that mixed methods are valuable for solving "a problem that is present in a complex educational or social context" (p. 293). The value is created by the multiple approaches to data collection which allows the researcher to draw conclusions and obtain a more complete picture about the complex issue. The complex nature of intercollegiate athletics and the dynamic of human behavior, with regards to strategic planning, makes a mixed methods design appropriate for this study.

The study is a descriptive study based on an examination of strategic planning processes at Division I-A athletic departments. The intent of the study was to develop a strategic planning process model for Division I-A athletic departments. Additionally, the research identifies benefits of strategic planning and the challenges that make strategic planning a difficult management tool for intercollegiate athletic departments to employ.

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The collection process for the survey data consisted of two emails to Division I-A Athletic Directors. The initial mailing was an e-mail from Dutch Baughman, Executive Director of the Division 1A Athletic Directors' Association, notifying Athletic Directors of the survey and encouraging their prompt response. The e-mail, included in Appendix B, contained a link to the electronic survey. The support of the Division 1A Athletic Directors' Association was an important part of the data collection efforts for this study. Dutch Baughman is a well-known and respected leader in intercollegiate athletics and his support of the study was instrumental in persuading Athletic Directors to respond to the survey.

Data was collected via a questionnaire sent electronically to the Athletic Directors of all Division I-A schools. An electronic questionnaire was used because of the efficient and cost-effective means it allows for data collection and analysis. The survey was a self-designed instrument and its questions were based on the review of strategic planning literature. It was considered cross-sectional, since it captured data at one point in time (Creswell, 2003). The questionnaire, included in Appendix C, contained 43 items and used categorical scales (yes/no), nominal scales, and rating scales – Likert-like items based on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree - to collect data. The instrument was tested by four experts in the sports management and/or strategic planning fields who submitted comments and revisions prior to mass distribution. According to Creswell (2003), this type of pre-testing is important to improve questions, confirm the format of the survey, fine-tune the scales used, and establish the face validity of the instrument. The individual survey items were cross-referenced to the research questions and are shown in Appendix D.

Approximately three weeks after the electronic mailing of the link to the survey instrument, a follow-up electronic mail message, included in Appendix E, was sent to all Athletic Directors. This message again encouraged participation in the survey.

After the surveys were collected and analyzed, the survey data was augmented by personal interviews with Athletic Directors (or individuals designated by the Athletic Directors) to gain further insight into the strategic planning processes used by these institutions. Twenty-two athletic departments, identified in Appendix F, were randomly selected for interviews. A stratified random sampling technique was used as a means of selecting a sample of athletic departments that engage in strategic planning and another sample of those that do not currently have a strategic plan. The stratified random sampling approach is a method used when data can be separated into two distinct groups yet random sampling is still appropriate. With this sampling technique, respondents to the questionnaire were separated into two groups, those that have a strategic plan and those that do not. From each group, eleven departments were randomly selected for interviews. The selected Athletic Directors were then sent an interview request via electronic mail and interviews were scheduled as Athletic Directors, or their planning designees, responded. In all, 16 interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over the telephone. Departments granting interviews are also identified in Appendix F. Eight interviews were conducted with departments that have a strategic plan and eight were conducted with departments that do not have a strategic plan. An outline of questions for the personal interviews is included in Appendix G. The personal interview questions were cross-referenced to the research questions and are included in Appendix H. These personal interviews were conducted after the survey data was analyzed so the interviews could be focused on specific

findings from the survey data analysis. Notes were taken to allow for specific thoughts to be captured during the interview, and analyzed at a later time.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began with a report on the number of returns and non-returns of the survey instrument. After capturing this information about survey response, the data analysis took the form of a descriptive analysis of information collected by the survey instrument. Demographic and descriptive data were analyzed by measuring the frequency distributions for the responses using SPSS software.

Personal interview data was analyzed by reviewing notes from interviews and categorizing the various topics that were revealed. This organized data was then reviewed to identify specific information related to the strategic planning processes used by athletic departments and to identify the benefits and challenges these particular departments face in planning.

The end result of data collection and analysis is a description of a process model for strategic planning by athletic departments in Division I-A. In addition, data analysis helped identify the perceived benefits of strategic planning and the challenges that make it difficult for athletic departments to engage in strategic planning. With knowledge of a process model and the benefits and challenges of strategic planning, athletic departments will be well-prepared to tackle the often onerous task of developing and implementing a strategic plan. This management tool can help athletic departments thrive in the difficult and dynamic environments in which they compete.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the data collected by the survey questionnaire and the personal interviews with athletic administrators who lead the planning effort in their respective Division I-A athletic departments. The data is organized by using the research questions introduced in Chapter 1.

The link for the electronic survey was sent in an email to the Athletic Directors of all 119 Division I-A colleges and universities. The email was sent from Dutch Baughman, the Executive Director of the Division 1A Athletic Directors' Association. Eighty surveys were returned. After eliminating incomplete surveys and duplicate responses, 67 surveys remained for data analysis. These 67 completed surveys represent a response rate of 56.3%. The survey was created using "skip logic" so that all respondents answering "no" to the question, "Does your department currently have a strategic plan?," were advanced in the survey to question number 29. As such, questions four through 28 contain 13 fewer responses and these are considered system non-responses since the respondent was never exposed to the question. The number of responses to other survey questions may also vary due to respondents choosing not to answer specific questions. There were some Athletic Directors who responded to most, but not all, questions. These surveys were considered completed surveys and still used in the data analysis.

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 15 statistical software. The first step in data analysis was to evaluate frequency distributions for the specific survey item responses. The frequency distributions, as they relate to the research questions are presented here.

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION #1

Do athletic departments in Division I-A engage in strategic planning?

Table 1 indicates that 80.6% of the responding Division I-A athletic departments currently have a strategic plan.

Table 1. Number of athletic departments that have a strategic plan

Department has a strategic plan:	Number	%
Yes	54	80.6
No	13	19.4

Kriemadis (1997), in his study of athletic departments in the mid-1990's, found that less than half of all Division I-A athletic departments engaged in strategic planning. The high percentage found in this study is an indication that athletic departments are more likely to have a strategic plan than they were 10-15 years ago.

The majority of these strategic plans were developed very recently, which indicates that strategic planning is still a popular management tool in Division I-A athletic departments. As Table 2 indicates, nearly half (42.6%) of responding departments developed their strategic plan last year and a full two-thirds (66.7%) of all responding departments developed their plan within the past two years.

Table 2. Indication of when departments developed strategic plan

How many years ago was plan developed?	Number	%
Last year	23	42.6
2 years ago	13	24.1
3 years ago	6	11.1
4 years ago	6	11.1
5 or more years ago	6	11.1

Results of the survey, displayed in Table 3, further indicate that most departments (75.0%) developed the strategic plan to cover a period of five years. The remaining 25.0% of responding departments developed plans for 1-4 years.

Table 3. Time frame covered by strategic plan

The current strategic plan covers a period of:	Number	%
One year	2	3.8
Two years	4	7.7
Three years	5	9.6
Four years	2	3.8
Five years	39	75.0

When asked about their intentions to update the strategic plan, 61.1% of responding departments indicated they intend to update the strategic plan annually (Table 4). Additionally, 13.0% of respondents plan to update the strategic plan every two years. Cumulatively, this means that 74.1% of responding departments intend to update their strategic plan at least every two years.

Table 4. Frequency with which the strategic plan will be updated

How often will the strategic plan be updated?	Number	%
Daily	1	1.9
Annually	33	61.1
Every 2 years	7	13.0
Every 3 years	2	3.7
Every 4 years	2	3.7
Every 5 years	2	3.7
Unsure	5	9.3
As needed	2	3.7

At its most basic level, strategic planning appears to be occurring in athletic departments. Athletic departments are developing strategic plans and typically these plans cover a five year time frame. The plans are updated once every two years.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION #2

For athletic departments that do engage in strategic planning, do they follow a process for plan development and implementation and what are the components of this process?

The data presented in this section attempts to identify components of a strategic planning process used by Division I-A athletic departments. Survey questions, and their corresponding results, are presented to show which parts of strategic planning models identified in the literature review are actually used by athletic departments.

4.2.1 People and the Planning Process

As the review of literature indicated, employee involvement can be an effective way of gaining buy-in for the strategic plan. If employees are involved in the creation of the plan, they are more likely to support the plan during its implementation. Table 5 displays the responses to questions related to personnel involved in the planning process.

Table 5. Personnel involved in the planning process

Planning Personnel	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Used an external consultant	15	27.8	39	72.2
Used a process champion	40	74.1	14	25.9
Appointed a planning group/committee	44	83.0	9	17.0

As Table 5 shows, only 27.8% of departments used an external consultant to lead the strategic planning process. This data suggests that athletic departments prefer to use internal resources, employees within the department, to guide the planning initiative and that departments feel comfortable with developing their strategic plan. The survey attempted to determine whether these internal resources were in the form of a process champion or a planning group or committee. As Table 5 shows, 74.1% of departments responded that they had a process champion who was instrumental in ensuring that the strategic plan was completed. In most cases, the process champion was either the Athletic Director or a member of the senior management team (Sr. Associate AD, Associate AD, etc.). In addition, 83.0% of responding departments indicated that they used a planning group or committee to oversee the planning process. In most cases, survey responses indicated that this planning committee reported directly

to the Athletic Director. In one unique case, the planning committee reported to the Dean of the College of Business.

Personal interviews supported this concept of a planning group. All interviewees that have a strategic plan involved a group or committee in the planning process. Some of these groups were small, consisting of just senior managers in the athletic department, while others were quite extensive, involving constituents from across the university and outside the department.

A cross tabulation of the process champion and planning committee responses provides an indication of whether departments use both a process champion and a planning committee for the development of the strategic plan. Table 6 shows that 32 of the 53 responding departments (60.4%) used both a planning committee and a process champion to lead the strategic planning process. Only two departments developed the strategic plan without using a planning committee or a process champion.

