

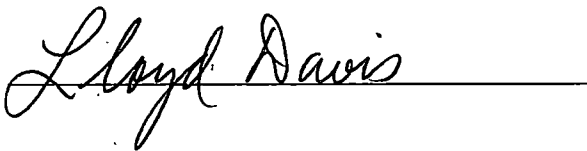
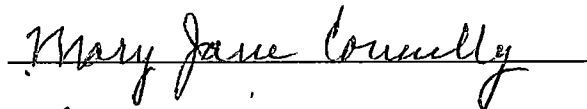
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation by Robert H. Adams entitled "A Study of the Effectiveness of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Athletics Certification Program." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education with a major in Education.

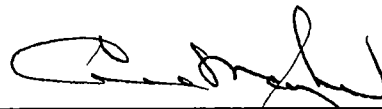


E. Grady Bogue, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Interim Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION'S
ATHLETICS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Robert H. Adams
May 2001

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to

Darla Adams

my wife and best friend

and to my son

Jeffrey Jackson Adams

for their encouragement, patience, and support
throughout this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of this study. First of all, special thanks to Dr. Grady Bogue, chairman of my doctoral committee, for his advice and encouragement throughout the course of my doctoral program. The assistance of Dr. Mary Jane Connelly, Dr. Lloyd Davis, and Dr. Bill Aiken, as members of my doctoral committee, is also greatly appreciated.

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Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my former boss, Dr. Duane Stucky, and my current boss, Dr. Richard Rhoda, for their support, understanding, and encouragement throughout my doctoral studies.

ABSTRACT

Athletics certification was approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for Division I institutions at its 1993 convention as a key part of the association's reform agenda. The certification program involves a comprehensive self-study which is followed up with a site visit from a peer-review team. The peer-review team files a report with the NCAA Certification Committee which makes the final certification decision.

This qualitative study examines the effectiveness of this program during its first cycle of implementation. All 305 Division I institutions have been through the process. The study involved interviews with selected Division I presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, NCAA staff, and staff of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The study addressed seven research questions involving such areas as the perception of the program with faculty, students, and the general public; strengths and weaknesses of the program; whether institutional improvements have been realized because of the program; costs vs. benefits of the program; whether the program helps institutions avoid

NCAA violations; and the level of cooperation between the NCAA and SACS.

The strength of the program was found to be the institutional self-study which leads to the opening of the athletic doors to the larger university community. It causes institutions to document their activities and provides a cross institutional look at athletics and where it fits in, its needs, and its challenges.

Three prevailing weaknesses were identified through the study. First, peer-reviewers were thought to be inconsistent in how standards were applied among different institutions. Secondly, peer-reviewers were perceived as bringing personal agendas to the review and were not always as objective as they should have been. Lastly, it was observed that there was more emphasis on the issue of gender equity than intercollegiate athletic leaders thought was originally intended.

The study includes a summary of findings, recommendations for institutions, the NCAA, and SACS, and suggestions for further research as well as emerging issues facing the NCAA as it continues exploring various reform ideas and approaches.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

During football and basketball seasons, weekly polls are published ranking intercollegiate teams based on the opinions of selected sports writers and coaches. There are also some rankings that are based on elaborate and sophisticated computer models. Are these rankings good evidence as to the quality of collegiate athletic programs? Should there be something more than a vote of sports writers and coaches as a means of determining quality? Do these polls say anything about whether the athletic programs are being operated with integrity and with sound ethical foundations?

College and university presidents at Division I institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have decided that athletic programs should be measured in more areas than just wins and losses. They have backed up this commitment with the enactment of a certification program that involves a comprehensive institutional self-study which is followed up with a site visit from a peer-review team. The peer-review team files

a report with the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification which makes the final determination of the certification status.

Athletics certification was approved for Division I institutions at the 1993 National Collegiate Athletic Association Convention as a key part of the NCAA's reform agenda. Certification was originally introduced in 1989 and was tested in a two-year pilot program. Participants generally agreed that the pilot program was valuable but could be improved by limiting the scope of the self-study. After a special committee reworked the idea over the next year, the NCAA President's Commission, the NCAA Council and the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics supported a revised version of the program.

Why certification? In a Louis Harris poll in 1989, eight out of ten Americans surveyed agreed that intercollegiate athletics had gotten out of control, that the athletic programs were being corrupted by big money, and that the many cases of serious rules violations had undermined the traditional role of universities as places where young people learn ethics and integrity (Knight Foundation, 1993). Reports of major scandals in athletic programs across the country had become a matter of routine.

According to the NCAA, during the decade of the 1980s, 109 colleges and universities were censured, sanctioned or put on probation. That number included 57 institutions out of 106 playing at the NCAA's top competitive level.

Athletic programs at many major universities have grown to multi-million dollar operations. Successful coaches are receiving incomes many times over that of full professors and often more than the president of their institution. At the time of his resignation as head football coach at Texas A & M in 1988, Jackie Sherrill was reported to be earning \$1.6 million annually and was the highest paid higher education employee in the country (Callahan, 1989). Athletic directors must function as CEOs of highly complex operations, allocating their time between administration, fund-raising, and keeping the alumni and fans happy. The pressure to win is immense and this pressure has often led to rules violations that when discovered and made public have placed a black cloud over the institution for many years.

University presidents are besieged by anxious alumni who want successful athletic teams. Unfortunately, some of these supporters equate success with fielding winning teams at any cost. Presidents feel pressure to raise more

athletic revenue to upgrade the athletic program and it sometimes becomes an unending spiral. Some presidents take a firm stand and insist on institutional control while others feel a sense of helplessness in maintaining ethics and integrity in the sports' programs. After firing his football coach in 1985 in the midst of massive rule breaking, including payments to recruits, University of Florida President, Dr. Marshall Criser, stated, "With its moneymaking activities, its vast support by local boosters and its network of communications to alumni and fans, the football program became a power unto itself" (Sanoff, 1985, p. 62).

In the mid 1980s, Tulane University came under intense scrutiny by the NCAA for alleged gambling by members of its basketball team. In the wake of this scandal Tulane President, Dr. Eamon Kelly, took bold action that was not popular with fans. He ended the basketball program entirely (Sanhoff, 1985).

Ironically, 10 years later, Tulane's faculty was in an uproar over its governing board's decision to increase the university subsidy for athletics by sixfold (Blum, 1996). In February 1996, the University's Faculty Senate voted to condemn the board's decision to allocate \$3.4 million to

the athletic budget at the same time that \$8.5 million was being trimmed from the university's general budget. This action included a freeze on faculty and staff salaries and the elimination of 50 staff positions. Paul Barron, a law professor who was vice-chairman of the senate at the time stated, "I think we should have athletics, but the question is simply: What can we afford? Our answer was that we can't afford to pay for athletics at the expense of the rest of the institution" (Blum, 1996, p. A40).

Tough action by presidents has not always been supported by boards of trustees. For example, Clemson University President, Dr. Bill Atchley, was forced to resign in 1985 over a confrontation with the board of trustees over his attempts to remove the athletic director (Sanoff, 1985). With this type of observed behavior, presidents may feel helpless in trying to keep controls in place over athletic departments that seem to wield such power.

Judge Saul Streit once condemned the University of Kentucky as "the acme of commercialism and overemphasis under the disintegrating influence of money-mad athletics" (Callahan, 1989, p. 43). That was in 1952, after hearings on Kentucky's role in a point-shaving scandal. After being

found to be in violation of many NCAA rules, Kentucky was prohibited from participating in NCAA basketball competition at all during the next season.

In early 1989, the University of Kentucky was once again under NCAA investigation for alleged cash offers to basketball recruits as well as falsified entrance exams (Callahan, 1989). The University of Kentucky has been synonymous with a rich, winning tradition in basketball and has won more basketball games than any other Division I institution. Kentucky was again found to be in violation of NCAA rules and was placed on probation and barred from postseason play for two years. If one of the most successful programs in the history of the game can get caught up in violations of NCAA rules, what about the other institutions that are striving to make a name for themselves in big-time athletics?

The NCAA is the governing body for the member institutions. It is often looked upon with disdain by fans and supporters if their favorite institution comes under investigation. However, the staff of the NCAA merely enforces the rules that representatives of the member institutions have voted into legislation. In fact, the NCAA spends more on public relations than on enforcement.

In 1990-91, \$3.4 million was allotted for public relations and \$2.2 million went for enforcement (Johnson, 1992).

In 1989 the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation were concerned that abuses in athletics threatened the very integrity of higher education. In October of that year, they created a Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and directed it to propose a reform agenda for college sports. The project was initially expected to take two years and had a budget of \$2 million. Ultimately, the project took three years and the cost was \$3 million (Knight Foundation, 1993).

In its initial report, Keeping Faith With the Student-Athlete, issued in March 1991, the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics endorsed a new concept labeled the "One-Plus-Three" Model. The "One" was to be presidential control, with the "Three" being academic integrity, financial integrity, and certification (Knight Foundation, 1991). Presidents are responsible for all elements of an institution and cannot be a figurehead whose leadership applies elsewhere in the university but not in the athletic department. Academic integrity, financial integrity, and a successful certification program cannot

occur without the commitment and strong leadership of university presidents.

According to the Knight Commission, academic and financial integrity of college athletics had reached such low repute that authentication by an outside agency was essential. Having outside reviewers assess academic direction, financial operations, and president's authority relative to athletics can go a long way toward guaranteeing that campus athletic operations are complying with NCAA legislation and is supportive of a commitment to play by the rules. The NCAA membership recognized this need for outside reviews and began the certification self-study and peer-review program during the 1993-94 academic year.

The stated purpose of the certification program is to ensure the NCAA's fundamental commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics. The program is structured to achieve its goal in several ways including the following:

1. By opening the affairs of athletics to the university community and to the general public.
2. By setting standards (called operating principles) for the operation of Division I athletics programs. They cover four basic areas - governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and equity, welfare and sportsmanship.

3. By putting tough sanctions in place for institutions that fail to conduct a comprehensive self-study or to correct problems. Athletics certification is intended to help an institution, not harm it. For this reason, the program allows ample time for an institution to consider its programs, to identify problems, and to correct them. Institutions that fail to make an honest effort face serious consequences: ineligibility for NCAA championships and eventually, removal from active membership in the Association (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 1999-2000, pp. 7-8).

The 1999-2000 Division I Athletics Certification Handbook states that the core of athletics certification is the institution's self-study, in which campus-wide participation is critical. Benefits of an effective self-study include:

1. Self-awareness. The self-study offers a unique opportunity to educate individuals across the campus about the athletics program's goals and purposes, the many challenges facing athletics and ways in which athletics supports the institution's overall mission.
2. Affirmation. Athletics certification is couched in the affirmative—its aim, after all, is to certify—and the self-study process will reveal many aspects of the athletics program worthy of praise.
3. Opportunities to improve. Even an outstanding program can be better, and problems will be identified routinely as part of any institution's self-study. As these problems come to light, the self-study process will offer a forum for suggestions from individuals with a wide range of experience (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 1999-2000, p. 8).

Lofty goals and impressive expected benefits of the NCAA Certification Program have been widely disseminated. Division I institutions of the NCAA are as a whole spending millions of dollars to implement this program. In kicking off its initial committee meeting, the University of Maryland assembled the 23 members of its self-study committee and listened to a presentation from an NCAA staff member on how to do the study and prepare the report. At the conclusion of the study, the university expected to have had over 40 staff members expend over \$250,000 worth of man hours to prepare the report (Blum, 1994).

Although more than 85% of the Division I institutions voted in favor of the legislation establishing the certification program, there are those who are critical of the program. Some critics say that the program lacks teeth and that the NCAA is unlikely to sanction institutions, relying instead on the institutions' promises to correct their problems (Blum, 1994). Dr. Betty Smith, a University of Maryland Professor, stated, "Why would an institution put information out to the public that would open them up for complaints, investigations, or reviews. I'm not sure this process carries enough weight or oversight to make sure that all the information is made available in an

understandable, consistent fashion on all campuses" (Blum, 1994, p. A48).

Another concern has been what some see as a duplication of effort by the NCAA and by the regional accrediting agencies. "I don't mind anyone looking at my program from top to bottom," said Homer Rice, Athletic Director at the Georgia Institute of Technology. "But we are worried about the expense of both processes and the hassle of dealing with two organizations doing essentially the same thing. It is burdensome to provide the same information over and over again, and I doubt there won't be a good deal of overlap" (Blum, 1992, p. A36).

In an effort to avoid duplication of effort, the NCAA and the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) developed a cooperative agreement to minimize the amount of work required by an institution. When possible, SACS and the NCAA have agreed to schedule institutional self-studies at the same time and combine their peer-review committees into a single group to make campus visits together (Blum, 1992). The first combined peer-review occurred at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) in March of 1995. I served as chairperson of the NCAA certification self-study committee

for MTSU and was able to observe first-hand the benefits of a combined visit by the NCAA and SACS. This combined visit condensed the time and effort required to provide the data and information required by both agencies and minimized the time required to meet with the peer-reviewers since it was all accomplished in a combined three day visit.

Statement of the Problem

There are over 300 institutions that are members of the NCAA's Division I classification. Each of these institutions has completed the initial self-study and has had a peer-review visit. The NCAA Certification Program is intended to at least cause each Division I institution to conduct an in-depth self-evaluation and open its affairs to the university community and to the public. This self-evaluation is then subjected to a review by a peer-review team. The peer-review team will assess whether the institution has met the standards established by the NCAA in the areas of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare and sportsmanship.

However, the problem is that there has not been a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the NCAA

Certification Program to determine if the expected benefits have been achieved. Also, there has not been an evaluation of the coordinated efforts of the NCAA and the regional accrediting agencies in the peer-review process.

There are a number of different approaches to conducting evaluation studies. Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) have classified the many different approaches into six categories as follows:

1. *Objectives-oriented approaches*, where the focus is on specifying goals and objectives and determining the extent to which they have been attained.
2. *Management-oriented approaches*, where the central concern is on identifying and meeting the informational needs of managerial decision makers.
3. *Consumer-oriented approaches*, where the central issue is developing evaluative information on "products," broadly defined, for use by consumers in choosing among competing products, services, and the like.
4. *Expertise-oriented approaches*, which depend primarily on the direct application of professional expertise to judge the quality of whatever endeavor is evaluated.
5. *Adversary-oriented approaches*, where planned opposition in points of view of different evaluators (pro and con) is the central focus of the evaluation.
6. *Participant-oriented approaches*, where involvement of participants (stakeholders in that which is evaluated) are central in determining the values, criteria, needs, and data for the evaluation (p. 78).

Although some aspects of this evaluation will fit the objectives-oriented approach, there are limitations of objectives-oriented evaluations. Another approach to be used is the goal-free evaluation. Goal-free evaluations are the direct opposite of objectives-oriented and are useful because goals seldom reveal the real objectives of the project (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 1997).

The following are major characteristics of goal-free evaluations:

- The evaluator purposely avoids becoming aware of the program goals.
- Predetermined goals are not permitted to narrow the focus of the evaluation study.
- Goal-free evaluation focuses on *actual* outcomes rather than intended program outcomes.
- The goal-free evaluator has minimal contact with the program manager and staff.
- Goal-free evaluation increases the likelihood that unanticipated side effects will be noted (Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick, 1997).