Table 6. Athletic department use of process champions and planning groups

		Planning Committee		Total
		Yes	No	
Process Champion	Yes	32	7	39
	No	12	2	14

The survey also attempted to identify whether external stakeholders (those outside of the athletic department) were involved in the strategic planning process. Of responding departments, 77.8% indicated that external stakeholders were involved in the strategic planning process. When asked to identify both internal and external stakeholder groups that assisted in the

development of the strategic plan, nearly 80% (79.6%) of respondents indicated that coaches were involved in the development of the strategic plan. Other stakeholders that tended to be involved in the strategic planning process were: university administrators, student-athletes, and university staff outside the athletic department. Table 7 shows the percentage of responding departments who indicated that the corresponding stakeholder assisted in the development of the strategic plan.

Table 7. Stakeholder participation in the strategic planning process

Internal or External Stakeholder	% of Departments Indicating Stakeholder Assisted with Strategic Plan
Coaches	79.6
University administration	77.8
Student-athletes	68.5
University (non-athletic) staff	64.8
Faculty	53.7
Donors	40.7
Alumni	38.9
Former letter winners	37.0
Board of Trustees	22.2
General student body	11.1
Student government board	11.1
Corporate sponsors	9.3

Data collected during personal interviews revealed some disparity among athletic departments with regards to stakeholders in the planning process. Some athletic departments made a concerted effort to involve departments and administrators from across the university in order to get university support of the plan. Other athletic departments were more focused internally and only included athletic department staff in the development of the plan. This variation in the approach to stakeholder involvement may be a result of the different cultures of

institutions. One Athletic Director, whose strategic planning committee included representatives from across the university and was chaired by a Dean of one of the institution’s colleges, indicated that the institution’s culture dictates that athletics and academics be intertwined, and the planning process reflected that culture.

4.2.2 NCAA, Conference, and Institutional Plans

The survey questionnaire also investigated the role of the NCAA and individual conferences in plan development and the approval process departments must go through to finalize the strategic plan. As Table 8 shows, of the responding departments, 70.4% indicated that the NCAA strategic plan did not play a role in the development of their department’s strategic plan. These results suggest that few departments, less than 30%, are concerned with developing a plan that is consistent with the NCAA strategic plan.

Table 8. The role of NCAA, Conference, and institution plans in departmental strategic planning

NCAA, Conference, Institution plans	Yes		No		Don’t Know	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Was NCAA plan considered?	16	29.6	38	70.4	n/a	n/a
Does conference have a strategic plan?	28	51.9	12	22.2	14	25.9
Was conference plan considered?	12	44.4	15	55.6	n/a	n/a
Does institution have a strategic plan?	58	86.6	6	9.0	3	4.5
Is dept. included in institution plan?	47	83.9	9	16.1	n/a	n/a

n/a = choice not available for that question

Similarly, the survey attempted to measure the role of the responding institution’s conference and the conference level strategic plan. As Table 8 indicates, 25.9% of respondents were not sure if their conference has a strategic plan. Another 22.2% responded that their conference does not have a strategic plan. The remaining 51.9% responded “yes” the conference

has a strategic plan. Those responding “yes,” were then asked if the conference strategic plan played a role in the development of their department’s strategic plan. Results, shown in Table 8, show that the majority of respondents (55.6%) indicated the conference strategic plan did not play a role in the development of their strategic plan.

The survey also inquired about the institution’s (versus the department’s) strategic plan. Responses shown in Table 8 reveal that nearly 87% (86.6%) of departments responded that their institution does have a strategic plan. Six responses indicated the institution does not have a strategic plan and three were unsure. The respondents who answered yes, the institution does have a strategic plan, were then asked if they were included in the institution’s strategic planning process. Table 8 indicates that 83.9% of the departments were included in the university’s strategic planning process.

Personal interviews also attempted to learn more about the relationship between the athletic department strategic plan and the institution’s strategic plan. In most cases, the interviewees indicated that the athletic department was included as a part of the institution’s strategic plan. In addition, athletic departments typically acknowledged the institution’s strategic plan in their own planning process but often did not make a formal connection to the plan. Two Athletic Directors indicated their department plan was done before the university’s plan and that the university was following their lead. Other Athletic Directors said they were “piggybacking” on the planning formats and guidelines that were established during the institution’s planning process.

4.2.3 Strategic Plan Approval

The survey questionnaire then turned to the approval of the strategic plan. Results shown in Table 9, indicate that nearly one-third of all departments (31.5%) are not required to get approval of their strategic plan. While 85.2% of departments get plan approval from the Athletic Director, it is somewhat surprising that this number is not 100%. This statistic indicates that either the Athletic Director is producing the plan and, therefore, does not require his/her own approval, or a senior staff member is producing the plan and is not required to seek the Athletic Director's approval. The majority of schools, 59.3%, submit the strategic plan to the President or Chancellor for approval.

Table 9. Approval of athletic department strategic plan

Strategic plan approved by:	% of Departments Requiring Approval
Athletic Director	85.2
President or Chancellor	59.3
Board of Trustees	16.7
Athletic Foundation Board	14.9
Faculty Senate or Faculty group	9.3
Alumni	0.0
Plan does not require approval	31.5

4.2.4 Components of the Strategic Planning Process

The review of literature on strategic planning allowed for the identification of various components that can typically be found in a strategic plan. Among the most common components were a mission statement, vision statement, goals and objectives, values, and an

environmental scan. In order to confirm the literature and its application to intercollegiate athletics, the survey asked Athletic Directors if their strategic plan includes these specific components of a strategic plan. Results of the responses, shown in Table 10, indicate the number of athletic departments that include each specific component in their strategic plan.

Table 10. Components of strategic planning used by athletic departments

Component of strategic planning process	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Mission statement	65	97.0	2	3.0
Vision statement	44	65.7	23	34.3
Goals and objectives	53	98.1	1	1.9
Written values	51	94.4	3	5.6
Environmental scan	35	64.8	19	35.2

As Table 10 indicates, nearly all (97.0%) of responding athletic departments have mission statements. Responses regarding the department’s vision statement indicate that it is less common for departments to have a vision statement than a mission statement. Only 65.7% of departments have a vision statement compared to the 97.0% that have a mission statement. This relatively low number of departments having a vision statement is interesting given that nearly all Athletic Directors interviewed, even those without a strategic plan, mentioned unifying the department’s vision as an important benefit of strategic planning. Athletic Directors, during personal interviews, seemed to place a greater emphasis on vision than they did in the survey questionnaire.

Strategic plans typically contain specific and measurable goals and objectives that identify what the organization hopes to accomplish through the planning initiative. Results of

the survey responses, included in Table 10, show that 98.1% of respondents indicated that their plan does in fact include specific and measurable objectives or goals.

Values are principles that shape the culture of an organization and beliefs that guide management decisions. The literature review suggested that written values are an important component of strategic planning. Data collected in this study reveals that written values are included in most athletic department strategic plans. Table 10 shows that, of responding departments, 94.4% indicated that their strategic plan includes written values to guide their department.

Environmental scanning, as discussed in the literature review, is necessary to differentiate strategic planning from operational planning. Strategic planning attempts to match an organization's strengths and weaknesses to the opportunities and threats created by the external environment. The environmental scan is the piece of strategic planning that allows this match to take place. Therefore, the survey attempted to determine how many athletic department strategic plans include an environmental scan – an assessment of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis). As Table 10 shows, 64.8% of athletic departments with a strategic plan do include an environmental scan as a component of this plan. Relative to the other components included in athletic department plans, this figure is low, and suggests that many athletic departments who believe they are developing a strategic plan, lack this vital component.

4.2.5 Plan Implementation

The preceding results reveal the components of the planning process but do not address implementation of the plan and its daily use as a management tool. The survey of Athletic

Directors, therefore, attempted to determine if athletic departments use strategic planning as a day-to-day management tool. Table 11 shows the results of survey questions designed to measure whether the strategic plan is actually used by the athletic departments. The data shows that nearly all (96.3%) respondents that have a written strategic plan use the plan to guide decision-making in their departments. This is an indication that decisions are made with the strategic plan in mind and that the plan is used to keep departmental decisions aligned with the goals and objectives in the plan.

Table 11. Athletic department use of strategic plan as a management tool

Measure of plan implementation	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Used to guide decision-making	52	96.3	2	3.7
Department progress measured against the plan	48	88.9	6	11.1

The responses in Table 11 indicate that fewer departments, although still a strong majority, measure department progress using the strategic plan. The 88.9% of departments that responded they do measure departmental progress against goals and objectives in the plan are holding the department accountable for achieving the plan’s goals and objectives.

A cross tabulation of responses to “Guides Decision-making” and “Measures department progress,” confirms the individual responses to these questions and supports the idea that the strategic plan is used as a management tool. As seen in Table 12, 48 of the responding departments indicated that they use the plan to guide decision-making and that they measure departmental progress against goals and objectives stated in the plan. This suggests that 88.9% of departments are using their strategic plan as a management tool.

Table 12. Use of the plan to guide decision-making and measure department progress

		Measures Dept. Progress		Total
		Yes	No	
Guides decision-making	Yes	48	4	52
	No	0	2	2

Implementation was further tested in the survey questionnaire by researching employee involvement in the planning process, and alignment between the strategic plan and management objectives, annual evaluations, and budgets. Results of these responses are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Responses to measures of plan implementation

Measure of plan implementation	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Employees at all levels involved in planning	11	20.8	23	43.4	3	5.7	16	30.2	0	0.0
Budget reflects priorities in the plan	16	29.6	32	59.3	3	5.6	3	5.6	0	0.0
Management objectives linked to plan	18	34.0	33	62.3	1	1.9	1	1.9	0	0.0
Annual evaluations based on plan	11	20.8	35	66.0	2	3.8	5	9.4	0	0.0

Responses to the survey questions listed in Table 13 are used to indicate whether strategic plans are actually implemented or if they tend to sit on a shelf after being developed. The literature shows that employee involvement in the planning process is an effective way to improve buy-in to the strategic plan. Consequently, as buy-in from employees improves, the implementation of the strategies in the plan is more likely. Table 13 shows the level of employee involvement in development of athletic department strategic plans. When asked to assess their level of agreement with the statement, “Employees at all levels of the organization have been involved in the development of our strategic plan,” 64.2% agreed or strongly agreed with the

statement. This is an indication that most departments attempt to involve employees in strategic plan development. It should be noted, however, that still nearly 1/3 (30.2%) of departments did not involve employees at all levels of the organization in the planning process.

Budgetary support and allocation of resources in support of the plan are necessary if the plan is to be implemented effectively. As Table 13 shows, 88.9% of responding departments indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the budget for the athletic department reflects the goals, objectives, and priorities established in the strategic plan. Only three respondents (5.6%) disagreed, indicating that most departments believe the relationship between the budget and the plan is a strong one and resources are allocated in a manner that supports the strategies outlined in the plan.

Personal interviews also inquired about the budget process as it relates to strategic planning. Consistent with the survey results, most of the administrators who were interviewed indicated that the budget was aligned with the strategic plan. Further questioning, however, revealed that there was rarely a formal connection between budgeting and the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan. Two Athletic Directors talked about using zero-based budgeting as their means of aligning the budget and the strategic plan. By requiring functional units to start every budget year at “zero” and justify all budget requests, they ensure that the budget supports the plan initiatives. Most departments, however, indicated they develop the budget with merely an informal acknowledgement of the strategic plan.

Table 13 also displays the responses to the survey question testing the alignment of management objectives and the strategic plan. As the table shows, 96.2% of all respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that objectives established for athletic department management are based on the strategic plan. This provides an indication that strategic plans are

being implemented and managers are being held accountable for achieving the goals and objectives in the plan.

Plan implementation can also be evidenced by alignment of the strategic plan and annual performance evaluations. If such alignment exists, and employees are evaluated based on goals and objectives outlined in the plan, then employees tend to make those goals and objectives a priority. The results, also displayed in Table 13, indicate that 86.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that annual evaluations of athletic department employees are based largely on their accomplishment of goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan.

Data collected through personal interviews was also analyzed to test the connection between the annual evaluations and the strategic plan. These responses were similar to the personal interview responses related to the alignment of the budget and the strategic plan. While most athletic departments indicated that this alignment does exist, few had a formal process for ensuring it. Two departments, in particular, had formal, and seemingly effective, means of aligning performance evaluations to the strategic plan. One of these departments requires each functional unit to develop annual action plans that support the strategies outlined in the strategic plan. These functional unit action plans are then further broken down into individual goals that support the unit level plans. These individual goals then become the basis for performance evaluations. The second department that has a formal process for aligning performance evaluations to the strategic plan also uses functional area action plans. These action plans are very detailed and support the goals and strategies outlined in the strategic plan. The action plans are updated monthly through a specific and formal process. These monthly updates then serve as the basis for performance management discussions so that the department is continually monitoring its progress towards the goals and objectives of the plan.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION #3

What do Division I-A athletic departments perceive to be the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool?

Strategic planning literature suggests numerous benefits of strategic planning. The survey tested several of these benefits, including improvements in internal and external communications, increases in revenue, and improved department effectiveness. Responses, displayed in Table 14, indicate that athletic administrators do consider all to be benefits that can be derived from strategic planning efforts.

Table 14. Perceived benefits of athletic department strategic planning

Perceived benefit of strategic planning	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
External communications have improved	10	18.5	35	64.8	8	14.8	1	1.9	0	0.0
Internal communications have improved	20	37.0	31	57.4	2	3.7	1	1.9	0	0.0
Revenue has increased	11	20.4	24	44.4	18	33.3	1	1.9	0	0.0
Department is more effective	18	33.3	32	59.3	3	5.6	1	1.9	0	0.0

Improvement of internal communications is perceived to be the most significant benefit of strategic planning. As Table 14 shows, 37.0% of respondents strongly agreed that internal communications have improved as a result of strategic planning and 57.4% agreed. Combined,

this indicates that 94.4% of respondents believe that internal communications have improved because of the department's strategic planning initiative.

Personal interviews with athletic administrators also supported this idea of improved internal communications within departments. A recurring theme throughout the interviews with Athletic Directors was the idea of strategic planning "unifying" the department and getting all employees on the same page. Most Athletic Directors mentioned this as one of the significant benefits of strategic planning. Phrases like "consensus of thought," "unifying force," and "on the same page" were heard frequently during interviews when discussing the benefits of strategic planning.

The perceptions of the affect of strategic planning on department effectiveness were also measured by the survey. Responses, displayed in Table 14, indicate that 92.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the department is more effective since developing the strategic plan.

Personal interview questions also attempted to identify if Athletic Directors perceived their departments to be more effective as a result of strategic planning, and if so, to determine what this effectiveness looked like. In the interviews, most Athletic Directors indicated they had seen changes in their departments since implementing the strategic plan. They talked about having more "focused" functional areas, clearer understanding of goals, a shared vision, and greater accountability by employees who understand their goals and what is expected of them.

The improvement of external communications was perceived as a benefit by fewer athletic administrators than the benefits of improved internal communications and department effectiveness. Nonetheless, the responses in Table 14 indicate that still 83.3% of respondents

agreed or strongly agreed that external communications have improved as a result of strategic planning.

When asked about revenue growth as a perceived benefit of strategic planning, survey results were less conclusive. As Table 14 shows, only 64.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that revenue has increased as a result of strategic planning, while one-third of respondents were not sure if revenue has increased as a result of strategic planning. This is likely an indication of the difficulty of attaching a cause and effect relationship to strategic planning and increases in department revenue. Revenue generation is influenced by a number of different factors in intercollegiate athletics – team performance, game day excitement, fan enthusiasm, effective marketing, etc. – so it would be difficult to attribute growth in revenue solely to the strategic planning effort. If, however, departments identify revenue growth as an objective in the strategic plan (which many do, given the difficult financial challenges they face), then ideally, the strategic plan would influence increases in department revenue by defining and implementing the strategies to achieve this objective.

In summary, the improvement of internal communications is perceived to be the most significant benefit of strategic planning. This was confirmed through both the questionnaire and personal interview data. Athletic Directors also perceive that their departments are more effective since developing their strategic plans. Although the data was not as conclusive, improvements in external communications and increases in department revenue were also perceived to be benefits of strategic planning.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION #4

What challenges make it difficult for intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A to engage in strategic planning?

The survey of Athletic Directors also investigated the challenges athletic departments face when attempting to develop strategic plans. Challenges identified in the literature review, such as lack of planning knowledge and interest, the amount of time needed to plan, the cost of planning, industry dynamics, and the perceived effectiveness of planning were all researched.

Table 15 highlights the responses to the survey questions regarding challenges to strategic planning.

Table 15. Perceived challenges of athletic department strategic planning

Perceived challenge of strategic planning	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Takes too much time	0	0.0	3	4.5	2	3.0	47	71.2	14	21.2
Costs too much money	0	0.0	1	1.5	4	6.1	42	63.6	19	28.8
Additional work without justifiable return	2	3.0	8	12.1	0	0.0	36	54.5	20	30.3
Industry changes too quickly	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1.5	46	69.7	17	25.8
Strategic plans don't lead to results	0	0.0	1	1.5	1	1.5	52	78.8	12	18.2
Staff is not interested in strategic planning	0	0.0	3	4.5	9	13.6	40	60.6	14	21.2
Staff does not know how to plan	0	0.0	5	7.5	8	11.9	43	64.2	11	16.4
AD has the knowledge to develop the plan	16	23.9	41	61.2	8	11.9	2	3.0	0	0.0

The time required to develop and implement a strategic plan is identified by the literature as a potential challenge to an organization's strategic planning initiative. As Table 15 shows, however, athletic administrators responding to the survey questionnaire do not perceive time to be a significant challenge for Division I-A athletic departments. Of the respondents, 92.4%

disagreed or strongly disagreed that it takes too much time to develop and implement a strategic plan. Only 4.5% agreed that it takes too much time to develop and implement a strategic plan.

The survey also evaluated the cost of strategic planning to see if this is a significant challenge for athletic departments. Responses to this survey question, shown in Table 15, indicate that most athletic departments (92.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that it costs too much to develop and implement a strategic plan. As such, while the cost of strategic planning may be an obstacle for athletic departments, it is not so considerable that it prevents departments in Division I-A athletics from engaging in strategic planning.

While the survey results indicate neither cost nor time are significant challenges to the strategic planning process, data collected from personal interviews revealed contradictory findings. When asked about the main challenges they faced while developing their strategic plans, most Athletic Directors mentioned cost or time, or both. This contradiction may be due to the format of the questions. In the survey questionnaire, Athletic Directors were responding to a statement about a specific challenge, whereas in the interviews, Athletic Directors were asked to list the challenges they faced when developing and implementing the strategic plan.

Table 15 also reveals that most athletic departments believe strategic planning provides a justifiable return for the effort required. Only 15.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that strategic planning is additional work without a justifiable return. Conversely, nearly 1/3 (30.3%) of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating they feel strongly that the return from strategic planning justifies the additional work required to develop the plan.

The survey questionnaire also attempted to measure perceptions about strategic planning as a tool to deal with a rapidly changing environment. Responses to this survey item, shown in Table 15, indicate that athletic departments do believe strategic planning is effective even in a

rapidly changing industry. Over 95% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that strategic planning does not help because the industry changes too quickly. Just 3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this survey item.

The survey investigated the perceived effectiveness of strategic planning by asking athletic administrators to respond to the statement, “Strategic plans don’t lead to results.” As shown in Table 15, nearly all (97.0%) of those responding athletic departments disagreed or strongly disagreed with the survey item. This indicates that the perception of Division I-A athletic administrators is that strategic planning does, in fact, lead to results.

The interest and knowledge of athletic department staff, as it pertains to strategic planning, can also challenge the planning efforts of the department. The survey measured the interest of the athletic department staff by asking for responses to the statement, “Our athletic department staff is not interested in strategic planning.” Responses, shown in Table 15, indicate that 81.8% of respondents believe their staff is interested in strategic planning (denoted by responding disagree or strongly disagree to the statement) and 13.6% are not sure. It seems from these responses, that athletic departments can more effectively gauge staff interest in planning by trying to determine whether or not this interest exists.