The main focus of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program. However, it was intended that the study not only determine how well the program achieves what it is supposed to do, but it was also important to focus on actual outcomes—whether intended

or not. For this reason special efforts were taken to discover important outcomes not directly related to program goals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program in its early years of implementation. Key to this evaluation were the opinions and observations about the certification program from those in leadership positions such as presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and NCAA staff. It was also a purpose of the study to evaluate the coordination efforts of the NCAA and the regional accrediting agencies in the institutional review process.

Research Questions

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the certification program, the following questions were addressed:

- Do key athletic policy stakeholders such as presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and NCAA staff think that the

certification program has led to an improved perception of athletics with faculty, students, and the general public?

- What are the program's strengths and weaknesses and what might be done to improve the program?
- Does the certification program contribute to improvement in the major operating principles of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare and sportsmanship?
- Does the certification program help identify areas that need improvement which could help institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules?
- Does the certification program help identify weaknesses or areas that need improvement which would not be discovered if the self-study certification program had not been implemented?
- Do the benefits of the certification program justify the financial and staffing resources that must be committed to conduct the study, prepare the report, and accommodate the peer-reviewers?
- Is there an appropriate level of cooperation between the NCAA and the Commission on Colleges, Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) regarding the certification process?

Significance of the Study

An evaluation of the NCAA Certification Program is important for several reasons. There is probably no more visible component of most colleges and universities than their athletic programs. It is the one aspect that binds together most alumni regardless of when they graduated or what their academic discipline. As evidence of its importance, most university alumni magazines devote a goodly portion of each publication to athletics. Additionally, the athletic teams receive quite a bit of coverage in local newspapers and successful teams can lead to substantial national coverage.

Even the most prestigious private institutions cannot escape the wrath of upset alumni and supporters when they feel the athletic program is not achieving the level of success they desire. Joe B. Wyatt, former Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, came under fire from influential alumni who felt the administration was not giving enough support to the athletic program. Many began withholding financial contributions that Vanderbilt so desperately

needs to compete in the rugged Southeastern Conference. Supporters felt Vanderbilt is unduly restrictive about admitting athletes; while faculty want to keep admissions standards at a high level (Benavides, 1996).

This study will be of significance to all Division I institutions of the NCAA as they struggle to satisfy anxious alumni, balance athletic budgets, and field competitive teams while playing by the rules. The costs of the certification program will over time be substantial and therefore benefits need to be evaluated carefully. At the 1996 NCAA convention, Division II institutions voted against the certification program for their level, citing costs and manpower constraints. Much of the significance of this study will be evaluating the benefits Division I institutions are receiving from the certification program in relation to the budget and manpower commitments that must be directed to this requirement.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Athletics certification was the result of a study commissioned by the Knight Foundation in 1989. However, there were several prominent studies of intercollegiate athletics over a 60-year span that are of historical significance when reviewing various reform efforts that ultimately resulted in the adoption of athletic certification. A review of these major studies provides the background and framework that ultimately led to the implementation of the NCAA Certification Program.

According to John Thelin (1996) there have been four national reports that provide the major points for discussion by academic leaders about the condition and character of intercollegiate athletics. These included Howard Savage's American College Athletics, published in 1929 under the sponsorship of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; the 1952 report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy of the American Council on Education; George Hanford's 1974 report to the American Council on Education on the need for a national study of

intercollegiate athletics; and the March 1991 report of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete, which proposed a new model for college sports. An analysis of these four studies as compiled by Deborah Katz is provided in Table 1 (Katz, 1998, pp. 20-21).

The Howard Savage Report

Savage's study began in 1926 and took three years to complete. It set out its objectives as being to "ascertain the significant facts concerning college athletics in the United States and Canada, to analyze these facts in relation to American college and university life, with such reference to school and college athletics in other countries as may shed occasional light upon our problems, and to present a summary of American college athletics, their merits and their defects, together with such suggestions looking to their improvement as may grow out of the materials in hand" (Savage, 1929, p. 1).

The Savage Report contended that the main problems facing intercollegiate athletics at that time were commercialism and a negligent attitude toward the

Table 1. Analysis of Four Major Studies.

	1929	1952	1974	1991-93
Report	American College Athletics	Council Action on Athletic Policy: Report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy	An Inquiry into the Need for and Feasibility of a National Study of Intercollegiate Athletics	1) Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics 2) A Solid Start: A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics 3) A New Beginning for a New Century: Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States
Form	383 page report	10 page section of publication, <u>The Educational Record</u>	159 page report	3 volume report-37,14,17 pages respectively
Author	Howard J. Savage, staff member of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching	American Council on Education Special Committee on Athletic Policy (included 11 men who were current or former university presidents)	George Hanford, higher education analyst for the American Council on Education	Knight Foundation Committee on Athletics with 22 people mostly university presidents or former presidents with some representation from media, congress, NCAA, USOC, and other associations
Procedure	3 year study of 130 institutions with data collected from students, teachers, alumni, and others	Discussion with competent authorities	6 month study including literature reviews, interviews, correspondence, site visits and conversations	A study over a year long including debate, testimony, and suggestions from over 80 experts
Purpose	To describe collegiate athletics in the United States and Canada, analyze it in relation to American college life, and summarize the merits and defects with suggestions for improvement	To suggest remedies to address the abuses associated with intercollegiate athletics	To find a framework for further study "which holds promise of strengthening something that is basically good"	To define the problems in collegiate athletics and propose a reform agenda

Source: Katz, 1998, pp. 20-21.

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Table 1 (continued)

	1929	1952	1974	1991-93
Rationale	Brutal injuries, abuse of eligibility policies, and the commercial nature of college sports threatened the intellectual essence of higher education	The purpose and implementation of athletics threatened the educational mission of the university and created a crisis of institutional integrity	No specific incident triggered this study	Public concern about abuse in college athletics was growing and threatened institutional integrity
Findings	- The educational value of sports as they now exist is overrated - Amateurism is a front for dishonesty and deceit - Public interest in college athletics is entertainment - The defects of college athletics are "commercialism and a negligent attitude toward the educational opportunity for the college exists" (Savage, p.306)	Serious violations of educational policies and good moral conduct are common in athletic programs - College violations of educational policies and good moral conduct are common in athletic programs - National solutions to problems will be hard to develop because of regional differences - Faculty are uninvolved and if they are ineffective - Big-time college sports is in the entertainment business - Commercialism will create worse financial problems	- College athletics has severe financial problems despite popular opinion - National solutions to problems will be hard to develop because of regional differences - Faculty are uninvolved and if they are ineffective - Big-time college sports is in the entertainment business - Commercialism will create worse financial problems	College sports have 3 possible futures: 1) internal reform within higher education 2) imposition of reform by external groups and regulation by government 3) rampant abuse and destruction of athletics' intrinsic value and higher education's claim to high moral ground College athletics must reflect the values of the university

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Table 1 (continued)

	1929	1952	1974	1991-93
Recommendations	- Value college athletics as an educational opportunity to teach responsibility, exercise, health, decision-making, and character - Renew institutional commitment to challenging "the best intellectual capabilities of the undergraduate." (p.310) - Agree on fundamental principles, rather than implementing uniform eligibility requirements and other matters	- Exert stronger leadership. (CEOs) - Include athletics in university accreditation (Regional accrediting agencies) - Promote compliance. (NCAA and conferences) - Run and control athletics like other university departments, treat staff like other university staff, and treat student-athletes like other students	- Include athletics in regional accreditation programs and force schools to explain athletics as part of their institutional mission - Don't leave reform to the NCAA because the organization is focused on revenue issues like tv contracts and championships - Disseminate the message and continue research and development	- Structure reform using the one-plus-three model, directing the one, presidential control, toward the three, academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification - Strengthen bonds connecting student, sport, and higher learning (should not need special athletic rules) - Use certification to advance athletic reform - Start reform on the institutional level

educational opportunity for which college exists (Savage, 1929). According to Savage, "The fundamental purpose of intercollegiate athletics ought to be the diversion or development of undergraduates, alumni, other members of the college family, and their guests. As matters now stand, their fundamental purpose is financial and commercial" (Savage, 1929, p. 82).

The Savage report concluded by citing two prime needs of college athletics, including:

- A change of values in a field that is sodden with the commercial and the material and the vested interests that these forces have created.
- The American college must renew within itself the force that will challenge the best intellectual capabilities of the undergraduate (Savage, 1929, p. 310).

How could these needs be addressed? In writing the preface to this study, Henry Pritchett placed responsibility directly on the president and the faculty. He noted that educational governance had always been in their hands and with them also lies the authority to bring athletics into a sincere relation to the intellectual life of the college (Savage, 1929). Ironically, strong presidential control would be the focal point of the Knight Commission study some 60 years later.

According to Thelin (1996), the Savage Report accomplished two important things: "it exposed college sports' resistance to systematic investigation, and it triggered refutations and denials by college and university presidents" (p. 27).

Impact of the Savage Report

The release of American College Athletics resulted in a broad pattern of mixed responses. Numerous articles in the major newspapers brought on a flurry of accusations and denials. According to Thelin (1996), it was common for a college official to endorse the Carnegie study in principle, with the specific disclaimer that the abuses reported were not indicative of the program at his own campus.

The commissioner of the Big Ten was particularly critical of the report. In responding to a reporter in October of 1929, he stated:

I have not had an opportunity to read the report, but judging from the excerpts, I don't believe the Carnegie investigators have given a fair picture of the Big Ten condition. We have nothing to be ashamed of. I think that I am better informed of Big Ten athletic conditions than any investigator for the Carnegie Foundation. And I honestly believe that the Western Intercollegiate Conference universities are cleaner in regard to proselytizing and subsidizing

athletes than are any other ten universities anyone may name. When the Carnegie report relies upon the facts uncovered by an agent in a twenty-four hour visit to a university, it seems to me that it is evident that the report cannot be always fair to the institution (New York Times, Oct. 24, 1929, p. 23).

Interestingly, these critical statements by the commissioner came shortly after the Big Ten had expelled the University of Iowa for major rules violations of conference rules.

Many athletic officials felt that the Carnegie report was full of inconclusive data and in one article the report was referred to as "fruitless." Officials representing the major Southern football programs, including the universities of South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama Polytechnic (Auburn University), reported that the report "had no affect whatsoever." The director of athletics at Vanderbilt University said, "I do not see any evidence of any changes generally." (New York Times, Jan. 14, 1931).

Current Developments in American College Sport was released in 1931 by the Carnegie Foundation as an update to the 1929 Carnegie Study. The report indicated that four out of five institutions have been "either forced to economize sharply on athletic expenses or curtail

activities" (Bentley, McGovern, & Savage 1931, p. 9).

Thelin (1996) indicates that Savage and the research team felt that this signaled substantive reform.

Thelin (1996) contends that in some exceptional cases this may have been the case, but that the Savage model for reform failed to acknowledge other contingencies that were occurring at this time. A key factor in the modest decline of athletic support and attendance was a severe national depression. It did not necessarily mean that the public had lost interest in college sports, but that it could equally indicate that consumers had less discretionary income. He further noted that although Savage believed that the economic problems confronting college sports programs in the early 1930s were signs of ethical qualms about the propriety of big-time athletics, in many cases they may well have been nothing more than straightforward manifestations of financial constraints.

Dr. Murray Sperber, a college professor and athletic researcher, was critical of the Carnegie Foundation for abandoning its efforts to reform college sports after release of its 1931 report. "Rather than continue the investigations, proposals, and pressure on specific universities and conferences for reform, the educational

mandarins retired from the field, hoping that the Great Depression would do their work for them," he states (Sperber, 1993, p. A52).

Thelin (1996) states that one could possibly agree with Savage's optimism about the self-regulation of athletics because of the emerging athletic conferences. Three conferences were at the forefront of the conference alliances being formed. These included the Big Ten, the Pacific Coast, and the Southeastern Conference. According to Thelin (1996), this movement occurred without the major historic East Coast universities which were bogged down by quarrels and jealousies. The alliance forming the Ivy League would not occur until 1956.

These conferences had been formed with stated intentions of moving college sports away from commercialization and towards amateurism. However, trends during the 1930s and 1940s would indicate otherwise and, in fact, conferences which had been intended as a mechanism for reform, were often not only allowing but promoting the kinds of practices that reformers once thought they would prohibit and police (Thelin, 1996).

The Big Ten began allowing a system of athletic scholarships in 1939 which was totally at odds with the

practice that the Carnegie Report had warned against a decade earlier (Thelin, 1996). It seems that the Big Ten had found that recruiting restraints were found to be unenforceable and therefore poor policy, which resulted in changing the standards (Thelin, 1996).

The Southeastern Conference, which had authorized athletic scholarships in 1938, moved even further away from recommended reforms when it voted in 1941 to allow unrestricted recruiting of athletes. "We think this is a free country. A coach should be allowed to get his talent wherever he can. But he must abide by Conference rules against improper inducements," stated W.D. Funkhouser, from the University of Kentucky who was serving as conference secretary at the time (New York Times, 1941, Feb. 18, p. 28).

It would appear that establishing intercollegiate athletic conferences as regulatory agencies did little to address the reforms recommended by the Carnegie Report. Coaches and athletic directors complained that conference regulations which limited recruiting and subsidies were unfair because they were unenforceable. Rather than taking needless risks of breaking rules, they promoted the strategy of simply changing the rules. The result was a

paradox of reform: by 1945, conferences had codified and legitimized many of the practices that they were formed to curb in 1930 (Thelin, 1996).

Throughout the 1930s and mid 1940s, the NCAA appears to have done little to bring about reform or enforce regulations. The NCAA did begin to flex its muscles in the arena of financial influence. Thelin (1996) concluded that as the NCAA moved to sponsor and endorse postseason events such as bowl games, it tended to increase rather than reduce the commercial character of large-scale intercollegiate athletics. He also credits the NCAA as being effective with such activities as deterring any legislative or governmental intervention, operating national championship events, and looking out for the legal and financial interests of big-time college sports.

Although the 1929 Carnegie Report, American College Athletics, received much publicity and attention when released, it seems that most of its recommendations for reform were shelved by those in college and university leadership roles.

The 1952 ACE Report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy

The next major effort at athletic reform was the establishment of a special committee on athletic policy by the American Council on Education (ACE) in the Fall of 1951. Prior to reviewing the aspects of that committee's work, a review of some key events in intercollegiate athletics that prompted the decision by ACE to embark on this project will be discussed.

As NCAA membership grew in the late 1940s, presidents, athletic directors, and NCAA officials sought to gain more control in the oversight of athletics. At the 1948 NCAA convention, the association adopted constitutional revisions called the "Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics" or the so-called "Sanity Code" (Thelin, 1996, p. 101).

The "Sanity Code" was an outgrowth of the "Purity Code" which had been drafted in 1946 by then Big Ten Commissioner, Kenneth "Tug" Wilson. "We must set up a policy whereby a boy will choose a school for its educational value rather than the school choosing a boy for his athletic ability," Wilson once told reporters (Sperber, 1998, p. 41). As Sperber notes, Wilson's memoirs later

made it clear that his decades in intercollegiate athletics had taught him the futility of this goal, but in 1946 his desire to envelop the NCAA in the amateur ideal allowed him to issue such statements with a straight face (Sperber, 1998).