Athletic Director perceptions of athletic department staff knowledge of strategic planning were also measured by the survey. Responses shown in Table 15 reveal that 80.6% of respondents believe their staff understands how to develop a strategic plan. Another 11.9% are not sure if their staff has this knowledge and 7.5% believe their staff does not know how to develop a strategic plan.

The literature on strategic planning indicated that an organization’s leadership plays a key role in making strategic planning a priority. It is assumed that as a leader’s knowledge of

strategic planning increases, then the commitment to planning will also increase. To this extent, Table 15 shows responses to the statement, “I have enough knowledge of strategic planning to allow me to develop a strategic plan.” Of all respondents, 85.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough knowledge to develop a strategic plan. However, only 23.9% responded strongly agree, which indicates that less than ¼ of athletic administrators feel very knowledgeable about strategic planning and their ability to develop a strategic plan.

Evidence of prior training and/or education in strategic planning provides an indication of whether the knowledge of strategic planning that athletic administrators do have was gained through formal processes or learned on the job. Responses to the survey question measuring training and education are shown in Table 16. These results indicate that less than half (43.9%) of respondents had formal training or education in strategic planning. The majority of respondents, therefore, learned strategic planning as they actively participated in the process.

Table 16. Strategic planning training and education of athletic planning administrators

Training and education	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
I have had formal training or education in strategic planning	29	43.9	37	56.1

The final survey questions expanded on this idea of strategic planning knowledge by inquiring about the value of strategic planning workshops for Athletic Directors. One of the questions states, “It would be beneficial for Athletic Directors to attend a strategic planning workshop.” Responses to this question, shown in Table 17, indicate that 77.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Only 3% of respondents disagreed with the statement, indicating that they do not believe a strategic planning workshop would be beneficial.

Table 17. Athletic administrator participation in strategic planning workshops

Strategic planning workshops	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Planning workshops would be beneficial	8	12.1	43	65.2	13	19.7	2	3.0	0	0.0
I would attend a workshop	10	14.9	42	62.7	11	16.4	4	6.0	0	0.0

The final survey question, attempted to determine whether Athletic Directors would attend a strategic planning workshop. Responses, shown in Table 17, reveal that 77.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would attend a strategic planning workshop if one was available at a conference or association meeting. Only 6.0% indicated they would not attend a workshop and 16.4% were not sure whether or not they would attend.

Looking cumulatively at the data collected regarding challenges to strategic planning, the survey data reveals that the most significant challenges to planning are the perception that planning is additional work without a justifiable return, staff lacking the knowledge to develop a strategic plan, and staff not interested in strategic planning. Personal interviews also identified the time it takes to plan and the cost of planning as additional challenges that Division I-A athletic departments face when developing and implementing a strategic plan.

This section presented the results of the responses to the survey questionnaire and the personal interview questions. The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings and a more detailed analysis of the data.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a more detailed discussion of the research data and includes conclusions to be drawn from the data analysis. The discussion is organized around the research questions identified in chapter one and concludes with the development of a process model for strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments.

It is important to note that there were discrepancies between data collected via the electronic questionnaire and data collected through personal interviews. A review of these discrepancies reveals the true value of a mixed methods study. After reviewing survey data only, a researcher might conclude that athletic departments in Division I-A are developing and implementing strategic plans in nearly “textbook” fashion. Indications are such that plans are developed, aligned with the budget, and that they are being used to guide decision-making, to develop management objectives, and to measure performance. Personal interview data, however, revealed very little evidence of any formal or concrete methods to align the plan to budgets, management objectives, day-to-day decision-making, or performance evaluations. It is possible that the survey data was subjected to a socially desirable response bias in that Athletic Directors answered questions about plan implementation in a way they thought the questions should be answered. Athletic Directors, who understand how strategic planning should be used as a management tool, provided answers to survey questions that reflected ideal uses of planning rather than the reality of their planning environment. A mixed methods approach to this study

mitigated this bias. It was through the personal interviews that more realistic views of strategic planning in Division I-A athletic departments were obtained. While Athletic Directors often acknowledged the importance of the plan and hoped department employees were using the plan as a management tool, rarely was there tangible evidence that this was occurring. Only two interviewees (of the eight conducted with Athletic Directors who have a strategic plan) identified formal methods for making sure the plan was used as a day-to-day management tool. These departments are referenced throughout the discussion and provide valuable models for effective plan implementation.

5.1 STRATEGIC PLANNING IN DIVISION I-A ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS

Research Question #1

Do athletic departments in Division I-A engage in strategic planning?

Data collected using the survey instrument indicates that athletic departments in Division I-A do engage in strategic planning. While 80.6% of departments in Division I-A have a strategic plan, this alone is not sufficient evidence to conclude that they “engage” in strategic planning. However, further analysis of the data indicates that departments appear to be fully engaged in the strategic planning and implementation processes. Of departments that have a strategic plan, 74.1% indicated they intend to update their strategic plan either annually or every two years. Furthermore, 96.3% indicated that they use the plan to guide decision-making and 88.9% that they measure department progress against goals and objectives in the plan. Similarly, 88.9% of respondents revealed that the budget for their department reflects the goals, objectives,

and priorities of the strategic plan and 96.2% indicated that management objectives are aligned with the strategic plan.

These statistics provide evidence that most Division I-A athletic departments do engage in strategic planning and that they are making efforts to link strategic plans to daily operations. This data indicates a significant increase in the popularity of strategic planning when compared to the Kriemadis (1997) study, from the mid-1990's, that found 43.4% of athletic departments engaged in strategic planning.

The data was also sorted by conference affiliation to determine if there are differences in the tendency to plan strategically, based upon the conference to which individual athletic departments belong. The results revealed no significant difference between Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conferences and non-BCS conferences. Of the 40 BCS conference schools responding, 31 (77.5%) have a strategic plan. Of the 29 non-BCS conference schools responding, 25 (86.2%) have a strategic plan. Although the percentages are not too disparate, it is somewhat surprising that a smaller percentage of BCS schools would engage in strategic planning than non-BCS schools. BCS schools are typically larger departments, both in terms of staff and revenue, and would seemingly have more resources to devote to strategic planning and also would potentially reap more significant benefits from gains in efficiency generated by strategic planning.

Nonetheless, it appears that strategic planning is occurring at the Division I-A level of intercollegiate athletics. Athletic departments are engaged in strategic planning and often are using these strategic plans as a management tool.

5.2 COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Research Question #2

For athletic departments that do engage in strategic planning, do they follow a process for plan development and implementation and what are the components of this process?

As the discussion of research question one indicated, the survey results suggest that the majority of Division I-A athletic departments engage in strategic planning. This research question seeks to determine whether there is a systematic process for strategic planning and to identify components of this process. Yow et al. (2000) identify a strategic planning process that includes: defining a purpose or mission; analyzing the environment; developing objectives; identifying strategies; developing operational plans; and evaluating performance.

Evidence of a “typical” process can be determined from an analysis of the frequency distributions for the survey item responses. For the purposes of this analysis of strategic planning processes, it is assumed that where a vast majority of athletic departments engage in a specific component of strategic planning, that component is an important part of a strategic planning process. For example, 75.0% of responding departments indicated that their strategic plans cover a five year period. As such, it is assumed for this study that the “typical” strategic planning process for Division I-A athletic departments is a five year cycle. This finding supports the conclusion of Yow et al. (2000) who also suggested a five year planning cycle. Additionally, 74.1% of departments intend to update their plan either annually or every two years. Based upon the frequency of response for these two items, the strategic planning process involves developing a five year plan and updating the plan at least once every two years.

This study revealed that 97.0% of all athletic departments have a mission statement. Interestingly, 12 departments that did not have a strategic plan did still have a mission statement.

Conversely, only one institution, of all the institutions with a strategic plan, had no mission statement. This is an indication that developing a mission statement is not exclusive to the strategic planning process, however, as Yow et al. indicates, it tends to be an important part of the process.

Following similar logic, the strategic planning process for Division I-A athletic departments includes a process champion (74.1%) and a planning group (83.0%) that reports to the Athletic Director. The planning group includes coaches (79.6%), university administrators (77.8%), student-athletes (68.5%), and university staff (64.8%). While Yow et al. (2000) do not identify the consistency of the planning group, they do advocate for such a group and suggest the group is instrumental in coordinating the planning effort. Furthermore, Division I-A athletic departments do not typically use the services of an external consultant (72.2% did not use an external consultant), but rather use their internal process champion to lead the planning process.

Although only 64.8% of respondents currently perform an environmental scan or SWOT analysis as part of the planning process, the literature (including Yow et al.) suggests that this is an important component of strategic planning. A process model that includes an environmental scan can help Division I-A athletic departments improve the effectiveness of their strategic planning.

Other features of the strategic plan are that development of the strategic plan typically involves employees at all levels of the athletic department (64.2%). Plan development does not include an evaluation of the NCAA (70.4%) or conference strategic plans. (Of respondents, 22.2% indicated their conference did not have a strategic plan; 25.9% indicated they were not sure if their conference had a strategic plan; 55.6% of the remaining respondents indicated the conference plan did not play a role in the development of the strategic plan).

The finished strategic plan includes specific and measurable objectives (98.1%) and written values (94.4%) for the department. Specific and measurable objectives are identified as a part of the planning process developed by Yow et al. (2000). This research study supports this step in the planning process and indicates nearly all departments include this in their processes. This study then suggests that the completed strategic plan is approved by the Athletic Director.

Implementation of the strategic plan (or, according to Yow et al., evaluation and control) occurs by using the plan to guide decision-making (96.3%) and measuring department progress against goals and objectives in the plan (88.9%). Additionally, the strategic plan is aligned to the athletic department budget by building a budget that reflects the goals, objectives, and priorities of the plan (88.9%). Plan implementation is also evidenced by aligning management objectives to the strategic plan (96.2%) and preparing annual evaluations of athletic department personnel using accomplishments of goals and objectives in the plan (86.8%).

While survey data identifies the existence of connections between strategic planning and the budget, management objectives, and annual evaluations, personal interview data is less conclusive. Athletic Directors, in their interviews, suggested that these connections exist but rarely offered a formal, or definitive, method for aligning the plan to these other management tools. One Athletic Director talked about monthly staff meetings as a way to keep the department focused on the strategic plan initiatives. Another Athletic Director indicated he looks at the strategic plan monthly and then gets together with the senior staff if corrections or adjustments to strategy are needed. Only two departments, however, identified formal processes for aligning the strategic plan to budgeting and performance evaluations. These departments both used action plans, at the functional unit level, as the basis for breaking down strategies into functional unit and individual goals. Both departments seemed to very effectively align the

strategic plan to both the budget and performance evaluations. These strategies for alignment will appear again later when the strategic planning process model is presented.

5.3 PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Research Question #3

What do Division I-A athletic departments perceive to be the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool?

Yow et al. (2000) identify the benefits of strategic planning as helping athletic departments “adapt to changing environments, take advantage of opportunities created by change, reach agreements on major issues, and place responsibility more precisely” (p. 6). In addition to these benefits, results of this study indicate that athletic departments believe that internal and external communications have improved. Additionally, 92.6% of departments believe they are more effective because of strategic planning. While one-third of respondents were not sure if revenue had increased as a result of strategic planning, 64.8% did attribute revenue increases to strategic planning.

Perhaps the most effusive endorsement of strategic planning came from interviews with Athletic Directors when they were asked about the benefits of strategic planning. Even Athletic Directors who did not have a strategic plan were extremely supportive of planning and indicated that developing a plan was one of their top priorities. The most common benefit identified by personal interviews was the idea of unification of the department that results from strategic planning. Interviewees mentioned that the department was now “on the same page,” “unified,”

or “clearly understanding the vision.” In interviews of the eight Athletic Directors with a strategic plan, unifying the department’s vision was mentioned by four of them as a benefit to planning. Coincidentally, four of the Athletic Directors whose departments do not have a plan, also mentioned unifying the department as a main benefit of strategic planning. One Athletic Director whose department does not have a strategic plan indicated they are embarking on the development of a plan and identified a list of benefits he hoped to achieve through the planning effort. This list included, “getting buy-in for the vision and unity of thought, the allocation of resources is clearer, and it can be a unifying force for the department.”

One Athletic Director identified a unique benefit of strategic planning and stated that planning has helped the department reduce hiring mistakes. This Director indicated that the plan “helped define us so we can attract a certain kind of employee.” The department has made fewer hiring mistakes because the strategic plan makes departmental commitments and priorities very clear. Another Athletic Director said his department employees are more willing to work hard because they understand more about what their work means and where they are headed as a department. Other benefits revealed during personal interviews were: improving focus by providing a concrete direction for the department, creating benchmarks to measure performance, increasing staff communication during the planning process, building ownership through employee involvement, increasing accountability of staff, and clarifying the allocation of resources.

5.4 PERCEIVED CHALLENGES TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

Research Question #4

What challenges make it difficult for intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A to engage in strategic planning?

Yow et al. (2000) identify three main reasons why strategic planning does not occur in athletic departments. Their findings indicate that 1) administrators lack training in strategic planning, 2) some administrators perceive strategic planning as unnecessary and, thus, view it as additional workload that is not justified, and 3) departments face problems with implementing the strategic plan. This study supports Yow et al.'s assertion regarding training, in that only 43.9% of respondents indicated they had received formal training or education in strategic planning. This study did not, however, support the Yow et al. finding that planning is additional work without a return. Of the respondents in this study, only 15.2% believe strategic planning is additional work without a justifiable return. Problems with implementation, while not evident in survey data, do appear in data collected through personal interviews. While Athletic Directors, in their survey responses, indicated they do use the plan to guide decision-making, measure department progress, develop management objectives, and evaluate personnel, personal interviews revealed that using the plan as a management tool is a challenge and that there are only two departments with formal methods for aligning the strategic plan to budgets, management objectives, and performance management.

Of the challenges identified by Kriemadis (1997) - insufficient finance, insufficient time, personnel resistance, communication, insufficient training, planning policy, and planning value – only insufficient training is supported by the survey data in this research study. Although less than half of the respondents received formal training or education, 85.1% believe they have the

knowledge to develop a strategic plan. This is an indication that athletic administrators have learned strategic planning from the experience of planning. This “on-the-job” training is the extent of strategic planning training for more than half of the respondents. Additionally, the survey data in this study does not find insufficient finance, insufficient time, or personnel resistance to be barriers to strategic planning.

Personal interview data, however, suggests that time and cost are challenges to athletic departments when developing a strategic plan. Time was mentioned four times by Athletic Directors who have strategic plans and three times by Athletic Directors without a plan as a challenge they face when developing and implementing the plan. Financial resources were identified as a challenge to strategic planning four times by Athletic Directors with a plan and once by an Athletic Director without a plan. One Athletic Director added that the business of college athletics “changes too fast and too quickly” for strategic planning to be effective. He went on to indicate, “we have 18 products with changing academic and financial environments” so there are limits to what strategic planning can achieve.

Given this data, it is important that the process model presented in this study allows for a concise and focused planning initiative. If a process is too time-consuming, departments are not likely to engage it for their planning and implementation purposes.

5.5 STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS MODEL

Research Question #5

Can a strategic planning process model be developed specifically for Division I-A athletic departments?

This study uses the Yow et al. (2000) six step strategic planning process as a framework for researching strategic planning in Division I-A athletic departments. Building on the Yow et al. model, this study proposes a process model (Figure 1) that includes two stages – the planning stage and the implementation stage – and nine total steps. The model also acknowledges the continuous nature of effective strategic planning. The arrows surrounding the steps of the process indicate that strategic planning is an ongoing, continuous process that requires constant assessment, evaluation, and reaction. The two stages are designed to help planning administrators understand the need for both a thorough planning process and also specific steps for implementation of the plan. Without the implementation stage, the strategic plan tends to sit idly on a shelf waiting for the next scheduled update, and is ineffective as a management tool.

Each stage of the strategic planning process (planning and implementation) includes specific steps. The nine steps are the comprehensive strategic planning process model developed by this study. It is believed that by following this two stage, nine step process model, Division I-A athletic departments can more easily engage in strategic planning which improves their ability to use the strategic plan as an effective management tool.

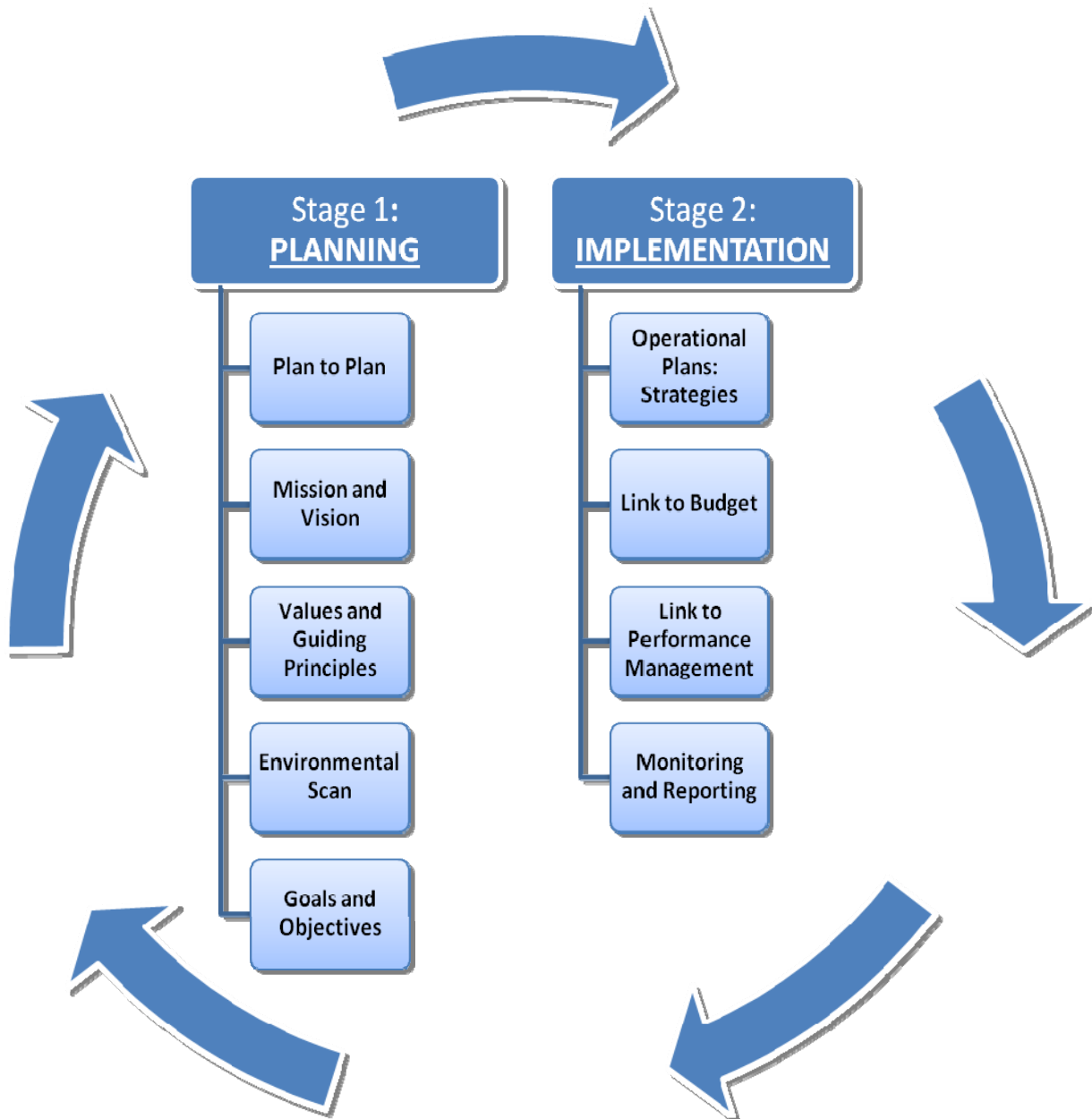


Figure 1. Strategic Planning Process Model

5.5.1 Planning Stage

The planning stage of the process model is when the actual strategic plan is developed. It is distinct from the implementation stage in that these steps focus more on the actual creation of the plan rather than its use as a management tool. The steps in the planning stage include: the plan-to-plan, mission and vision statements, values and guiding principles, environmental scan, and goals and objectives.