According to Thelin (1996), the Sanity Code was a concise declaration of principles of amateurism, institutional control and responsibility, sound academic standards, financial aid, and athletic recruitment and its intent was to state in general language for all member institutions that varsity athletes were genuine students. It sought to give college presidents and athletic directors incentive to rein in booster clubs and alumni groups and by establishing a compliance committee, the NCAA took on an enforcement role, with power to suspend or expel violating institutions. The most controversial section of the code was on financial aid. This section prohibited athletic scholarships and required that student-athlete's aid be based on a student's financial need (New York Times, 1948, April 17).

There was an immediate outcry from some institutions who objected to the transfer of authority to the NCAA and away from the conferences and institutions. Coaches began

referring to the Sanity Code as the "insanity code" because it was impossible to enforce which had been the same rationale that had forced conferences to lighten their regulations in the 1930s (Thelin, 1996).

In 1950, members refused to expel the University of Virginia and others who challenged the code. Pressure to amend the code was extreme. At the 1951 NCAA convention, members voted to eliminate the section about NCAA involvement with financial aid and also eliminated the rules and the statement of purpose that would have given enforcement powers to the NCAA compliance committee (New York Times, 1951, Jan. 13).

According to Dr. Murray Sperber the main problem with the "Sanity Code" was that the only penalty it provided was expulsion; a severe penalty. "Expulsion was too blunt a instrument. Damage control requires subtlety and gradations of response; the NCAA needed minimal penalties to minimize crimes," he states (Sperber, 1998, p. 44). Sperber adds that with the NCAA elimination of the "Sanity Code" the NCAA installed flexible and light penalties in order to perfect a damage-control strategy.

At approximately the same time that the "Sanity Code" was being eliminated, a black cloud began hovering over

college athletics. A number of prestigious institutions were suddenly in the news for point shaving scandals involving college basketball players and organized gamblers. Involved were players from such institutions as Long Island University, City College of New York, Brooklyn College, the University of Kentucky, Bradley University, and the University of Toledo (Thelin, 1996).

The institutions involved were among the best basketball teams in the nation. It appears that college officials had overrated the sanctity of their institutions. For example, Coach Adolph Rupp of the University of Kentucky had boasted to reporters that "gamblers couldn't touch my boys with a ten-foot pole" (Rupp as quoted by Rice, 1982, p. 85). Coach Rupp and other southern coaches dismissed the scandals as being confined to the Northeast and could be explained away as a big-city problem (Thelin, 1996). However, after some of his players were implicated in the point shaving scandals, Rupp's Wildcats were barred from NCAA basketball competition for one full year. Would this be the catalyst that would finally bring about reform?

Since colleges had not dealt decisively with the serious problems associated with their sports programs, the courts were now in the business of policing intercollegiate

athletics. According to Thelin (1996) "the 1951 counterpart of Howard Savage's 1929 Carnegie Foundation report was not written by a higher education group; it was written by Saul S. Streit, Judge of the Court of General Sessions in New York City, in his sixty-three page commentary, which documented the commercialism and professionalism that had gotten out of hand" (p. 106).

In October of 1951, the American Council on Education (ACE) announced the creation of a special committee to consider the ethics of college sports. On November 10, 1951, Dr. Arthur Adams, president of ACE, announced the appointment of ten university presidents to a committee charged to make recommendations to the ACE's 979 member institutions (New York Times, 1951, Nov. 10). The appointment of this committee received favorable press coverage including a headline in the New York Times of "College Presidents Ready to Hurl Flying Block at Football Scandals" (New York Times, 1951, Nov. 14, p. 39). This committee immediately went to work and released its Report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy on February 16, 1952.

The work of the committee was chaired by John Hannah, president of Michigan State College. Thelin (1996) notes

that Hannah remained confident that "sports de-emphasis was sure to come," and that "athletic directors and football coaches probably wouldn't like it," but that the ACE presidents would ultimately prevail. "We have announced our principles and we will give the various conferences and the NCAA two or three years in which to adopt and live up to our proposals. Then, if they refuse, we will be back with police powers and force, if necessary, to see that our principles are adhered to" (Hannah, as quoted by Marsh in Ann Arbor News, 1952, Oct. 15).

Opening comments from the ACE report included the following somber conclusion:

This committee, after consulting competent authorities, has reluctantly reached the conclusion that in intercollegiate athletics as now conducted, despite the adherence by many institutions to the highest standards, serious violations not only of sound educational policies but also of good moral conduct are not in fact uncommon. Wherever these exist, they can only be injurious to athletics, to our schools and colleges, and especially to our youth (Report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy, 1952, Feb. 16, p. 1).

In addressing the problems of college athletics, the ACE report provided ten specific recommendations, summarized as follows:

- As in all other educational activities, the control of athletics should be held absolutely and

completely by those directly responsible for the administration and operation of the institution.

- Admission standards, as announced in official publications, should apply to all students, athletes and non-athletes alike.
- In order to be eligible for intercollegiate competition, a student should be enrolled in an academic program leading to a recognized degree, and should be making normal progress, both quantitatively and qualitatively, toward the degree.
- No student should be permitted to participate in intercollegiate athletics as a member of a varsity team during his first academic year of attendance at the institution.
- Every institution should make continued efforts to increase the number of available scholarships and grants-in-aid for students of unquestioned academic ability who are in need of financial help.
- Each institution should clearly state in its catalog the reasons for its program of intercollegiate athletics and its policies with regard to the admission and aid of athletes.
- Seasons for the three leading team sports, football, basketball, and baseball should be clearly defined. No post-season games should be permitted.
- All institutions should make efforts to attract students of the type and quality best adapted to profit from the academic programs offered.
- Since athletics are agreed to have important educational and recreational values, colleges and universities should make every effort to offer the opportunity of participation to all students.
- In order to avoid some of the undesirable outside pressures associated with intercollegiate

competition, institutions should be encouraged to compete with others having similar policies and programs (Report of the Special Committee on Athletic Policy, 1952, Feb. 16, pp. 2-5).

Thelin (1996) contends that one favorable legacy of the ACE special committee's report was that it showed presidential and institutional concerns. However, it was very evident that even concerned university presidents had difficulty leading athletic departments in their own institutions. For example, shortly after release of the special report, the committee chair, President John Hannah of Michigan State College, learned that his own institution had been exposed for having an elaborate slush fund. Michigan State College was put on probation by the Big Ten Conference "for its delinquencies in permitting to exist an organization, the Spartan Foundation of Lansing, known to have solicited funds for the assistance of Michigan State athletes" (Thelin, 1996, p. 113). This only served to show that regardless of how well-intentioned a college president might be about controlling a big-time sports program, it was going to take extraordinary efforts to actually succeed in changing the organizational culture of intercollegiate athletics.

As in the 1929 Carnegie study, it would appear that little change occurred because of the release of the ACE report. The report recommended de-emphasizing football by moving away from spring practice and eliminating bowl games. Development of such recommendations had met with resistance even from within the committee members themselves. For example, as the report was being drafted, committee member J.D. Williams, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, reminded ACE president Adams that the football team from *his* university was, indeed, going to play in the Sugar Bowl (Thelin, 1996, p. 113). Further expansion and commercialization of college sports during the 1950s and 1960s would seem to indicate that there was little effective change as a result of the 1952 ACE report.

A Critical Scrutiny of College Sports—Hanford's 1974 Report "An Inquiry into the Need for and Feasibility of a National Study of Intercollegiate Athletics"

Although, little effective reform appears to be documented as a result of the 1952 ACE report, that does not mean that changes were not occurring in intercollegiate athletics. Unfortunately, those changes were in the direction of turmoil and controversy.

Possibly the most scathing problems occurring during the 1950s were chronicled in the Pacific Coast Conference. In 1956, revelations of major offences at four member institutions--the University of Washington, the University of Southern California, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of California, Berkely--created what one journalist called "Football's Biggest Stink" (Thelin, 1996, p. 129).

Central to the problems cited were the existence of slush funds which were being used to make improper subsidies to student-athletes (Thelin, 1996). Severe penalties for the institutions as well as the firings of certain head coaches put the conference in a state of turmoil. Animosity was so great and distrust among conference members was at such a level that the conference began to fall apart. A decision was made to dissolve the conference and the conference ceased operations in June 1959. These institutions would realign in a new conference (the PAC 8, later to become the PAC 10) in the mid 1960s where they currently remain.

Other problems in college sports would surface from time to time throughout the 1960s, but no major studies or reform efforts were undertaken during this time period.

The next major look at college sports didn't occur until 1973 when George Hanford, vice president of the College Entrance Board, received two grants--\$15,000 from the Carnegie Corporation and \$57,750 from the Ford Foundation--to conduct for the American Council on Education a pilot study on the place of college sports in higher education.

Hanford's report, An Inquiry into the Need for and Feasibility of a National Study of Intercollegiate Athletics, was released by the American Council on Education on March 22, 1974. Thelin (1996) concludes that Hanford's report differed from Howard Savage's 1929 study in several important ways: it was not triggered by any single spectacular episode; it was proactive; a kind of distant early warning system that anticipated a new set of problems outside public consciousness; and it was written by analysts within the higher education community, not by an external group. He also credits Hanford with spending less time looking backward and more time trying to convince presidents to confront the future.

Hanford noted the growing importance of sports in the United States with the ever expanding coverage in newspapers and the rapid expansion of television coverage of sports events. He states, "In traditional economic or

financial terms, sports have become big business and those in the counterculture counter with the observation that sports have become capitalism's current substitute for religion as the opiate for the masses. In almost any terms these days, sports have become a major interest of our society and most signs point to the likelihood that the level of interest will increase, not diminish, in the years ahead" (Hanford, 1974, p. 19).

Three major concerns were noted by Hanford (1974) which prompted the call for his study and which at the outset appeared to have surfaced quite independently. However, during the course of his study they turned out to be inextricably interrelated. The three concerns were that intercollegiate athletics had become too commercialized, that big-time college sports had put higher education in the entertainment business, and that the whole enterprise was infected by unethical practices. He concluded that the commercialism in intercollegiate athletics was a function of being in the entertainment business and that the unethical practices were spawned by competition for the entertainment dollar.

Commercialism as a problem was nothing new, since this was a focus of the 1929 Carnegie report. Oddly, Hanford

did not blame the athletic department for the rise in commercialism. "In short, one finding of the inquiry is that *the cries of anguish about the overemphasis on winning, and about the growing commercialism of big-time college sports* of which that overemphasis is a function, *should be directed not at the athletic establishment but at the legislators, trustees, and administrators who today demand that intercollegiate athletic departments support themselves,*" he states (Hanford, 1974, p. 65). He felt that institutions should undertake studies to determine how they could either abandon or rationalize their break-even policies. In order to bring in the big dollars, coaches were expected to be big winners, which undoubtedly led to many unethical practices and rules violations.

Hanford's (1974) study could not dispute that college sports programs were in the entertainment business whether they liked it or not. However, he notes the differing opinion on whether they should be in the business in the first place with those opposing college athletics doing so mainly on the philosophical ground that public entertainment is neither traditionally nor properly a function of higher education, period.

He cited three reasons that supporters offer in favor of college sports: "First, like it or not, the institutions have assumed a responsibility which they cannot now abdicate. Second, even though college sports may not pay for themselves, they provide a focus for alumni, taxpayer, and legislator attention which has an indirect pay-off in general financial support for the institution. The third argument is philosophical and rests on the logic that colleges and universities have traditionally and properly been providing entertainment of many kinds over the years" (Hanford, 1974, p. 66).

Hanford (1974) found validity with both arguments for and against sports entertainment as entertainment, but recommended further study was needed as to sports entertainment as big business.

On the issue of unethical practices, Hanford states that his findings were not conclusive, but that there appeared to be sufficient evidence to suggest that "*the ethical problems relating to the recruiting, subsidy, and on-campus care and feeding of participants in big-time college sports are serious enough, both in kind and in number, to warrant the mounting of a national study of intercollegiate athletics*" (Hanford, 1974, p. 82).

The focus of most of the Hanford inquiry was to provide recommendations for further study and analysis of critical issues identified through his review. He deviated from that format when discussing the important function of accreditation.

Hanford (1974) describes the work of the regional accrediting associations and their work in setting and maintaining overall standards of quality and performance for the nation's colleges and universities. He concludes that the work of the accrediting associations is more "preventive" and designed to encourage institutions to prevent themselves from falling below standard, rather than "corrective" which is the approach of college sports.

Hanford writes, "Although all aspects of a college's or university's operations are presumably subject to review, there is one notable exception to this universality of attention. The regional accreditation associations have abdicated responsibility for sound standards of conduct in intercollegiate athletics and left it to the national athletic associations such as the NCAA and NAIA and to the regional and local athletic conferences such as the ECAC, Big 10, and PAC 8" (Hanford, 1974, p. 92).

He further states "This disinterest on the part of the accrediting agencies, and more particularly on the part of the faculty members and administrators who comprise their visiting teams, would seem to be further evidence of the breakdown in the relationship between athletics and education. Meanwhile, left to accredit or police itself, the athletic establishment finds itself in a ludicrously complicated situation with respect to the organization of the regulatory process and in an awkward position with respect to its nature" (Hanford, 1974, pp. 92-93). Unfortunately, it would take nearly 20 years and another major study of college athletics before a system of accreditation would be adopted by the NCAA.

Although immediate reform efforts do not appear to have emerged from Hanford's report, Thelin (1996) identified what he believed to be four positive results of the inquiry, including:

- (1) The report caught the attention of James Michener and served as the base for his extended discussion of intercollegiate athletics in his best-selling 1976 work, Sports in America, providing Hanford's report an audience far beyond college presidents.
- (2) In January 1977 the Ford Foundation awarded a \$200,000 grant to the American Council on Education to establish a Commission on College Athletics.

- (3) The NCAA showed signs of activity by commissioning Mitchell Raiborn to survey the financial condition of athletic programs in NCAA member institutions.
- (4) The Hanford study and ACE provided the impetus for multidisciplinary study by devoting the fall 1979 issue of Educational Record to college athletics (p. 172).

Although these outcomes of the Hanford report may have been positive, there is still little evidence that actual reform efforts resulted from his work. However, the next major national study would build on Hanford's call for accreditation and a new required NCAA certification program would finally be implemented.

Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete

On October 19, 1989, the Trustees of the Knight Foundation created a commission on intercollegiate athletics and directed it to propose a reform agenda for intercollegiate athletics. The foundation had created the commission because of concern that abuses in athletics had reached proportions threatening the very integrity of higher education, which is one of the principal program interests of the Foundation (Knight, 1991, p. v).

After over a year of study and debate, in March of 1991 the Commission released its report entitled Keeping Faith with the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics. In developing its recommendations, the Commission sought advice and suggestions from more than 80 experts. During a series of public hearings the Commission heard from athletics administrators, coaches, student-athletes, scholars, journalists, leaders of professional leagues, and others. The open approach to the Commission's research was in stark contrast to the 1929 Carnegie study which had been conducted in a secretive manner.

Two follow-up reports were released by the Commission over the next two years. In March of 1992, the Commission released A Solid Start, A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics and in March of 1993, it released A New Beginning for a New Century, Intercollegiate Athletics in The United States. Both of these reports highlighted progress that had been made since the release of the original report.