5.5.1.1 Step 1: Plan-to-Plan

While Yow et al. prescribe starting the planning process with development of the mission statement, this study suggests that before the exercise of defining the department's mission can begin, the department should lay out a clear plan for the planning process. They should, in essence, develop a "plan-to-plan." As such, the plan-to-plan is step one of the process model. Personal interviews identified one athletic department that conducted a plan-to-plan prior to initiating the formal planning process. This department, subsequently, had a very positive planning experience, and by all accounts, has used planning very effectively as a management tool. The plan-to-plan includes a description of the planning process and specific details about how the strategic plan will be developed. Areas addressed in the plan-to-plan include, the time period covered by the strategic plan, how often the plan is to be updated, who the members of the planning group are, who the process champion is, the role of the Athletic Director, and how the planning process is to move forward. The role of the Athletic Director is particularly important because the literature on strategic planning (Mintzberg, 1978; Hosmer, 1982; Bloom, 1986; Vinzant & Vinzant, 1996) has indicated that leadership commitment to planning is important for success of the planning effort. If high level leaders make strategic planning a priority, then the

organization is also likely to make strategic planning a priority. The literature (Bryson & Roering, 1988; Paris, 2004) also suggests the importance of the identification of a process champion to lead the planning process and the selection of a planning group that reports to the Athletic Director. The process champion for a Division I-A athletic department strategic plan is typically a member of the senior management team of the athletic department. The planning group for a Division I-A athletic department would likely include members of the athletic department administration, coaches, university staff, and student-athletes. It is important to get people at all levels of the organization involved in the strategic planning process. Research collected through personal interviews revealed that several Athletic Directors made specific mention of the need to involve the entire department in the planning effort. This is important to create buy-in from the department staff and also to help unify the staff with a common vision and direction.

Although several Athletic Directors specifically mentioned the importance of employee involvement, this study indicates that only 64.2% of departments with a strategic plan involved employees at all levels of the organization in the planning process. This presents an area of opportunity for Division I-A athletic departments to improve strategic planning. Based on Bloom's (1986) findings which revealed that greater involvement in the planning process leads to greater ownership of, and accountability towards, the goals and objectives developed in the plan, increasing employee involvement in planning can potentially increase the effectiveness of planning by Division I-A athletic departments.

Once these details are clearly defined in the plan-to-plan, the process champion and the planning group can begin the planning process. The plan-to-plan is an important first step in the process as it lays the foundation for effective strategic planning.

5.5.1.2 Step 2: Mission and Vision Statements

This study reveals that 97.0% of all athletic departments surveyed have a mission statement. Research regarding vision statements, however, revealed that only 65.7% of responding departments have a vision statement. Step 2 in the process model is creation of both a mission and vision statement. The development of a mission statement is an important step in the planning process and should occur after the plan-to-plan is complete. As Yow et al. (2000) suggest, the mission statement should identify the department's reason for being and its purpose for existing. Generally, an athletic department mission statement would include points related to developing student-athletes, helping student-athletes to graduate and achieve their goals, fiscal integrity of the department, and competing at a high level either within the conference or nationally.

The vision statement is a declaration of where the department hopes to be at the end of the strategic planning cycle. Since most athletic department plans cover a period of five years, the vision statement would indicate where the department intends to be at the end of the five year time span. Strategic planning literature emphasizes mission over vision and, in fact, rarely includes a vision statement as part of the planning process. Creation of a vision statement is included in this model for two reasons: 1) strategic planning is about moving the organization in the direction of the goals and objectives established in the strategic plan and the vision statement is a broad, yet concise, summary of these goals and objectives and is important for helping the organization to understand the ultimate goal; 2) while survey responses indicated only two-thirds of respondents had a vision statement, the idea of vision was frequently raised in personal interviews. When discussing the benefits of strategic planning, most Athletic Directors raised the idea of vision and identified strategic planning as a tool that unifies the vision, helps

departments to understand the vision, and develops buy-in to the mission and vision. One Athletic Director commented, “it puts them [athletic department staff] all on the same page, it gets them saying the same thing.” Another Athletic Director spoke about how the strategic plan “crystallizes the vision and develops consensus of thought so you can agree where you want to go.” Since this idea of vision is such an important part of the benefits of strategic planning, as perceived by Athletic Directors, it seems only natural to include it as a step in the planning process.

5.5.1.3 Step 3: Values and Guiding Principles

Another important early step in the strategic planning process involves developing written values and guiding principles. Although Yow et al. do not include written values as a step in the strategic planning process, 94.4% of the respondents that have a strategic plan included written values as part of the plan. As such, step three in the process model proposed by this study is identifying the department’s core values and guiding principles. Values for an athletic department should depict the principles and beliefs of the department. These values might be summarized by words such as, integrity, teamwork, pride, honor, persistence, commitment, and accountability. In a personal interview, one Athletic Director spoke about values by indicating that “every decision is grounded in student-athlete development.” For this department, student-athlete development is an important value that guides decision-making. Another Athletic Director talked about the focus of their entire strategic planning initiative centering around one value – excellence. Excellence became the theme upon which all strategic initiatives were developed. This approach was particularly effective at this institution because it helped department staff define excellence and make decisions to achieve their concept of excellence.

5.5.1.4 Step 4: Environmental Scan

Strategic planning literature strongly endorses the use of environmental scanning in the strategic planning process. The environmental scan helps to align the changes in the environment with the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and in this regard, is deemed a critical step in strategic planning. Although the strategic planning literature is very clear on the value of conducting an environmental analysis, only 64.8% of departments indicated that they conduct an environmental scan or SWOT analysis as part of the planning process. This is another area of opportunity for athletic departments seeking to make strategic planning more effective. As such, step four in the process model presented here is an environmental scan. An environmental scan that includes both an internal and external analysis is critical for effective strategic planning. Understanding the department's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats presented by the external environment is an important step toward setting meaningful objectives for the department.

5.5.1.5 Step 5: Goals and Objectives

Once the department completes its plan-to-plan, understands its mission, defines its core values, identifies its own strengths and weaknesses and determines the external opportunities and threats it faces, it can then proceed with step five of the planning process – developing goals and objectives for the organization. Of the survey respondents that have a strategic plan, 98.1% indicated that the plan includes specific and measurable goals and objectives. These specific and measurable goals and objectives should be developed for the five years covered by the strategic plan. The goals and objectives are specific results that the department intends to achieve during the planning period and they are critical for the plan to be meaningful and effective. Without these specific goals and objectives, the department will not know what it is working towards, nor

will it be able to measure its progress because it won't know where it is heading. Yow et al. (2000) suggest that an athletic department's goals and objectives might include items such as, "revenue by sport, championships, wins/losses, graduation rate, attendance at games, budget, and community service" (p. 54).

5.5.2 Implementation Stage

After goals and objectives are established, the planning group proceeds to the implementation stage of the planning process. The implementation stage includes developing operational plans and specific strategies, linking the plan to the budget, linking the plan to performance management, and monitoring and reporting on progress.

5.5.2.1 Step 6: Operational Plans - Strategies

Step six in the strategic planning process model (the first step in the implementation stage) is developing operational plans and strategies. Yow et al. (2000) define strategy as the "course of action taken by an organization to achieve its objectives" (p. 67). Similarly, operational plans are very detailed plans that identify specific strategies that, when executed, will lead the organization closer to the goals and objectives identified in step five of the strategic planning process model. Operational plans should be developed for each specific functional area of the athletic department. Sutton and Migliore (1988) recommend that an intercollegiate athletics program develop operational plans in the areas of ticketing, sports information, marketing/promotions, facility management and planning, business/finance office, athletic development, and a plan for each of the individual sports programs.

Personal interviews conducted for this study identified two athletic departments that effectively use operational (or action) plans as a management tool. These operational plans are necessary to “activate” the strategic plan and to develop functional unit initiatives that will lead to accomplishment of the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. One personal interview emphasized the importance of these operational plans as the athletic administrator stated, “Every area has an action plan and understands the tasks needed to accomplish the plan. These are annual and they connect with the strategic plan.”

This study proposes that operational plans be developed on an annual basis. This requires that department personnel plan just once per year and then focus on implementation and monitoring progress. Operational plans increase the likelihood of the department achieving its goals and objectives because the plans define clear strategies for accomplishing the stated goals. Without specific operational plans and strategies, developed at the functional unit level, the strategic plan tends to be little more than a vision statement of what the department wishes to become without any concrete strategies to get it there.

5.5.2.2 Step 7: Link to Budgets

Step seven in the strategic planning process model is to link the strategic plan to the operating budget. Of the survey respondents with a strategic plan, 88.9% indicated that the department budget reflects the goals, objectives, and priorities of the plan. Personal interviews supported this concept of a link between the budget and the strategic plan, but found only sparse evidence that formal alignment with the budget exists. This is an important step in the planning process because it is the only way to make sure that adequate funding is available for the department to achieve its goals and objectives as stated in the strategic plan. It is also important to note that with this step, timing is critical. The operational plans, that detail very specific

strategies for achieving objectives, must be completed early enough in the budget process to allow for budgeting based on the plans. If budgeting occurs simultaneous to, or even before, development of the operational plans, it will be impossible to link the budgets to the plans. As an example, if budgets for the fiscal year running July 1 through June 30 are due May 1, then operational plans for the corresponding academic year should be completed by February 1. This allows the department to then use February through April for building a budget to support the plans.

Strategic planning literature, as it relates to intercollegiate athletics, is surprisingly void of this idea of linking budgets to the plan. This important step is an area of opportunity for athletic departments as they engage in strategic planning. If the process includes the formal step of linking the budget to the plan, the budget is more likely to reflect the priorities in the plan and thus, the plan is more likely to be successful.