In transmitting the initial report to the Foundation, Commission Co-Chairmen, William C. Friday and Theodore M. Hesburgh, noted the demanding and difficult task of

monitoring college sports. Factors they identified as contributing to this difficulty included the perception that ethical behavior in the larger society had broken down, the public's insistence on winning local teams, and the growth of television combined with the demand for sports programming (Knight, 1991, p. v.).

As in previous studies, commercialism is portrayed as a serious threat to college sports. However, unlike many other athletic studies and reports, the Knight Commission's report presents an action plan for reform. It puts reform responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the presidents. As stated in the report's introduction, "The Commission's bedrock conviction is that university presidents are the key to successful reform. They must be in charge—and be *understood* to be in charge—on campuses, in conferences and in the decision-making councils of the NCAA (Knight, 1991, p. vii). As noted by Ewald B. Nyquist, intercollegiate athletics had become quite independent of the usual lines of presidential authority. He quoted one university president as stating, "Intercollegiate athletics are frequently far more autonomous and unrelated to the campus than such tyrannical and cussedly independent siblings as medicine and law" (Nyquist, 1978, p. 11). By 1991, the

Knight Commission had concluded that it was time to address this "independent" attitude head-on.

The emphasis being placed on presidential control was not unlike similar recommendations that had been made twelve years earlier by the Commission on Collegiate Athletics for the American Council on Education. Among other recommendations this report concluded institutional leaders should give attention to the following responsibilities:

- The chief executive should reaffirm that an athletics program is a part of the institution's mission.
- Presidential delegation of authority for all types of programs, including athletics, is necessary to effective administration. Delegation of authority to an athletics director should be clearly spelled out. The president still has responsibility to oversee the program and be assured of its integrity.
- The president is immediately and ultimately responsible for issuing a document in which institutional policy towards athletics is spelled out.
- When members of the athletics staff or others go beyond the stated objectives of the institution with regard to the athletics program, corrective action should be taken immediately (Marmion, 1979, p. 348).

In July of 1979, ACE President, J.W. Peltason, wrote the membership that, "I am not so naïve as to think that a single ACE declaration can provide the political and

organizational clout that a president needs over these programs, but the policy statements may help" (Marmion, 1979, p. 345). Although the ACE Commission had stressed the importance of presidential control, there appears to be little evidence that these policy statements did much to change or alter the behavior of presidents in their dealings with athletic operations.

In order to achieve presidential control, the Knight Commission proposed what it called the "one-plus-three" model. This new model would be a structure in which the "one"--presidential control--is directed toward the "three"--academic integrity, financial integrity and independent certification (Knight, 1991).

The proposed certification program would be the cornerstone of the reform effort with each college and university being required to withstand the scrutiny of a review by their peers. The Commission envisioned that this program would verify that the athletics department follows institutional goals, that its fiscal controls are sound, and that athletes in each sport resemble the rest of the student body in admissions, academic progress and graduation rates (Knight, 1991).

The report noted that intercollegiate athletics were at a critical juncture and that college sports faced three possible futures:

- Higher education will put its athletics house in order from within;
- Athletics order will be imposed from without and college sports will be regulated by government; or
- Abuse-unchecked-will spread, destroying not only the intrinsic value of intercollegiate athletics but higher education's claim to the high moral ground it should occupy (Knight, 1991, p. 7).

According to the Commission, reforms should start with respect for the dignity of the young men and women who compete and a conviction that they occupy a legitimate place as students on our campuses. Student-athletes should represent their institutions as true members of the student body, not as hired hands. The report asserts if this happens then everything else will fall into place and if not, the rest will be all wrong (Knight, 1991).

In concluding its justification as to why reform was needed the Commission stated, "Intercollegiate athletics exist first and foremost for the student-athletes who participate, whether male or female, majority or minority, whether they play football in front of 50,000 or field hockey in front of their friends. It is the university's

obligation to educate all of them, an obligation perhaps more serious because the demands we place on them are so much more severe. Real reform must begin here" (Knight, 1991, p. 8).

Although the task at hand appeared immense, it was not deemed insurmountable. Patty Viverito, Commissioner of the Gateway Conference and a Commission Panelist, put the effort needed for reform in perspective when she stated, "I think the temptation is for us to throw up our arms and say we can't possibly change this mess. Such a position is pretty feeble in light of what's happened in Eastern Europe. If the Berlin Wall can come down, I find it hard to believe we can't deal with the problems of college athletics" (Knight, 1991, p. 10). The Knight Commission concluded that the changes needed would require courage, determination, and perseverance on the part of all (Knight, 1991). It was now time for college and university presidents to assert their leadership roles and implement the recommended reforms including a certification program.

Implementation of the Athletic Certification Program

The fundamentals of the NCAA Athletic Certification Program can be traced back to the Commission on Colleges'

Regional Accreditation process. As noted by Bogue and Saunders (1992), having a degree from an accredited college is tantamount to having a product with the collegiate "Good Housekeeping" seal of approval (p. 29). They further state that accreditation is probably the most widely known and respected form of quality assurance among parents, government officials, and other civic friends (Bogue and Saunders, 1992).

Thelin (1996) credits regional accreditation associations for helping colleges and universities avoid government intrusion, leaving initiative and control to colleges, emphasizing academic standards, and promoting sound administration. Strangely, the regional accrediting agencies had historically taken a hands-off approach to intercollegiate athletics. As Thelin (1996) states, "Academic leaders and university boards were spared the obligation to make profound changes because there was no evidence that any athletic scandal had jeopardized a university's regional accreditation" (p. 181).

More recent action by the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has placed a greater emphasis on the importance of intercollegiate athletics in the accreditation process.

For example, in its 1998 Criteria for Accreditation, SACS included a special section relating to intercollegiate athletics. In regard to administrative oversight it states:

The administration **must** control the athletics program and contribute to its direction with appropriate participation by faculty and students and oversight by the governing board. Ultimate responsibility for that control **must** rest with the chief executive officer. It **is essential** that responsibilities for the conduct of the athletics program and for its oversight be explicitly defined and clearly understood by those involved (Criteria for Accreditation, 1998, p. 65).

However, Thelin (1996) notes that even if accreditation had not been affected, athletic scandals had influenced public opinion about college athletics. From a 1989 Associated Press-Media General Survey, it was reported that, "Americans widely doubt the integrity of the nation's top sports colleges, believing they commonly give secret payments and inflated grades to student-athletes, with two-thirds of those surveyed saying that colleges overemphasize sports and neglect academic standards for athletes (Associated Press, 1989 as reported by Thelin, 1996, p. 181). Thelin (1996) concludes that the public had become immune to sports' scandals and that only when public opinion was directly tied to a mechanism of public policy,

such as legislation or litigation, did revelations of corruption matter to reform.

The concept of the NCAA Certification Program was approved by the NCAA Council at its meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, in April 1989. Executive Director Richard D. Schultz was authorized to develop the concept of a certification and peer-review procedure for intercollegiate athletics programs. Schultz deemed the new program would offer "a concept for total integrity in athletics" and would have its base in the institutional self-study of athletics programs that was made mandatory by the membership at the special NCAA Convention in June 1985 (The NCAA News, 1989, April 26). The 1985 institutional self-study requirement did not include a peer-review of the institutional self-study.

Thirty-six institutions agreed to pilot the program on a trial basis. By establishing the program on a trial basis, no legislation would be necessary to implement the project. The tentative approach would be to "field test" the program for a one-to-two year period and evaluate the program at the end of that period to determine if it should be continued and, if so, whether it should be mandatory or

continue to be offered on a voluntary basis (The NCAA News, 1989, Aug. 16).

At the 1991 NCAA Convention, the delegates approved Proposal No. 59, a resolution supporting the concept of certification and directed that a status report on the pilot certification program be delivered at the 1992 Convention (The NCAA News, 1991, Oct. 14). The NCAA Council formed a Subcommittee on Certification to evaluate the pilot program. This committee, chaired by Dr. Joseph Crowley, President of the University of Nevada, was to report its findings at the 1992 Convention and to recommend legislation for the 1993 Convention. The subcommittee was later reauthorized as a special committee of the Council in order to permit several subcommittee members to continue working beyond the expiration of their Council terms in January 1992.

Administrators who participated in their institutions' pilot certification programs generally felt that it is the best way to ensure the integrity of athletics programs. Dr. Daniel E. Ferritor, Chancellor of the University of Arkansas, wanted to make sure that discussion of the magnitude of the project did not overshadow its benefits. "We may be making this sound more onerous than it really

was," he said. "The people who put the report together probably spent more time on it than we normally would ask them to, but it was more productive than onerous. The real advantage was in the four or five months of the self-study process," he added (The NCAA News, 1992, Feb. 19, p. 1,15).

Ferritor also did not view the certification program as having punitive intentions. He saw the program providing athletics an opportunity to improve and confirm that athletics has a place in higher education. "If it becomes a mechanism for enforcement, it won't be effective because the major purpose—to conduct an honest, first-rate self-study—goes by the wayside," he said (The NCAA News, 1992, Feb. 19, p. 15).

One recurring message from the 35 institutions participating in the pilot certification program was that the process was too complicated and time-consuming. "The pilot program was highly complicated—for a reason," said NCAA Executive Director, Richard D. Schultz (The NCAA News, 1992, June 24, p. 1).

John H. Leavens, assistant executive director for compliance services, stated the complexity was necessary for the pilot program to generate adequate data. "The final plan will be quite different from what was

experienced by the pilot-program participants," he said
(The NCAA News, 1992, June 24, p. 1).

For example, the program's scope was narrowed to cover four areas: governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and equity (including matters involving gender, race and the overall experience of the athlete) (The NCAA News, 1992, June 24). The pilot-program had encompassed seven basic areas: institutional mission, institutional control and presidential authority, fiscal integrity, academic integrity, conduct of student-athletes and athletics personnel, commitment to rules compliance, and student-athlete experience (The NCAA News, 1992, Mar. 25).

Possibly the most controversial aspect of the certification program was the issue of funding. It was acknowledged that implementing a successful certification program would involve considerable expense even if the utmost attention was paid to efficiency and ease of administration. However, the committee reported that, "This expenditure of funds is essential to ensure public confidence in the integrity of both intercollegiate athletics generally and the championship events from which the Association derives its financial well-being" (The NCAA News, 1992, Apr. 15, p. 13).

Final approval of the athletics certification program was approved for Division I institutions at the 1993 NCAA Convention as a key part of the NCAA's reform agenda. The pilot program had been valuable, but participants generally agreed that it could be improved by limiting the scope of the self-study. The revised scope was adopted and the Fall of 1993 began a five-year cycle during which each Division I institution was to be certified as a condition of retaining membership in the NCAA. Table 2 summarizes the basic differences between the pilot program and the proposed program.

The Certification Process

Athletics certification is essentially a three-step process that occurs over approximately two years. The first step that occurs over a 12-month period is the conducting of the self-study. During this time the institution is to gather and analyze data, and report the findings in a self-study report. The Committee on Athletics Certification has established certain expectations of the institutional self-study reports. Specifically, the committee expects that:

- The report's conclusions are based on data or records that are available and reliable.

Table 2: Pilot Certification Program vs. Certification as Proposed by Committee on Certification.

Pilot Program	Proposed Program
Time allowed	
Participants were allowed three months to complete their self-study	An institution would be allowed at least one year to complete its self-study
Number of questions	
The pilot program asked about 200 questions in seven basic areas	The proposed program would ask about 40 questions in four basic areas
Nature of questions	
Questions were detailed, which led to redundancies with many answers	Self-study items are broader than in the pilot program
Review	
NCAA staff members reviewed pilot-program reports and made evaluation visits to campus	A trained peer-review team would consider each institution's self-study
Institution's direct expenses	
On average, \$1,500 to \$2,000	Estimated at less than \$10,000 for each five-year cycle
Size of report	
Approximately 100 to 150 pages	Probably about 30 to 40 pages
Decisions	
No pilot schools were certified	The Committee on Athletics Certification would decide to certify, certify with conditions or not certify a school
Standards	
Pilot participants were asked to identify their own institution's standards	Operating principles in four areas have been formulated for institutions to use as benchmarks
Administration	
NCAA staff members administered the program	The Committee on Athletics Certification would oversee all aspects of the program
Frequency	
A one-time, two-year program for 34 Division I institutions	All Division I institutions would complete the process in the first five-year cycle; frequency of subsequent cycles to be reviewed

(Source: Pickle, 1992, p. 10).

- The conclusions reached are reasonable based on the available data.
- All existing concerns have been identified by the institution and a plan for improvement has been established to address those concerns.
- Where the institution has concluded that plans to correct problems in one area may affect existing programs in other areas, plans have been established to maintain the current level of quality of all programs (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 1999-2000, p. 20).

The self-study is intended to offer the institution the opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of its athletics programs by focusing on four major areas of emphasis including: governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and equity, welfare and sportsmanship. Each area of emphasis has certain operating principles that are reviewed during the self-study as follows:

Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

- Mission of the Athletics Program and the Institution.
- Institutional Control, Presidential Authority and Shared Responsibilities.
- Rules Compliance.

Academic Integrity

- Academic Standards.
- Academic Support.
- Scheduling.

Fiscal Integrity

- Financial Practices.
- Fiscal Management and Stability.
- Established Fiscal Practices and Procedures.

Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship

- Gender Issues.
- Minority Issues.
- Student-Athlete Welfare.
- Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct.
(NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Self-Study Instrument, 1999-2000, pp. 7-33).

Once completed, the self-study report is made available to the peer-review team members for the second step of the process. External peer-review teams are selected and assigned by the Committee on Athletics Certification. These teams are composed of experienced educational and athletics personnel. A typical peer-review team will consist of four or five members and whenever possible, a chief executive officer will serve as chair. Each peer-review team member receives training, with special emphasis on training for peer-review team chairs. Peer-review teams are responsible for:

- Verifying that the institution's self-study was accurate and complete, and that it was characterized by campus-wide participation.
- Evaluating the self-study in terms of the operating principles that have been approved for all Division

I members and the institution's mission and purpose (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 1999-2000, p. 9).

The peer-review team's institutional visit takes place over a four-day period during which supporting documentation of the self-study is reviewed and interviews are conducted with key personnel. A draft report is prepared by the team prior to departing the campus. The peer-review team chair is responsible for putting the initial report into its final form and submitting it to the Committee on Athletics Certification.

The final step in the process is the certification decision by the Committee on Athletics Certification. The committee bases its certification decision on information from the following sources:

- The institution's self-study report.
- The formal, written report of the peer-review team.
- A written reaction from the institution to the peer-review team's report.
- The peer-review team's response to the institution's reaction.
- Additional commentary deemed necessary by the committee (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 1999-2000, p. 31).

The Committee on Athletics Certification chooses from three options in determining each institution's certification status; certified, certified with conditions, or not certified. The committee communicates its certification decision, including any specific corrective actions, to the institution's chief executive officer in writing. After notifying the institution, the committee will announce its decision publicly through a standard press-release-type report.