5.5.2.3 Step 8: Link to Performance Management

Step eight in the process model proposed by this study involves linking the strategic plan to performance management. Of the departments responding that they have a strategic plan, 96.2% indicated that management objectives are aligned with the plan and 86.8% indicated that annual evaluations are based on accomplishments of goals and objectives outlined in the plan. This data provides evidence of a link between strategic planning and performance management. Personal interviews, however, revealed that this link is seldom formal and concrete. More often, athletic departments simply expose individuals to the strategic plan and then hope that they develop individual goals that align with the plan. Two Athletic Directors, however, identified a formal process used in their departments to link the plan to performance management. In both of these departments, the operational plans played an important part of this link. The operational

plans were developed by functional units. Functional unit heads then required individuals within each functional unit to take accountability for specific strategies in the operational plans. These responsibilities became the goals for the individuals and, in this regard, their performance management goals were linked directly to the strategic plan.

Given the apparent effectiveness of this approach at formalizing the connection between the strategic plan and performance management, athletic departments, as part of their operational plans, should develop functional unit goals and objectives that support the strategic plan goals and objectives. These functional unit goals and objectives should then be assigned to individuals with the accountability to achieve them. These individual goals and objectives should become the foundation of the performance management system. This process results in a performance management system that is directly related to the strategic plan and reinforces the goals and objectives stated in the plan.

5.5.2.4 Step 9: Monitoring and Reporting

The final step in the strategic planning process model proposed in this study is monitoring and reporting. This step is similar to the final step in the Yow et al. (2000) model in which they proposed evaluation and control procedures that include monitoring, feedback, and reward. In this step, Yow et al. stressed the importance of timely feedback that occurs frequently, rather than simply at the end of the planning period. Yow et al. stated, “The administrator cannot afford to wait for the time period of a plan to pass before control information is available” (p. 81).

Sutton and Migliore (1988) also support the importance of feedback by including a step they refer to as: constantly appraising performance to determine if it is keeping pace with the attainment of objectives and if it is consistent with defined purpose. This step allows

departments to change strategy as needed, to evaluate progress, and to reward the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

This study recognizes the importance of not just monitoring, but also reporting. This final step is critical for ensuring that the department is moving closer to the goals and objectives developed in the strategic plan. Essentially, it allows the department to confirm that the strategies are effective. Reporting is an important part of this final step because it ensures that management is getting the information they need to make effective strategic decisions. If the department does not develop a monitoring and reporting system, managers may not receive important feedback until the end of the five year planning cycle when it prepares to go through the planning process again. Without reporting, departments would not have the ability to react to changing trends or execute needed adjustments to strategy. In short, this would result in a slow-moving and reactive organization that would not maximize the benefits of strategic planning. Without the monitoring and reporting step, the plan would be a static document that does not help the organization adapt to its dynamic environment. As such, the real value of strategic planning would not be recognized.

5.5.3 A Continuous Process

The arrows surrounding the stages and steps of the strategic planning process model signify that strategic planning is an ongoing, continuous process. The process requires constant assessment of the strategies against the goals and objectives established in the plan. This assessment then allows for the organization to react and make strategic changes as necessary. The arrows surround the strategic planning steps because the organization's reaction to this assessment could occur at any step in the strategic planning process. It is not always necessary to go back to the

beginning of the process after assessment. The assessment, for example, could indicate that adjustments should be made to steps in the planning stage or steps in the implementation stage. This concept supports the notion that plans must be flexible and responsive, rather than static. Static plans are less effective because they tend to sit on a shelf and do not allow organizations to react at times other than at the end of the specific planning intervals.

Strategic planning is an effective management tool when it allows organizations to anticipate and adapt to change. Change, and the strategies developed to deal with change, is continuous. An effective strategic planning process monitors and reports on the progress of the organization in achieving the plan's objectives and allows for adjustment to objectives, strategies, and implementation tactics to move the organization closer to achieving its overall mission.

5.6 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study revealed information about strategic planning by Division I-A athletic departments and their use of strategic planning as a management tool. After determining how many departments engage in strategic planning, the study identified components of strategic planning processes used by athletic departments. Research indicated that a typical Division I-A athletic department strategic plan covers a period of five years and is updated annually or every two years. The study then identified the benefits of, and challenges to, strategic planning. Finally, the study culminated in the development of a strategic planning process model for Division I-A athletic departments. The model is intended to simplify the strategic planning

process and make it easier for athletic departments to engage in strategic planning. The model consists of two stages – planning and implementation – and nine total steps.

This mixed methods study revealed several areas that could lead to improvement for athletic departments as they engage in strategic planning. These recommendations include: using a plan-to-plan, including an environmental scan, increasing employee involvement, and formalizing the link between the budget and the plan.

The plan-to-plan can help athletic departments prepare for the planning initiative. This pre-planning activity helps to clarify the objectives of the planning process and to set parameters for planning that will help move the process along efficiently. There was very little evidence of any formal preparation for the planning initiative and the plan-to-plan could help to make the planning process easier for athletic departments.

Environmental scanning involves both an internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses and an external assessment of opportunities and threats. The environmental scan is an important step in the strategic planning process because it forces the planning organization to think “outside the box” and attempt to anticipate changes that may impact its future success. This is a critical part of strategic planning. Oddly though, less than two-thirds of athletic departments conducted an environmental scan as part of their strategic planning process. Including the environmental scan in the strategic planning process model offers a significant opportunity for athletic departments to improve their planning and be better prepared for changes to the environment in which they compete.

Personal interviews frequently revealed that unifying the department and developing a common vision were significant benefits of the strategic planning exercise. For departments that involved employees at all levels of the organization, this benefit was realized. To fully

maximize this important benefit of the strategic planning initiative, it is necessary for athletic departments to involve employees from throughout the department. There are several ways to create this type of environment during the planning process. One way to increase employee involvement is to make sure the planning group or committee has representatives from all areas of the department. Employee participation can also be expanded by asking all employees for input as to what the goals and objectives should be for the department. Finally, personal interviews identified several departments that increase employee involvement by making sure all employees have specific responsibilities for goals and strategies within their functional units.

The final recommendation for athletic departments is to formalize the alignment between the budget and the strategic plan. This is an important recommendation because it ensures that funding allocations support the strategies identified in the plan. Without this alignment, departments run the risk of underfunding strategic planning initiatives and increase the likelihood that goals and objectives will not be reached. The most effective way to align the budget and the strategic plan is to require that planning exercises – both strategic and operational – be completed prior to the annual budget process. Once strategic and operational plans are completed, budget managers can build the budget to fund the action items outlined in the plans. Alignment of the strategic plan to the budget also keeps the strategic plan from becoming a static document. Typically, athletic departments have budget systems for monitoring and reporting that are more advanced and formal than reporting systems for strategic planning. As such, if the budget accurately reflects the priorities of the strategic plan, the formal budget monitoring system also serves to keep the strategic plan at the forefront of the minds of administrators who monitor their budgets on a regular basis.

The strategic planning process model presented in this study, and the recommendations emphasized in this section, can help athletic departments use strategic planning more effectively as a management tool. These ideas ensure that the strategic plan is a tool used to aid Division I-A athletic departments, rather than a binder that sits on a shelf. Survey and personal interview research identified significant and important benefits of strategic planning. To realize these benefits, athletic departments must understand how to plan strategically by using a process that makes efficient use of their valuable time and financial resources. This study presented ways for athletic departments to realize these benefits through the efficient development and effective implementation of a strategic plan.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

While this study presented a model to guide the strategic planning process of Division I-A athletic departments, it did not attempt to measure the effectiveness of strategic planning. Therefore, while Athletic Directors indicated they believe their departments are more effective because of strategic planning, there was no attempt to quantify this effectiveness or measure the exact impact of strategic planning. An empirical study to define effectiveness and to measure the effectiveness of strategic planning, while ambitious, is an area deserving of future research. Additionally, personal interviews research revealed that several Division I-A athletic departments are “doing” strategic planning very well. These departments would make an interesting case study for future research. The case study could identify even more specific pieces of the planning process and the tools used by these departments to assist with developing and implementing the strategic plan. Lastly, the link between operational plans and the strategic

plan is critical because the operational plans are used to align the strategic plan to both the budget and the performance management system. Research investigating this link between operational and strategic plans could be instrumental in helping athletic departments fund the strategic plan initiatives sufficiently and use strategic plan goals and objectives as the core of the performance management system.

APPENDIX A

DIVISION I-A INSTITUTIONS

<u>Name of Institution</u>	<u>Name of Institution (continued)</u>
Arizona State University	Mississippi State University
Arkansas State University	New Mexico State University
Auburn University	North Carolina State University
Ball State University	Northern Illinois University
Baylor University	Northwestern University
Boise State University	Ohio State University
Boston College	Ohio University
Bowling Green University	Oklahoma State University
Brigham Young University	Oregon State University
Central Michigan University	Pennsylvania State University
Clemson University	Purdue University
Colorado State University	Rice University
Duke University	Rutgers University
East Carolina University	San Diego State University
Eastern Michigan University	San Jose State University
Florida Atlantic University	Souther Methodist University
Florida International University	Southern Mississippi University
Florida State University	Stanford University
Fresno State University	Syracuse University
Georgia Institute of Technology	Temple University
Indiana University	Texas A&M University
Iowa State University	Texas Christian University
Kansas State University	Texas Tech University
Kent State University	Troy University
Louisiana State University	Tulane University
Louisiana Tech University	U.S. Air Force Academy
Marshall University	U.S. Military Academy
Miami University	U.S. Naval Academy
Michigan State University	University of Akron
Middle Tennessee State University	University of Alabama

<u>Name of Institution (continued)</u>	<u>Name of Institution (continued)</u>
University of Alabama at Birmingham	University of Nevada
University of Arizona	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Arkansas	University of New Mexico
University of Buffalo	University of North Carolina
University of California, Berkeley	University of North Texas
University of California, Los Angeles	University of Notre Dame
University of Central Florida	University of Oklahoma
University of Cincinnati	University of Oregon
University of Colorado	University of Pittsburgh
University of Connecticut	University of South Carolina
University of Florida	University of South Florida
University of Georgia	University of Southern California
University of Hawaii	University of Tennessee
University of Houston	University of Texas
University of Idaho	University of Texas at El Paso
University of Illinois	University of Toledo
University of Iowa	University of Tulsa
University of Kansas	University of Utah
University of Kentucky	University of Virginia
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	University of Washington
University of Louisville	University of Wisconsin
University of Louisiana at Monroe	University of Wyoming
University of Maryland	Utah State University
University of Memphis	Vanderbilt University
University of Miami	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
University of Michigan	Wake Forest University
University of Minnesota	Washington State University
University of Mississippi	West Virginia University
University of Missouri	Western Michigan University
University of Nebraska	

APPENDIX B

E-MAIL TO ATHLETIC DIRECTORS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DIVISION 1A ATHLETIC DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Good morning.