In 1998, a five-year "checkup" revealed mixed reviews of the effectiveness of the certification program (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14). "Certification has helped alleviate the trust gap that existed when only athletics department "insiders" really had any idea of how the program operated," said R. Gerald Turner, president of Southern Methodist University and chairman of the certification committee for the first five years of its existence (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14, p. 1).

Others expressed frustration with the process and in particular the equity components that are entrenched in the provisions of Title IX. For example, C. William Byrne, Jr., athletic director at the University of Nebraska, stated that even though his school was in complete

compliance with the law, Nebraska's equity plan received more scrutiny than he believed was necessary (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14). "Our plan was one of complying totally with the law and it was picked at by the peer-review team because that wasn't enough," said Byrne. "I was stunned by that. Certification started out as a way to make sure schools were in compliance with NCAA rules and regulations, but it has since become a tool for gender-equity enforcement--and that's become almost its only purpose," he added (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14, p. 14).

Rudy Davalos, athletic director at the University of New Mexico, said periodic certification may be unnecessary. "While the process of self-study is a good one for schools to maintain, at some point each school should be able to monitor itself without assistance," said Davalos (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14, p. 15).

Despite some grumblings from institutional members about the certification program, no legislation has been proposed that would eliminate the requirement. The most noteworthy change in the process was a revision at the 1997 NCAA Convention changing the five-year cycle to a ten-year cycle. "I think its been around long enough now that many people have forgotten the conditions that led to it that I

think would revert back were certification eliminated," said Turner. (Brown, 1998, Sept. 14, p. 15). Those conditions according to Turner were uncertainty and mistrust (Brown, 1998).

As of February 2001, 304 of the 305 Division I institutions had been certified through the first cycle, with one decision outstanding. This included 34 institutions that were initially certified with conditions and later certified and one institution initially not certified and then later certified.

Prior Research on Athletics Certification

Only one significant study of athletics certification could be identified. The dissertation, A Case Study of NCAA Division I Athletics Certification: The Experience of a Large Midwestern University, was completed by Dr. Deborah A. Katz in 1998. Dr. Katz suggested further research on this subject including a study of certification effectiveness in meeting institutional and NCAA goals (Katz, 1998, p. 129).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the research design, participant selection, provisions for trustworthiness, and collection and analyzing of data in this study.

Research Design

Quantitative and qualitative research methodology—the entire process of a study—differ (Creswell, 1994). “The quantitative approach holds that the researcher should remain distant and independent of that being researched. Thus, in surveys and experiments, researchers attempt to control for bias, select a systematic sample, and be “objective” in assessing a situation. The qualitative stance is different: Researchers interact with those they study. In short, the researcher tries to minimize the distance between him-or herself and those being researched” (p. 6).

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), the goal of qualitative research is to discover patterns which emerge

after close observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis of the research topic. Contrary to most quantitative studies, the qualitative researcher does not typically pose hypotheses at the beginning of the study. Rather, hypotheses emerge from the data as the study progresses (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1996).

Since the purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program in its early years of implementation, it was determined that the qualitative approach would be best suited for this type of research.

Research Participants and Data Collection

The research participants for this study included selected presidents and athletic directors from NCAA Division I colleges and universities, various commissioners of Division I athletic conferences, pertinent staff of the NCAA, pertinent staff of SACS, and Dr. John Thelin, Professor of Educational Policy and Analysis at The University of Kentucky and author of Games Colleges Play (see Appendix A for complete list of participants).

Presidents of NCAA member institutions are the key decision makers when it comes to athletic policy and

administration. They vote on all legislation that comes before the NCAA Council. Athletic certification did not occur until the chief executive officers were willing to vote for the process at the 1993 NCAA Convention. Therefore, their opinions about the effectiveness of the certification program is of utmost importance to this study. It is their perceptions of the worthiness of the program that will determine whether the program continues over the long-term or falls by the wayside as so many athletic reform efforts have in the past.

Athletic directors and conference commissioners are on the frontline in carrying out the policies of the NCAA. Their ideas and opinions are also key elements in evaluating the effectiveness of this program. They must provide information to presidents and NCAA staff that will allow them to make informed decisions about athletic policy matters and NCAA legislation. Others, such as NCAA staff and SACS staff, can provide useful information about the issues related to the certification program. There was not any attempt to limit the participants to those cited above, but participants selected were determined to offer insights into the issues involved in the certification process.

The individuals selected for interview were determined by a qualitative technique known as purposeful sampling (Maykut and Morehouse, 1997). Maykut and Morehouse (1997) suggest that participants be carefully selected for inclusion based on the possibility that each participant will expand the variability of the sample. They note that purposeful sampling increases the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon will be represented by the data, in contrast to random sampling which tries to achieve variation through the use of random selection and a large sample size (Maykut and Morehouse, 1997). Also, purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 1990).

As Patton (1990) notes, the underlying principle in selecting samples in a qualitative study is the selection of information-rich cases. These are cases that will yield a great deal about matters of importance and are cases worthy of in-depth study (Patton, 1990). Therefore, it is not necessarily the size of the sample, but rather the ability to select participants that will provide the best

information relative to the study that matters most to the researcher.

In addressing sample size, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sample selection:

"to the point of redundancy. In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion" (p. 202).

While sampling until there is redundancy may be ideal, Patton (1990) notes that this may not be practical because it assumes unlimited time lines and unconstrained resources. His solution is the use of judgement and negotiation based on expected reasonable coverage given the purpose of the study and stakeholder interests.

Data collection procedures in qualitative research involve four basic types: observations (ranging from non-participant to participant), interviews (ranging from semi-structured to open-ended), documents (ranging from private to public), and audio-visual materials (including materials such as photographs, compact discs, and videotapes) (Creswell, 1998). Because of the nature of this study, the use of open-ended personal interviews was deemed to be the best approach to data collection.

A number of different types of interviews are cited in qualitative research literature. Fraenkel and Wallen (1996) identified four types of interviews, including: structured, semi-structured, informal, and retrospective. The informal interview was considered to be the best method for this study. The interviews tended to resemble casual conversations which pursued the interests of both the researcher and the respondent. The primary intent was to find out what people think and how the views of one individual compare with those of another.

The design of a qualitative interviewing study changes as the researcher learns more from the interviewees (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). As noted by Rubin and Rubin (1995), design takes shape gradually, as the researcher listens and hears the meaning of the data and works out questions to examine new ideas and themes that emerge during the interviews.

Patton (1990) suggests the use of an interview guide in order to ensure that basically the same information is obtained from the participants by covering the same material. An interview guide provides a framework within which the interviewer develops questions and makes decisions about which information to pursue in greater

depth; while still allowing the researcher a degree of flexibility as the interviews progress.

In order to begin the development of an interview guide and begin the process of sample selection, the researcher talked to three university officials using a preliminary interview guide. The preliminary interview guide contained questions designed to obtain their perceptions of the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program as well as any strengths and weaknesses of the program. Following these interviews, no changes were deemed necessary to the interview guide (Appendix B). All interviewees were provided a consent form which outlined the purpose of the study and documented their agreement to participate in the interview process (Appendix C).

Once the general interview guide was developed, data collection proceeded with those individuals selected for interviews. Five interviews were held with Division I conference commissioners, five interviews with presidents/chancellors of Division I institutions, and five interviews with athletic directors of Division I institutions. Also interviewed were the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification program and two staff members from SACS that are familiar with the joint review

process. Additionally, an interview was held with Dr. John Thelin, Professor in the Department of Education Policy Studies at the University of Kentucky and noted researcher on intercollegiate athletics (Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by a procedure known as inductive analysis. According to Patton (1990):

An evaluation approach is inductive to the extent that the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the phenomenon or setting under study. Inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the evaluator comes to understand program patterns that exist in the empirical world under study. Inductive analysis contrasts with the hypothetical-deductive approach of experimental designs that requires the specification of main variables and the statement of specific research hypotheses *before* data collection begins (p. 44).

Patton (1990) further notes that inductive designs allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be.

Notes taken from the interviews were recorded in a journal. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for further analysis. From the transcribed interviews, the

next step was a process of unitization. Units are described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as:

single pieces of information that stand by themselves, that is, that are interpretable in the absence of any additional information. A unit may be a simple sentence or an extended paragraph, but, in either case, the test of its unitary character is that if any portion of the unit were to be removed, the remainder would be seriously compromised or rendered uninterpretable (p. 203).

Following unitization of the transcriptions, the next process was the categorization of the units. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) categorization involves sorting and classifying units into categories that appear to have similar characteristics. The researcher then works back and forth between the data and the classification system to verify the meaningfulness and accuracy of the categories and the placement of data in categories (Patton, 1990).

Certain of the research questions could be answered with a simple yes or no. However, it was the intent of the researcher to gain a consensus answer to each question as the data were placed in categories. However, it is acknowledged that the results may indicate that there was not enough of a consensus to draw an appropriate conclusion. In such cases, the varying answers are presented with supporting rationale for each position.

Verification

Validity and reliability pose special challenges for the qualitative researcher. Some researchers have even gone so far as to dismiss concern with validity and reliability by considering them irrelevant (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest that how validity is defined and treated varies according to what researchers do and what tasks they are undertaking in what phase or stage of the research. They further note that since reliability refers to the extent which studies can be replicated, this poses an impossible task for the researcher studying naturalistic behavior (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have attempted to substitute other terms for validity and reliability for the qualitative researcher. They substitute the term "credibility" for "internal validity", "transferability" for "external validity", "dependability" for "reliability", and "confirmability" for "objectivity".

Five techniques are recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced. The first technique

involves the use of at least one of the following activities: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. The other four techniques are peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, and member checks.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation both require long-term involvement with the subjects of the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "Prolonged engagement requires that the investigator be involved with a site sufficiently long to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data" (p. 302). They state that the purpose of persistent observation "is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 304). While both of these approaches are useful in qualitative studies, they were not deemed appropriate to this study.

Triangulation was determined to be the most useful technique for this study. In triangulation, researchers attempt to use multiple and different sources to validate information. "Typically, this process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light

on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 1998, p. 202). It was acknowledged that each interviewee had his/her own ideas about the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program and that the multiple interview technique provided for an effective method of determining if similar or different perceptions exist. Additionally, attempts were made to compare any comments made during the interview to any public statements made by the interviewees.

Peer debriefing is a technique recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to help the researcher identify any personal biases that may affect the credibility of the study. It also provides an initial and searching opportunity to test working hypotheses that may be emerging in the researcher's mind. Peer debriefing sessions "provide the inquirer an opportunity for catharsis, thereby clearing the mind of emotions and feelings that may be clouding good judgment or preventing emergence of sensible next steps" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308). A debriefer who listens sympathetically can assist the researcher in devising coping strategies that will improve the quality of the study.

The debriefer must "be someone who is in every sense the inquirer's peer, someone who knows a great deal about

both the substantive area of the inquiry and the methodological issues" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 308-309). Additionally, the debriefer should not be in an authority relationship (either junior nor senior), should be someone prepared to take the role seriously, and should be willing to keep written records of communications with the researcher.

Dr. Terry Whiteside, Professor of Psychology at Middle Tennessee State University, agreed to be the peer debriefer for this study. Dr. Whiteside teaches sports psychology and has an interest in the subject of this study. He has extensive experience in many and varied research projects and currently serves as Chairperson of the NCAA Certification Self-study Committee at MTSU. He is within the same age range and shares a collegial relationship with the researcher. Meetings and discussions were held with Dr. Whiteside throughout the course of the study.

The object of negative case analysis is to "continually refine a hypothesis until it *accounts for all known cases without exception*" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 309). The purpose of this study was to determine the views of the participants, therefore no hypothesis was associated with the study. Interviews were conducted until it was

felt that no additional significant new information was being obtained. This procedure provides a useful means of reducing the number of exceptional views as proposed through the use of negative case analysis.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe referential adequacy as the maintenance of recorded material that provide a kind of benchmark against which later data analyses and interpretations can be tested for adequacy. "Skeptics not associated with the inquiry can use such materials to satisfy themselves that the findings and interpretations are meaningful by testing them directly and personally against the archived and still 'raw' data" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 313). For purposes of this study, referential adequacy was obtained by tape recording all participant interviews. Additionally, all interviews were transcribed for review by the auditor selected for this study.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) member checks refers to a process whereby "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected" (p. 314). It is cited by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as being the most crucial technique for

establishing credibility. "If the investigator is to be able to purport that his or her reconstructions are recognizable to audience members as adequate representations of their own (and multiple) realities, it is essential that they be given the opportunity to react to them" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 314).

Member checking can be both formal and informal and may include providing a summary of an interview back to the participant for his/her reaction (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the investigator who has received concurrence from respondents as to the credibility of the research has established a strong beachhead toward convincing readers and critics of the authenticity of the work. Member checks were obtained by furnishing written summaries of interviews back to participants and requesting their comments and reactions (Appendix D). Only minor editorial changes were returned by the participants after their reviews.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the term "transferability" over "external validity" which in a qualitative study is virtually impossible to establish. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state:

For while the conventionalist expects (and is expected) to make relatively precise statements about external validity (expressed, for example, in the form of statistical confidence limits), the naturalist can only set out working hypotheses together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold. Whether they hold in some other context, or even in the same context at some other time, is an empirical issue, the resolution of which depends upon the degree of similarity between sending and receiving (or earlier and later) contexts. Thus the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (p. 316).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the thick description should "provide a sufficient base to permit a person contemplating application in another receiving setting to make the needed comparisons of similarity" (pp. 359-360). In order to address the requirement of transferability, the researcher provides "thick descriptions" as part of the analysis so that readers may determine for themselves the transferability of this research to other settings.

In addressing reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the terms dependability and confirmability. Several techniques are offered as useful in establishing dependability and confirmability. The researcher considered the most salient technique for this study to be the inquiry audit. This technique makes use of an auditor

to authenticate the process of the inquiry. If the process for collecting the data is adequate, the investigation will be considered dependable. The auditor also "examines the *product*—the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations—and attests that it is supported by data and is internally coherent so that the "bottom line" may be accepted (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 318).

Mr. Alan Thomas, Controller for Middle Tennessee State University, agreed to serve as the inquiry auditor for this project. Mr. Thomas is a CPA *Inactive* and has extensive experience in auditing and verification of supporting documentation. Typically, CPAs are associated with accounting and financial information. However, most CPAs have a much broader background that includes experience in reviewing underlying documentation which is used to support conclusions and decisions that are a result of various studies and research. Mr. Thomas was requested to sign a confidentiality agreement concerning the information that he reviewed concerning the transcripts of the interviews.

Information provided to Mr. Thomas for his review included taped interviews and transcriptions, follow-up corrections from participants, the researcher's notes and journal, results of the unitization and categorization

process, the conclusions developed from the study, and Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this study (Appendix E). A written report of the auditor's findings documenting the review is provided in Appendix F.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter the results of the interviews are presented. Section one presents a description of the interviewees. Section two includes a discussion of the pertinent findings that emerged from the interviews. Section two is divided into a separate section for each research question that was identified in Chapter 1.

Description of the Interviewees

Nineteen interviews were conducted for this study. Interviews were held with presidents, athletic directors, and Division I conference commissioners in accordance with the procedures described in Chapter 3. Also interviewed were the NCAA staff member that is directly responsible for the NCAA Certification Program, two staff members from SACS who are responsible for coordination with the NCAA, and Dr. John Thelin, Professor of Educational Policy at the University of Kentucky and author of Games Colleges Play.