I am excited to announce that our Association has the opportunity to participate in a study about strategic planning by Division 1A athletic departments. The study is being conducted by Jim Earle, a former associate athletic director at the University of Pittsburgh and current doctoral student in the Higher Education Management program at the University of Pittsburgh. Jim has offered his services to our Association and has focused his study specifically on Division 1A athletic departments.

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the extent of strategic planning by Division 1A athletic departments and the processes used to develop and implement strategic plans. In addition, the research will identify benefits of planning and challenges that make it difficult for athletic departments to plan strategically.

The responses to this survey will remain confidential. No individual schools will be identified in the results and, in keeping with Association policy, those schools who participate in this survey will receive a final report of the results.

You may complete the survey, which is entirely voluntary, by clicking on the link below. The entire survey should take about 15 minutes.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm+2Y3dWbC9tlErVLkoebUo5Q>

I hope you will participate in this survey as this study will result invaluable information for our profession. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Jim at jearle@bc.pitt.edu, 412-491-5111.

Sincerely,
Dutch

Dutch Baughman
Executive Director
Division 1A Athletic Directors' Association

APPENDIX C

STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY FOR DIVISION I-A INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS

The following survey is designed to gain information about strategic planning processes used by athletic departments in Division I-A of the NCAA. It is intended that one survey will be completed per department. While it is most beneficial to have the Athletic Director complete the survey, the survey can be completed by any athletic department employee who is knowledgeable about the strategic planning process of the department. Survey results will be kept confidential; no college or university names will be linked to specific data. Please provide an answer to each question. The entire survey should take approximately 15 minutes. If you have any questions about the survey, please direct them to Jim Earle, jearle@bc.pitt.edu or (412) 491-5111.

1. Name of Institution:

2. Name and title of individual completing survey:

3. Does your department currently have a strategic plan?
 - Yes
 - No

4. How many years ago was your current strategic plan developed?
- Last year
 - 2 years ago
 - 3 years ago
 - 4 years ago
 - 5 or more years ago
5. Your current strategic plan covers a period of:
- One year
 - 2 years
 - 3 years
 - 4 years
 - 5 or more years
 - Other (please specify)
6. How often will the strategic plan be updated?
- Annually
 - Every 2 years
 - Every 3 years
 - Every 4 years
 - Every 5 years
 - Unsure
 - Other (please specify)
7. Was there one individual in the department who led the planning process, a “process champion” who was most instrumental in seeing that the strategic plan was completed?
- Yes
 - No
- If yes, what is the name and title of this individual?

8. Do you have a planning group or committee that oversees the planning process?
- Yes
 - No

If yes, to whom (name and title) does this planning group report?

9. Were stakeholders outside of your athletic department staff involved in the strategic planning process?
- Yes
 - No

10. The following internal and external stakeholder groups assisted in the development of our strategic plan (check all that apply):
- Student-athletes
 - General student body
 - Student government board
 - Faculty
 - University (non-athletic) staff
 - Alumni
 - Former letter winners
 - Donors
 - Corporate sponsors
 - Board of Trustees (Regents, Directors, etc.)
 - University administration
 - Coaches
 - Other (please specify)

11. Did you use the services of an external consultant (outside of the institution) to assist with the development of your strategic plan?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what was the name of the company or individual?

12. Does your plan include specific and measurable objectives or goals for what is to be accomplished?

- Yes
- No

13. Does your plan include written values (beliefs such as accountability, integrity, respect, etc.) to guide your department?

- Yes
- No

14. Does your plan include an environmental scan - an assessment of the department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis)?

- Yes
- No

15. Is your strategic plan being used to guide decision-making in your department?

- Yes
- No

16. Do you measure departmental progress against goals and objectives stated in the plan?

- Yes
- No

17. The athletic department strategic plan was approved by (check all that apply):

- President/Chancellor
- Board of Trustees (Regents, Directors, etc.)
- Athletic Director
- Athletic Foundation Board
- Alumni council
- Faculty Senate or Faculty Group
- The plan did not require approval
- Other (please specify)

18. Did the NCAA strategic plan play a role in the development of your department's strategic plan?

- Yes
- No

19. Does your conference have a strategic plan?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

20. Did your Conference's strategic plan play a role in the development of your department's strategic plan?

- Yes
- No

21. External communications have improved as a result of strategic planning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

22. Internal communications have improved as a result of strategic planning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

23. Revenue has increased as a result of strategic planning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. Our department is more effective since developing our strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

25. Employees at all levels of the organization have been involved in the development of our strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

26. The budget for our athletic department reflects the goals, objectives, and priorities established in our strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

27. Objectives established for athletic department management are linked to the strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

28. Annual evaluations of athletic department employees are based largely on their accomplishment of goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

29. Does your department have a mission statement?

- Yes
- No

30. Does your department have a vision statement?

- Yes
- No

31. Does your institution (university/college) have a strategic plan?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

32. Is the athletic department included in the University's strategic planning process?

- Yes
- No

33. I have enough knowledge of strategic planning to allow me to develop a strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

34. I have had formal training/education in strategic planning.

- Yes
- No

35. Strategic planning is additional work without a justifiable return.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

36. It costs too much money to develop and implement a strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

37. It takes too much time to develop and implement a strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

38. Strategic planning does not help because our industry changes too quickly.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

39. Strategic plans don't lead to results.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

40. Our athletic department staff is not interested in strategic planning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

41. Our athletic department staff does not know how to develop a strategic plan.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

42. It would be beneficial for athletic directors to attend a strategic planning workshop.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

43. I would attend a strategic planning workshop if one was available at our conference or association meetings.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

APPENDIX D

CROSS-REFERENCE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SURVEY ITEMS

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Corresponding Survey Item</u>
1. Do athletic departments in Division I-A engage in strategic planning?	3, 4, 5, 6
2. For athletic departments that do engage in strategic planning, do they follow a process for plan development and implementation and what are the components of this process?	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25
3. What do Division I-A athletic departments perceive to be the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool?	26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33
4. What challenges make it difficult for intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A to engage in strategic planning?	34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43
5. Can a strategic planning process model be developed specifically for Division I-A athletic departments?	Model will be developed based on responses to research questions 1-4.

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW UP E-MAIL TO ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

Just an update.

We have had a terrific response to the survey pertaining to strategic planning.

Many of you have completed the strategic planning survey I sent out a few weeks ago and your responses are appreciated. If you have not yet had a chance to complete the survey, I hope you will take 15 minutes today to do so. We are hoping to have all surveys completed by June 13 and having responses from all Division1A schools is important to making the results meaningful.

For your convenience, simply click the link below and follow the instructions for the survey.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm+2Y3dWbC9tErVLkoebUo5Q>

Your participation is greatly appreciated, and remember, those who participate will receive the final report.

Best wishes

Dutch

APPENDIX F

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS SELECTED FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Departments Selected for Interviews and Identification of Those Not Responding:

Boston College (no response)
Central Michigan University (no response)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Miami University
Mississippi State University
Ohio State University
Rice University
Southern Methodist University
Southern Mississippi University
Syracuse University (no response)
Troy University (no response)
University of Buffalo
University of California, Berkeley
University of Cincinnati
University of Florida (no response)
University of Maryland
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of New Mexico
University of Oregon
University of Toledo
Western Michigan University (no response)

APPENDIX G

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for athletic departments that have a strategic plan:

1. Describe the process you go through to develop your strategic plan.
2. Did you engage in any preliminary activities (a plan-to-plan) to prepare for the planning process?
3. Will you follow the same process during the updating phase or will it differ from the development process?
4. What does implementation of the plan look like? How do you keep the plan “alive” rather than sitting on a shelf?
5. Do your functional units develop operational plans?
 - a. Are these operational plans linked to the strategic plan?
 - b. If so, how?
6. Do you develop the budget to reflect what’s in the plan?
 - a. If so, how?
7. Are performance evaluations linked to the plan in any way?
8. How do you monitor and report on progress related to the strategic plan?

9. Have you seen changes in your department since you started strategic planning?
 - a. If yes, what types of changes have occurred?
10. Did you review the University's strategic plan when developing your strategic plan?
 - a. If yes, how did it impact the development of your plan?
11. What are the benefits of strategic planning?
12. What are the challenges that make strategic planning difficult?

Questions for athletic departments that do not have a strategic plan:

13. Why don't you have a strategic plan?
14. Did you ever have a strategic plan for this department?
15. Is there an expectation that your department have a strategic plan?
 - a. If so, from whom does this expectation come?
16. What are the main challenges that make strategic planning difficult?
17. Do you have operational plans for your functional units?
 - a. If yes, what time period do these cover?
 - b. How often do you update them?
18. Do you feel there are any benefits to strategic planning?

APPENDIX H

CROSS-REFERENCE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Corresponding Personal Interview Question</u>
1. Do athletic departments in Division I-A engage in strategic planning?	Stratified random sampling technique
2. For athletic departments that do engage in strategic planning, do they follow a process for plan development and implementation and what are the components of this process?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
3. What do Division I-A athletic departments perceive to be the benefits of using strategic planning as a management tool?	9, 11, 18
4. What challenges make it difficult for intercollegiate athletic departments in Division I-A to engage in strategic planning?	12, 16
5. Can a strategic planning process model be developed specifically for Division I-A athletic departments?	Model based on data analysis

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