Five presidents were interviewed who are or were chief executives that represented three Division I-A and two

Division I-AA conferences. The five athletic directors also represented institutions that included three Division I-A programs and two Division I-AA institutions. The conference commissioners represented three Division I-A conferences, one Division I-AA conference, and a conference that is currently Division I, non-football, but will be moving to Division I-A in 2001-2002.

Interview Results

Research Question One

Do key athletic policy stakeholders such as presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and NCAA staff think that the certification program has led to an improved perception of athletics with faculty, students, and the general public?

A consistent trend emerged from the interviewees as this question was discussed. Of the five presidents, only one felt it has had a positive impact with those outside the inner circle of athletics and that would be limited to those who were directly involved in the certification process as members of one of the self-study committees. As one president stated, "I think the reason it hasn't happened is that the only thing that ever gets publicized

is negative findings; we haven't really done any publicity for the accountability side."

Another president summed up his thoughts about how this program has been received in this way:

If you ask me if Joe Public has heard about certification, I think the majority will say no. For the ones that have heard of it, if you ask them if they think it has helped the image of college athletics, I think the answer will be that they are not sure or the image is about the same. If you ask a typical faculty member as to what certification has meant to academic integrity, he or she would not be very much impressed. They would think athletics is athletics and that there is too much of it in higher education.

Another president felt the process had led to an improved perception only for those who participate directly in the process. In explaining his perspective he made the following statement:

I say that because the program requires that the steering committees be broadly represented. That is, you have alumni, you have students, you have student-athletes, you have members of the governing board, and the faculty should be strongly represented. Because of that involvement, I think through that process a group of people at least get to know what's going on.

In addressing the issue of the broader based groups he said, "Now, the hedge I would say is how much this process has enhanced generally the faculty and general higher education community's broadly defined appreciation of intercollegiate athletics." It seems that the main idea

from him was that an improved perception of intercollegiate athletics had occurred because of certification, but was confined to those directly involved in the certification process. He did go on to add, "I do think as you go through it institution by institution, over time there will be an appreciation that the NCAA and its leadership decided that we are going to do something to show a certification or stamp of approval."

Another president felt that the only thing those outside the athletic community know about athletics is what the sportswriters tell them in the press. He offered the following comments:

I think more of what the public gets with regard to the NCAA is what the columnists write in the press. Something like certification--within the athletic community--everyone knows about it, but the average person on the street really doesn't know that much about it and they don't really care that much about it. They are much more interested in Bobby Knight and what's happening to him at Indiana because its juicy and its bad. I think the only time the public takes note is when something bad happens and gets splattered all over the newspaper.

His position was that so many institutions have been certified that it is not news. Only if an institution was not certified would it be news-worthy since it would sound like a sanction against the institution.

Similar thoughts from another president included the following response:

I think the newness of the program, combined with the fact that it isn't done in Divisions II and III, but only in Division I, leaves a lot of unfinished business in the area of public perception. I think there's a lot to be done to communicate more about the program and the fact that it's a self-policing, self-review as with accreditation. I don't think the general public is very much aware of this program; I'm not even sure sportswriters know anything about it. It also gets confused a bit with enforcement rules and issues. I think the people aren't quite sure that these are separate.

In summary, except for those who have been directly involved in the certification process, presidents do not think that the certification program has contributed very much to improving the image and perception of intercollegiate athletics with those outside the athletic community. The public gets its information about athletics from sportswriters and the certification program has been largely ignored by the media because an institution being certified is not very exciting news.

Athletic directors presented much the same thoughts on this question as did the presidents, although one of the five directors did offer the opinion that the certification process has improved the perception of athletics with the public in his community.

He felt that wide publicity in his university and the local media has had a positive effect and offered the following comments:

I think it has had a positive impact. I know we went through the process a little over a year ago. Obviously, we were very proud of our results and it made our school newspaper, our faculty newspaper, and the local newspaper. We were very proud of the fact that it went so well. Yeah, in our situation it helped public perception.

The other four athletic directors were of the opinion that the only ones who have an improved perception of intercollegiate athletics as a result of this program are those individuals on campus who were directly involved in the self-study. As one stated, "I think the certification process has brought an awareness to the university community, especially those who had the task of serving on those committees." He added that he wasn't sure how much awareness there would be outside that group, although the reports are normally made to the faculty senate and his athletics board by the faculty athletic representative.

Similar thoughts were offered by another athletic director who indicated:

In regard to the general public, I would think not. I would think that very few people realize what's actually going on. I think people in education on campuses think its good and that they're looking at the right things, but I don't think the general public

outside of higher education really knows that much about what's going on. Probably if led by someone in the media, they would just say they're looking at themselves so what the heck does that mean?

Ideas from another athletic director included the following:

We've only been through one cycle with the institutions and I doubt if the public really has any understanding of what's going on. Didn't have any to start with and doesn't have any now. There would be a limited few people who would have some concept of what's going on, but generally it's going to take a little more time to have people have a track record that goes with this and so I don't think there's a lot of public response to this. I think certification has had a far larger effect on a number of people on campus than it has had off campus. The first mark of credibility has to be internally to the university and certification has been a big plus to that.

Another athletic director noted that although there may have been some impact on campuses, the bigger community has "not been impressed at all." His rationale was tied to the fact that you can become certified, but immediately be cited for rules violations. He offered the following comments:

It's probably had some impact on campuses because it's being viewed as similar to the accrediting process that the whole institution goes through. In academe it's sort of viewed as peer-review and that's good. So it may have shored up the image on campus a little bit. But I'm not sure that the community or the media or the bigger community has been impressed at all, because you can get certified one day and be spread all over the newspaper the next day for having a major rules violation.

In summary, four of five athletic directors thought the certification program has had negligible impact on the perception of intercollegiate athletics with the general public. One thought it has had a positive impact within his community, while the others acknowledge that it has improved the perception of athletics on the campuses with those who were directly involved in the review process, but has done little to reach those outside the institution.

Conference commissioners presented similar views as to how valuable the certification process has been in improving the perception of intercollegiate athletics. They, like the other groups, think that the general public doesn't know anything about this program, but that it may have helped improve the understanding of what athletics is all about in the minds of those faculty and students who were directly involved in the campus studies. This opinion was consistent with all five commissioners. As one commissioner stated:

I would say from the standpoint of the public—that being the public at large and the media—the certification program has not affected them at all in so far as I have been able to ascertain. I think that although I am somewhat removed from direct campus environments, that the process has forced different segments of the community to look at and become familiar with athletic programs within the larger

confines of a larger university community. To that extent, I think that it is probably a positive and has affected perceptions and I would say from the standpoint of people outside of athletics on campus its probably been a positive.

Another commissioner expressed similar views with the following observations:

I think in the general public, the media and so forth it's either little known or not known that this program is even in existence. I think the closer you get to the direct administration or control of athletics then the more and more people who have been impacted and have some knowledge of what's going on. Faculty who were involved--especially the ones who were involved directly--have a pretty good understanding of the program, as well as those who know those people and had them talk about it. The general student body, no; some of the student-athletes probably have some understanding, but not widespread. I don't think the general public understands what goes on with accreditation and those kind of things.

Responses from the other commissioners were similar in thoughts and opinions. In summary all five thought that the program has done little to make the general public have a better understanding of intercollegiate athletics or to improve the perception of athletics. They do all think that those on campus who were directly involved with the certification process did gain a better awareness and perception of intercollegiate athletics as a direct result of the certification program.

Comments from the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification program mirrored those of the other groups.

He provided the following specific observations:

From faculty members who were allowed to be part of the process--either on the steering committee or as subcommittee members or as just interested faculty who read the report--I do think you have a greater appreciation for what goes on in the intercollegiate athletics enterprise. I have no question about that. For faculty members who were not part of the process or did not avail themselves of those opportunities, I'm not sure that just knowing their institution went through the process would have changed anything. Where they had direct hands on experience with it, I think you would see some positive changes in terms of perception. The public is much more difficult to gauge. My general sense would be "no" it has not impacted their view unless they are someone who is extremely well read in this area and understands what this is all about. I guess I would think it has not really changed public perception.

The analysis of the answers from presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification program provides a general consensus on the answer to this research question. In their opinion, the NCAA Certification Program has not led to an improved perception of intercollegiate athletics with faculty, students, or the general public unless they were a direct participant in the self-study process. For those that were direct participants, then it is generally

believed that they gained a better understanding and perception about intercollegiate athletics.

Research Question Two

What are the programs strengths and weaknesses and what might be done to improve the program?

Strengths

A total of 15 different strengths were provided by the interviewees. However, throughout the interviews it was obvious that there was only one prevailing strength that was cited by most of the respondents. The one strength that was repeatedly mentioned in one way or another was the self-study process and involvement of the greater university community. This programmatic strength was cited by three presidents, four athletic directors, all five conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member in charge of this program.

One athletic director had the following comments as he characterized the benefits of the self-study at his campus:

It's probably an educational process for the whole campus because we had people involved when we went through certification who were reviewing the financial operations, reviewing governance and so forth and our commitment to academic standards who have nothing to do with athletics, have never attended an athletic event in their lives, and had no idea what we do or what's involved in what we do. They got an education

and they were the first to admit it--about what's involved and how seriously we take it and how well we go about doing what we do. It helped them to see and it helped us to show them. In other words there's benefit to doing a self-study.

This theme seemed to come forth from the respondents and particularly from each of the conference commissioners. "I think the number one strength is opening the athletics program to evaluation by the campus wide community," stated one commissioner. He also noted that the program had been a positive experience for institutions in his conference by getting people to truly appreciate how much work and effort athletics puts out there to try to do the right thing to conduct a good program.

Another commissioner explained his support of the self-study process as follows:

One strength is the self-study. I think that can force everyone to sit down every eight to ten years and really take a look at their program. They can bring in people from outside the athletic department. You have a review as to how athletics fits within the purpose of that particular school. Not how it fits within the NCAA, but how does it fit within the budgetary restraints of that university, what are the long range goals of that university, how information is communicated between the admissions office, the financial aid office, and the registrar's office--that I think is good.

The NCAA staff member involved with the certification program had the following comments:

The opening up of the athletic doors to the larger university community was absolutely significant. On many of our campuses, particularly Division I-A, there was a sense that athletics was operating in a vacuum, that faculty and others did not know what went on in the athletics operation and I think that we have a group that now sees more clearly what goes on in athletics and was a part in making some positive change.

There were two other strengths that were noted by two of the interviewees. The quality of the people assigned to the review teams was cited by one president and one athletic director. The value of participating on a peer-review team and seeing what other institutions do was noted by one athletic director and the NCAA staff member. The following listing of strengths were only mentioned once by the interviewees:

- Sends a message that your institution measures up
- Not a multiplicity of operating principles
- Not overwhelmed by volumes of materials in guidelines
- Assistance given by NCAA staff
- Standardized format for writing the report
- Emphasizes to the president that you are responsible
- It has headed off federal intrusion into athletics
- NCAA willing to change the process as it evolves
- Puts athletics on same level as academic departments that must go through accreditations
- Affirmation that things are being done correctly
- Awareness of areas needing improvement.

The interviews with the presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member conveyed that the major strength of the certification program is the self-study. The self-study causes institutions to document their activities and provides a cross institutional look at athletics and where it fits in, its needs, and its challenges.

Weaknesses

A total of 13 different weaknesses were provided from the interviews. Of that total, three were mentioned by at least five of the interviewees. Each of those three will be discussed separately and the less mentioned items will be listed following those discussions.

The most often mentioned weakness was that individuals too often bring their own political agendas to the review process. This was cited by one president, two athletic directors, all five of the conference commissioners, as well as the NCAA staff member. As one president stated, "We live in a very politically charged and economically charged environment and on the political side we end up with people bringing political agendas to the certification process."

One athletic director noted that some reviewers come with their own agendas--not unlike the reviewers with SACS, but with the regional accrediting agencies the teams are so large that one person's agenda gets diluted by the larger group. He offered the following rationale:

Even if the standards are clearer and so forth you get certain people who are on certain kicks even with the southern association. The difference is with a team of thirty people the one person with an agenda gets diluted, whereas if you have four reviewers--two of whom have agendas--its tougher on the two remaining members to change their minds.

Each of the commissioners cited this issue as a weakness of the program. "I think one of the weaknesses that surfaced was that the peer groups do not apply the same standards to all the studies and some bring their own agendas to the studies," stated one commissioner. Another commissioner offered the following about the peer-reviewers and personal agendas:

The complaint I have about the peer-reviewers is in many cases some of these peer-reviewers have an ax to grind on every campus. That's the only thing they look at. Whether its gender equity, whether its minority issues, whether its role of the faculty rep--that's the only thing they look at because that's the one thing they have an interest in. That's not what the thing should have been about and that's where I have a problem with the peer-reviewers.

A similar position came from another commissioner who said, "I think that initially there were special interest

groups who had an agenda to be carried out by the certification program and I was a voice on the committee that continually said that we are not the office of civil rights, we are not charged with training people or ourselves going in and determining if programs are in strict compliance with Title IX because we don't know what that is." From the comments provided from the interviews, this group thinks that reviewers bringing personal agendas to the process is an overall weakness of the program.

Somewhat related to the above weakness is a citing of inconsistency in peer-review teams. This weakness was noted by two presidents, two athletic directors, two conference commissioners and the NCAA staff member. As one president stated, "The biggest weakness I would say would be in the composition of the review committees; the variability there." "I know that the NCAA wants to make sure as much as possible that doesn't happen, but as hard as you work, invariably that's going to happen sometimes," he added. Another president stated that a major challenge for the NCAA in the next cycle of reviews is doing a better job of training peer-reviewers so that there is more consistency in how the reviews are done. The NCAA staff member stated, "I think the quality of our peer-review

teams varied and I won't say significantly, but varied to a point where I think some institutions received better service than others."

One commissioner felt the whole idea of peer-reviewers just doesn't work as he offered the following comments:

I think you need somebody that's across the board and many times the review team is headed by a president and usually the president has got very little time. Being a president is a tremendous commitment of time and he doesn't have time to run around the country and certify people. And so they kind of turn it over to subgroups and sometimes those subgroups are very good and sometimes they are totally bad--and the bad part is you get reviewed by a very good group and I get reviewed by a very ordinary group and all of a sudden the two reports are totally different. I think that is the real weakness in the whole concept of the peer-review process; it just doesn't work.

One athletic director extended the inconsistency one step further beyond the peer-reviewers to the actual NCAA certification committee. He felt the certification committee action in regard to his university was inconsistent with the peer-review teams recommendations and offered the following comments:

We know for a fact that the committee that reviewed us gave us a positive review without exception. Then the NCAA committee certified us conditionally because we didn't have a plan for minority issues and they weren't satisfied with our plan on equity issues. But the committee that reviewed us didn't have a problem with us on that and the committee notified us one day and then announced to the world the next day that we were being certified with conditions. We had no

opportunity to respond or to do anything about it whatsoever. I was pretty upset about that; in fact I'm still not over it.

From the comments provided by presidents, athletic directors, and conference commissioners, and a NCAA staff member, the lack of consistency among the peer-review teams is a major weakness of the program. Training for peer-reviewers for the next review cycle is a critical point for improving the acceptance of the program by member institutions.

The third prevailing weakness that evolved from the interviews was too much emphasis on gender equity. This area was cited by two presidents, one athletic director, and three conference commissioners. In discussing the gender equity issue relating to the certification process, one president stated, "My experience is that sometimes you have to be a bit diligent not to get overly carried away with that issue."

Another president offered the following comments about the problems associated with the gender equity issue:

I do think there is a legitimate criticism on the gender side. I think one of the reasons this certification program came into being was because of gender equity concerns and I think the way the NCAA put the certification committee together, the balance between male and female membership--the females they put on it really kept this issue front and

center. I think it was a way to address critics who were saying you don't care a darn for women's athletics in the NCAA. I think who's on the certification team—we've had some real intense gender equity focus on some of the teams and an attempt on the part of some of the team members—in spite of the training and everything else—for them to define gender equity or compliance with Title IX in a way that the federal government doesn't define it. Such as not recognizing that there are multiple definitions of compliance with Title IX. I think that's too bad. I think they give the program a bad name when they're out there saying this is the only criteria.

From the comments of this president it seems that some individuals involved in the review process attempted to make their own interpretations of the legal requirements of Title IX. This was of particular concern to one commissioner who felt the program had gone well beyond the intent of the member institutions when this program was approved for implementation. He offered the following comments about the issue:

I think it's a concern by an awful lot of institutions. That was not an intent of the program when it was started. It became the focus. The NCAA is not involved in those kinds of issues. The NCAA is a very narrow operation and we have taken the NCAA and have attempted to use it to go far beyond what it was meant to do. That's where you got a lot of complaints from institutions about these kinds of issues that got merged into this project which are really not the total responsibility of what we think the NCAA is all about.

Another commissioner who had served on the certification committee voiced similar concerns and stated,

"I think that initially there were special interest groups who had an agenda to be carried out by the certification program."

From the comments and concerns expressed during the interviews it can be determined that emphasis on gender equity generally exceeds what interviewees think was intended by the member institutions when this program was approved. Interestingly, one strength of the certification program that was mentioned by one president is that the program has helped keep the federal government from intruding into college athletics. Since Title IX continues as such a focus of the federal government in ensuring equal opportunities for female student-athletes, the certification program or something more stringent may have to take a more assertive approach in order to keep the federal government out of the business of college athletics.

There were three other weaknesses that were noted by more than one interviewee, but are considered less important due to the limited number of times the item was cited. Not having adequate standards was noted by one president and one athletic director. The cost of the program was mentioned by two presidents and one

commissioner and the fact that not all presidents and athletic directors participate in peer-review visits was noted by one athletic director and one conference commissioner.

Other weaknesses that were mentioned only once included the following:

- Arbitrary findings can do damage to an institution's reputation
- Only Division I institutions are participating in the process
- Institutions are seen as policing themselves
- Difficult to get presidents and athletic directors to take time away from their jobs to do the peer-review visits
- False sense of getting a good housekeeping seal of approval that you are doing no wrong
- Doesn't get at the problem of the breakdown in the chain of command (too much control by coaches)
- Doesn't adequately investigate whether or not values are constructive and healthy.

In summary there were three major weaknesses that evolved from the interviews with the presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member. These included individuals bringing their own political agendas to the review process, a lack of consistency among peer-review teams, and too much emphasis on gender equity during the review process.

Comments and Suggestions for Improvement

One action that has recently taken place is the decision to change the review cycle from being done every five years to a review every ten years. Four presidents, four athletic directors, three commissioners, and the NCAA staff member cited this as a positive move. For the most part, they felt this helped address the cost issues, the commitment of campus staff time requirements, and the availability of peer-reviewers. It was also noted that a ten year interval was more consistent with the time interval adhered to by the regional accrediting agencies. However, one athletic director stated he would still like to see the studies done every five to seven years.

Other suggestions from the interviewees included the following items:

- NCAA needs to do a better job of training peer-reviewers
- Require the process in all divisions
- Need better trained NCAA staff to go out and manage the process
- Try to better control the focus—the NCAA is not the federal government or the state budget authority
- Include the total program as part of the regional accreditation process
- NCAA staff should be more rigorous in ensuring the institution gets into the self-study process a little bit deeper.

At the time of this writing the NCAA is moving into the second cycle of conducting the self-studies and preparing for peer-review visits. From the comments and observations provided by the interviewees, it appears that the long-term success of this program will depend mainly on improving the training of peer-reviewers and ensuring more consistency in the approaches used by the reviewers when conducting the campus visits. Determining the appropriate level of emphasis that should be placed on the review of the gender equity issue should also be addressed by the NCAA in order to alleviate the concerns institutions have about this portion of the certification process.

Research Question Three

Does the certification program contribute to improvement in the major operating principles of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare, and sportsmanship?

There was a definite consensus that certification has contributed to improvement in the major operating principles addressed in the program. Of the five presidents, four stated that it has definitely helped, while one responded that it has probably helped. One

president attributed improvement to the fear of being judged by outsiders. "I think it has contributed to commitment to equity because the fear of being judged by an outside committee has probably led to an increase in funding for participation in women's athletics," he stated.

Another president summarized how he thought it had led to improvement as follows:

It (certification) causes institutions to document how they deal with certain athletic issues and document who is responsible for monitoring the various activities to see that proper actions are taking place. This causes institutions to take more notice of what's occurring in those areas and it's brought a tremendous amount of improvement and a tremendous amount of credibility to those who are on the inner circle of athletics.

One president noted that the penalty of not being in compliance with the operating principles is so dramatic that no institution wants to have itself declared not certified or out of compliance. He elaborated as follows:

If you are in compliance with them (the operating principles)—you run a pretty good athletics program. I say yes because I don't know of any institution that's going to approach the process callously and say "well we're not going to worry about certification, what difference does it make?" You have five people plus an NCAA representative that are going to spend four days talking to God and everybody about what you're doing. They're going to talk to athletes. They're going to talk to academic folks. Well you said you have good academic support—do athletes agree with that? Because of the completeness of the operating principles and the intense scrutiny that you

get when the visiting team comes, I believe quite keenly that this process causes institutions to move to be in compliance with the operating principles if they were not otherwise in compliance with them.

The consequences of not being certified may very well be the main impetus for making improvements in light of the program, since an institution that is not certified cannot retain NCAA membership. As one president stated, "I think the institutions in anticipating certification made some changes and brought their house into order better than they would have without the program." Another president felt that it has probably helped some institutions, but did not think it helped his institution. "At my institution it hasn't made that much difference because we've always done the things that we're talking about," he stated. He added that it is just another regulation to go through to satisfy the NCAA.

From the responses provided by the presidents it appears that on the whole they think the certification process has contributed to improvements in the operating areas of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare, and sportsmanship. Even the president who did not think it had helped at his institution thought it had probably helped others.

Similar to the presidents, the athletic directors as a whole thought the program had led to improvement in the operating principles. Four athletic directors thought it had definitely helped, while one stated that he wasn't sure it had helped at his institution. One athletic director noted the improvement in equity support and stated, "I think really and truly its moved Title IX ahead more than anything that's happened with the law." Another stated, "It's been good for us and I believe it's been a very, very positive step we've taken."

Although four athletic directors were very certain that the program had led to improvements in the operating principles, one stated that he wasn't sure this had happened. He wasn't sure that it had helped at his institution and stated that whenever some program is about to be reviewed there is an infusion of money in order to be sure everything will meet the requirements of the review. He noted that the benefit to his department was a budget increase, but he wasn't sure it had led to any improvement in the operating principles as they were being applied at his campus.

Although one athletic director was not certain it had helped improve the operating principles, it appears that

there was general agreement among athletic directors that the program has led to improvement in the areas that are emphasized in the certification process.

Although generally supporting the idea that the program has contributed to improvement in the operating principles, the conference commissioners presented some slightly different views of how valuable it has been. Two responded with a definite yes. "I think there are a number of institutions who were not giving the appropriate amount of attention to those areas and that going through the certification process brought them to attending to those areas," stated one. However, he did have some reservations about how diligently campuses may have been in implementing stated action plans since the first certification visit. "Now the true test is going to be in the next cycle which is coming up as peer reviewers go to those campuses and are looking at their plan and seeing if they actually were implemented or did they just say a bunch of words to appease the certification committee and put them on a shelf," he noted.

Three commissioners thought it had helped some, but not across the board. One addressed the issue as follows:

Can I say across the board? No. But has it helped some institutions? Yes. I think it helped some institutions establish or enhance their control mechanisms on campus with regard to the things we talked about--initial eligibility, review of financial aid structure, or things of that nature. I think that part has been helpful, where they have been forced to look at it themselves and see where they have some shortcomings. Now can I say across the board it's been a tremendous plus for every school? No, but I think it's helped a significant number of schools.

Another thought that although it's hard to measure improvement, the institutions with the least amount of resources and infrastructure probably had more opportunity to grow from the process than those with better financial bases which could afford more elaborate checks and balances.

One commissioner thought the process has helped in some institutions, but may have been overkill in some cases where the issues were being managed in a proper way as he offered the following perspective:

I think in some universities, and in fact the majority of institutions, these issues were being managed and dealt with in a very proper way because that's the way the university functions. I have no doubt that some institutions are better served having gone through the process. Now as to whether the process was necessary for everybody or whether the process was overkill, I think is another question.

Conference commissioners had varying levels of ideas on the level of improvement in the operating principles

that is gained from the certification. However, there was general consensus that there is some level of improvement that can be gained from the process at most institutions.

The NCAA representative felt the program had contributed to improvement in the operating principles—if the institution took the process seriously. He offered the following observations:

The process itself helped refine those operating principles and helped set new standards for institutions. At a national level I do think it had that positive impact. On individual campuses I also feel that you have institutions that did benefit. I know some benefited greatly because they took the program seriously and as a result of their seriousness they were willing to acknowledge problems and make substantive changes. Others perhaps didn't come at it with the same conviction and the benefits would have been minimal. But again, it was how willing the institution was to kind of openly embrace their issues through the self-study and the report of the committee.

The analysis of the answers from the presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification program provides a general consensus on the answer to this research question. Generally, the program has led to improvement in the operating principles of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare, and sportsmanship. The level of improvement is difficult to

measure and depends on many factors such as how well the institution is already functioning in regard to these principles. Quite likely the amount of benefit gained may be attributable to how serious the institution was about the program and its willingness to acknowledge problems and implement corrective actions. As one conference commissioner noted, the lack of serious attention during the first cycle may very well show up during the second review cycle.

Research Question Four

Does the certification program help identify areas that need improvement which could help institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules?

There was general consensus that the certification program does little to help institutions avoid NCAA violations. Responses from the five presidents indicated that three did not think it helped while two thought it might help if the certification program is looked at seriously and objectively. One president offered the following comments about the program and whether it might help institutions avoid NCAA violations:

If you have a renegade program, this isn't going to stop them. I think most programs are like my

university. They're clean programs and people want to do the right thing. The fact that you have this certification program, if you have a rogue program, I don't think it's going to do much to stop them. If some very prestigious universities can get caught with major violations after certification, I think it kind of puts it in perspective. I'll bet there hasn't been any appreciable decrease in NCAA major violations since certification went into effect.

This idea may be supported most dramatically with a look at the only Division I institution to receive the so-called "death penalty." In the 1970s Southern Methodist University (SMU) was in such flagrant violation of NCAA rules, that the institution was eventually forced by the NCAA to close down its football program. In December, 2000, SMU was again placed on probation for violations in its football program.

SMU was fully certified in March of 1996. The probation penalty given out in 2000 was for violations that went back to the years 1997 and 1998; essentially right after going through the certification process and being certified. The violations involved bylaws governing recruiting, extra benefits, academic fraud and unethical conduct. The academic fraud violation, which occurred in 1997 and 1998 was considered by the Committee on Infractions as the most serious of violations. This violation involved a coach who had paid someone to take an

entrance exam for a prospective student who eventually became a student-athlete at SMU (Jankowski, 2000. Dec. 13). Other similar stories could be told as institutions have continued to be cited for rules violations at a regular pace since the certification program went into effect.

Another president who felt it does little to help institutions avoid NCAA violations noted that this shouldn't necessarily be looked at as a negative for the program since the program is really not meant to look at compliance or enforcement. "The role of the certification program is really not to look at compliance or enforcement; its focus is on whether the university is operating within the scope of the operating principles outlined in the certification program," he stated.

One president who thought it helped somewhat in helping institutions avoid NCAA rules violations explained his position as follows:

Now it's not going to uncover everything. It's not going to look at some of the things that the rules enforcement people look at. But in a general sense to know whether you've got checks and balances in the system, whether you've got people whose integrity you can trust who've got a track record of doing things honestly. You can always have somebody out there who's doing something for the parents or the recruit; now this sort of thing is not going to be discovered through the certification process so its not going to get at everything. But in terms of just good sense

operations for a program, an institution that really wants to do things right, I think is aided with this program.

From the responses provided by the presidents, as a whole they think the program does little to help institutions avoid NCAA violations. As one president noted, improved compliance and rules enforcement are not necessarily an expected outcome of this program. It may however, be an aid if certification results in the establishment of good systems of checks and balances.

The athletic directors generally thought the program does not contribute much to the avoidance of NCAA rules violations. Four out of five did not think it helps. One thought it might help just a little, and offered the following thoughts:

You have to think it helps a little, but I'm not sure it prevents violations. No matter what kind of scheme you have in place, a coach that is hell bent on cheating, can and will. An institution can go through making sure that everything is in place, but if the president says you win or you get out of here--and he doesn't have to say it that plainly--then coaches know their choice is to do whatever it takes to win or be unemployed. So I don't think it helps much. You cannot command a coach who knows that he must win at all costs and that the institution expects that; especially if you have never fired a coach for cheating, but you have fired several for losing.

Although one athletic director thought it might help a little, it appears that the general thinking and perception

of the athletic directors is that the certification program contributes little towards helping institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules.

The conference commissioners were fairly consistent in their opinions that the program does not help institutions avoid NCAA violations. Four did not think it offers much help, although one did think that it sets up the systems that may help avoid violations in the future. One commissioner stated that the program had been useful in tying athletics to university's missions and goals but had not had any real impact on compliance with NCAA rules. He went on to add that compliance was totally outside the need for the certification program and was an area in which every institution had made significant investments.

The responses from the conference commissioners indicate that they do not think there is much of a contribution from the certification program towards helping institutions avoid NCAA violations. There may be some other benefits to the certification program, but they feel those are benefits outside of the compliance and enforcement areas.

The NCAA representative offered the opinion that the program does help institutions avoid NCAA rules violations.

He defended this perception because the certification program asks that procedures be in place to identify problems. "There were occasions where through the substantive process institutions discovered violations, but more importantly it is an examination or a refinement of procedures that in the future will discover potential problems," he stated. His position seems to point to the need for establishing sound operating procedures in response to the operating principles in the certification program which in turn would help discover potential problems that could be dealt with in an early time frame.

The analysis of the answers from the presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification program provides a general point of view that the certification program does not contribute greatly to helping institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules. There were, however, some thoughts that the program can help if institutions take it seriously and do a good job of documenting their processes and procedures in order to get a early warning signal of potential problems. Also, as one president pointed out, the certification program is not meant to be used as a compliance and enforcement program, but rather a review of

how well institutions operate their athletic programs in relation to the operating principles as stated in the certification program.

Research Question Five

Does the certification program help identify weaknesses or areas that need improvement which would not be discovered if the certification program had not been implemented?

This is one question for which there was virtually a unanimous opinion from the respondents. They clearly indicated that weaknesses and areas needing improvement are identified because of the certification process which would not have been identified if the program had not been put in place. Four presidents answered with a definite yes and one answered that without the certification program a number of institutions would not have made the effort to find out areas that need correction.

As one president stated, "It has caused universities to ask some questions and answer some questions that they may not have been answering before." He further noted that he didn't think those in athletics are bad people, but they just didn't answer the questions if no one asked. Another president pointed out that he had not observed one of the

certification processes that did not have recommendations for corrective action. Another president offered the following perspective on this question:

They might have been discovered, but they may have been swept under the rug. I think it has identified and brought into the open areas of this kind that scream for improvement. I think that absent the certification program, a number of institutions might not have made the effort to find out areas that need correction. Those that might know that something was amiss, might not necessarily put themselves under fire to correct in the same way if certification was not in place.

From the responses of the presidents it seems that they all think the program has helped identify weaknesses that would not have been identified without the implementation of the program.

All five of the athletic directors agreed that the program has helped identify weaknesses that would not necessarily have been identified otherwise. One also noted that although the program helps identify weaknesses, it can also be a tool that can identify program strong points as well.

From the conference commissioners there were four that responded that the program definitely has aided in identifying areas that need improvement. However, one was of the opinion that it has the potential to be helpful, but

he felt the program had fallen short in an area that he perceives to be the weakest aspect of intercollegiate athletics. He explained his position as follows:

I think it has potential, but in my opinion the area where this process could have done the most good and may have done the least good is in the area of detecting inappropriate concentrations of power and the breakdown of the chain of command vis-à-vis administrators and coaches. In fact, more coaches are going to boards and trustee members around athletic directors and presidents and basically running roughshod over systems. I'm not sure I've seen instances or evidence of this process being able to get at that problem.

This commissioner also addressed the issue of "values corruption" and offered the following insights:

I think the other thing this process has failed to get at is not only the issue of power corruption, but the issue of what I would describe or what I would call a level of values corruption to the point that we are so highly regulated, this process is about how much in conformance to the regulatory system we are; when in fact that same regulatory system leads people to believe that if they comply with the regulations then everything else that is not regulated is appropriate to do. In other words if it is not tied down—if it's not prohibited—then it must be OK when in fact you can't identify everything that's wrong. You need a conscious sometimes to stop you from doing things. This system I don't think has adequately—maybe no system of certification can—investigated whether or not the values are constructive and healthy.

As he states, possibly this program cannot get at the issue of constructive and healthy values. However, he makes a very resounding point that it's hard to regulate

every little action that a coach might ever take. At some point a person's conscious and values system should kick in such that he or she will do the "right thing" rather than just worrying about what the NCAA manual says is specifically a rules violation.

This concept would seem to parallel the thoughts of James J. Duderstadt, former president of the University of Michigan and author of Intercollegiate Athletics and the American University. He writes:

It seems that the key to integrity in athletic programs lies not in more rules. In fact, the complexity and confusion in the process by which we create and apply rules in intercollegiate athletics is part of the problem. The rules have become so complex, so encumbered with special interests, and in some cases so bent out of shape as to be unworkable. Instead, we need first to agree on some fundamental values that should characterize college sports (Duderstadt, 2000, p. 227).

The NCAA representative thought the program had definitely helped identify weaknesses that would not have been discovered if the program had not been implemented. He offered the following rationale for his answer:

With the level of specificity required in the self-study questions and the documentation that needed to be produced to answer those questions, we would never have gotten institutions to that level of detail without the program. If you just used the old checklist like the ISSG-old institutional self-study-if you went through that checklist it would have said "do you have a policy for?" and you would have checked

it and moved on to the next one. But once you have to open up the policy and examine its content and examine whether its covering the areas that need to be covered--through that process you discover those gaps.

The analysis of the answers from the presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA staff member in charge of the certification process indicates that the program does help identify weaknesses and areas needing improvement that might not have been discovered otherwise. One conference commissioner offered a dissenting opinion in that he thought the program did not adequately assess the breakdowns in the reporting chain of commands and the lack of assessment of value systems. However, he did acknowledge that maybe no system can adequately investigate whether values are constructive and healthy.

Research Question 6

Do the benefits of the certification program justify the financial and staffing resources that must be committed to conduct the study, prepare the report, and accommodate the peer-reviewers?

There was not overall agreement that the benefits of the program are worth the costs. Three of the five presidents were of the opinion that the benefits are worth

the costs. One stated that he wasn't sure, but that he saw no difference in this program from SACS or other accreditations. One president was adamant that the benefits do not justify the costs and stated that it is a very expensive and time consuming process that has limited results.

One president who thought the benefits are worthwhile noted that some who have criticized the costs of the program are looking at it from a very narrow point of view. "If you look at it from the point of person hours that are needed to put together the self-study report, then the costs appear very high," he said. He added however, that one could use that criticism of any project that the university undertakes including its periodic regional accreditation self-study.

Another president offered the same opinion and elaborated as follows:

My basic answer is yes, the good that comes out of it justifies the costs. I don't have an argument with that. Sometimes folks complain about costs because they don't have anything better to complain about. Whether they have a budget of \$40 million or \$1 billion, institutions spend money for various purposes. Institutions complain about the costs of complying with accreditation requirements for law, for dentistry, for medicine, and a whole series of them. I get a little weary of those kind of comments because you're going to be doing something with your time and

in the case of athletics, I think it's a false complaint. Most of those involved are going to be working on some blooming committee anyway. Higher education is noted for its committees. I think the time you spend on this is as well justified as time spent on others. Most athletic programs spend all kinds of money for all sorts of good purposes and they don't usually complain a lot about it. If you can afford an athletics program, you can afford the costs of a self-study and the costs of hosting a visiting team.

This line of reasoning was similar to another president who thought the costs of the program were not out of line considering the gains that have been made. He did acknowledge the program is expensive, but not out of proportion with the following comments:

It's not a cheap program. I will agree with that, although institutions have found creative ways for absorbing some of those costs by generally taking it out of the hides of the people. In that sense the cost is a hidden cost. You are just exploiting the people, but colleges and universities do that all the time and do it very well. I think that given the overall cost of athletics, the cost of certification is probably not out of proportion here. I guess I think personally the gains have been worth the investment of the funds and the investment of time.

Although one president felt strongly that the program is too expensive for the benefits received, it appears that the general feeling of the presidents is that the program is cost effective. One president wasn't sure, but he stated that he thought this program is as cost effective as any other accreditation type program.

The five athletic directors varied somewhat on their opinions about this question. Two thought the costs were in line with the benefits. One noted that he wasn't sure about the costs, but that he thought the process was something that needed to be done. Another stated that he wasn't sure, but he felt the amount being spent is more than was originally anticipated and another stated that he thought cost is a valid criticism.

The athletic director who thought the costs are more than originally expected explained his position as follows:

Many times we have to spend a lot of money to justify what we're doing. This is certainly one of those cases. The amount of money that is being spent on certification for travel and peer-review teams is really more than was originally anticipated. When you take the amount of money that the NCAA has spent at the national level on training seminars and the institutions having to fund the teams coming in--it's probably more than was initially planned. Eventually somebody has to pay and usually it's the institutions.

The athletic director who stated that cost is a valid criticism felt that a better use of the money would be for a compliance audit. "A good audit for compliance with rules would probably do as much good as certification in terms of getting at whether good controls are in place and would be less expensive," he said.

An analysis of the opinions of the athletic directors indicates divided thoughts on the benefits of the certification program in relation to the costs. Two thought the program had been worth the costs, one who wasn't sure nevertheless thought the program was something that should be done, and two generally thought that cost was a valid concern and was more than originally anticipated. No general consensus was noted from the athletic directors.

Only one conference commissioner deemed the benefits and costs to be compatible. He couched this response in relationship to other endeavors in athletics as he said, "The costs associated with this are probably in line with some of the other warm and fuzzy things that we've wrapped our arms around in recent years." He did, however, think that institutional costs have been way overstated and that the benefits of the certification program will probably be best judged after future rotations.

Two commissioners thought that the benefits of the process have not been worth the costs. As one commissioner stated, "I've been told by some of our schools in this conference that it's more expensive to go through this

process than it is through a regular accreditation process and that's not what it started out to be."

Another commissioner felt very strongly that the costs have been more than the benefits gained and offered the following comments:

The cost is enormous. The real cost has never been calculated. If you took an institution in my league and put the value on man hours of individuals you would find that the cost of this process is absolutely extraordinary. Now that is over and above any direct costs the NCAA might have in staffing, putting together meetings, and those kinds of things. When you multiply the cost across all the 300 plus institutions in Division I, that simple piece of legislation creates an incredible cost. I don't know enough about how accreditation works, but from the NCAA standpoint I think we have to be more sensitive to the cost issue.

Another commissioner wasn't sure about the costs versus benefits, but thought most people would think the cost has been more than the benefits. However, he did think the project was worthy and offered these observations:

I think that to begin with it was a worthy subject for legislative or policy discussion. Having gone through the process, I think it was worthwhile to experiment with. Having experimented with it, most people would probably say the cost is more than the benefit derived. Therefore, there has been an adjustment from a five year to a ten year plan. I think at that juncture you may get more from it. The start-up costs are always great, especially compared to the net benefit.

Similar to the previous commissioner, he seems to believe that the real picture of the value of the program in relation to the costs of it can be better judged after future cycles of the program have been completed.

One commissioner who wasn't sure about the level of costs being incurred did think the program should be afforded the same level of support as other accreditation type activities. "I would put athletics in its endeavor to Division I institutions on the same level of importance as about any other program that you have including a law school or professional school because there is so much to be gained or lost by what your athletics program does in terms of its integrity," he said. He went on to add that in his opinion the loudest complaints have come from the institutions that can best afford the costs. "I think they don't like the program period and are trying to use this as a way to get rid of it," he stated.

The analysis of the responses from the conference commissioners presents several differing ideas on the value of the certification program in relation to the costs. There seemed to be some sentiment that the program is costing more than was originally expected and a general

wait and see attitude as to how things go with the next cycle of reviews.

The NCAA representative felt strongly that the program is worth the costs as he offered the following thoughts:

We spend a lot of money on intercollegiate athletics and when I hear people saying it cost them a \$100,000--and you hear a lot of different totals--quite candidly I don't have a lot of sympathy for that argument. I guess I would have more sympathy if you talk about the human resource hours put in, but here again as a first time program and a one in five year cycle and now a one in ten, it seems to me that the costs are justified given the outcomes and given comparison expenditures for other issues. I've always used the analogy that we have people on our campuses two or three deep that record every spike that every volleyball player makes in their entire career--every game, set and match. Therefore, to have people look at how we govern our programs, whether we have academic and fiscal integrity--as I kind of weigh those things out, I'm OK with resources being put forward to look at how we govern our programs.

It seems that in his opinion this program is just as important as anything else that institutions are more than willing to financially support and that the costs are justified given the outcomes of this program.

An analysis of the responses to this question did not provide a prevailing opinion of the benefits of the certification program in relation to the costs. There were some who thought the program is definitely too costly, while others thought the cost is in line with other

institutional and intercollegiate athletic expenditures. It does appear that there is enough negative sentiment concerning the costs of this program that it is an issue that requires continuing review and scrutiny by the NCAA and its member institutions. Possibly the move to a ten year cycle will alleviate some of the concerns and complaints. Also, as mentioned by several respondents, the true value of this program may not be evident until several cycles have been completed.

Research Question Seven

Is there an appropriate level of cooperation between the NCAA and the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) regarding the certification process?

In 1994 the NCAA and SACS entered into an agreement to conduct joint certification and accreditation reviews when requested by the institution. No other regional accrediting agency has an agreement for coordinating the processes.

Staff members for SACS indicated that there were several reasons that the southern association had been approached initially to work jointly with the NCAA. First

and foremost was the fact that SACS was (and still is) the only regional accrediting association in which intercollegiate athletics is included in the standards that are reviewed as part of the accreditation process.

Secondly, the southern region includes approximately 40 percent of the NCAA Division I institutions. The NCAA thought that if it could be successful in the southern region, then this would be a huge step forward in bringing the certification process together with institutional accreditation programs nationwide.

Also, several key presidents involved with development of the certification program were from institutions in the southern region. These presidents thought that much of the criteria used by SACS would be helpful in the NCAA Certification Program and encouraged staff members to work with SACS. As one SACS staff member stated, "When they were developing their system, they were always pumping us; like how do you select committee members, what are the criteria, how do you write up a report, why do you use the word recommendation." Therefore, the processes used by the NCAA have taken on many similarities of those used by SACS.

According to SACS staff, the original agreement between SACS and the NCAA called for "joint" visits. The

concept was that there would be one team made of SACS evaluators and NCAA evaluators meeting together and producing one common report. However, that concept just didn't work. For one thing the SACS process begins over nine months before the NCAA even does an orientation. The use of the term "joint" visit was abandoned three years ago with the "concurrent" visit being the term used in its place.

SACS staff noted that the concurrent process had added some logistical problems as far as having to coordinate campus visits with another organization. However, the campus benefits because SACS has agreed to use the NCAA self-study to satisfy its requirements and doesn't require a separate self-study be done for SACS. As far as criteria, the major differences are that SACS has more requirements in the area of finances and has absolutely no requirements in the areas of compliance and gender equity which receive so much emphasis by the NCAA.

The chair of the NCAA peer-review team is always a college or university president. SACS usually calls on that person to help out on other areas during the visit. The following explanation of this joint duty was provided by a SACS staff member:

That person would typically do some work with our committee on organization and administration on some of our requirements in addition to the NCAA work. That person would actually be a working member of our team and it would enable us not to have a president on the team. That person would meet with our team when we have our executive meetings and report what they're finding in athletics and what he or she is finding in the area of the organization and administration requirements that we have.

This double duty allows the SACS committee to get even better analysis information on athletics because the NCAA team is focused only on that area of the institution rather than the broader based approach SACS has to use in looking at the entire institution.

SACS staff members commented that they have the complete support of the presidents on this and felt that overall the process has been pretty successful. When discussing weaknesses in the concurrent program one SACS staff member offered the following comments:

I think the really big thing is there are no point people for this. I think that's problematic because of turnover of staff and the lack of understanding of what was intended in the beginning. The other thing is that early on there was more cooperation in the selection of chairs and we used to have approval of chairs. Now we just kind of get chairs. Usually they're pretty good, but sometimes they just don't match the school at all. For our purposes, the president has to be a fairly good match for that school. We try to get our team members from comparable institutions because they have to look at things where there has to be kind of an understanding, but the NCAA doesn't do that. That's not a criticism,

it's just their way of doing it. I think staff communications on both parties is an issue. We also need to look at the contract and renegotiate it to reflect the way we are doing business now. Three years ago our council passed the fact that these would be "concurrent" visits and not "joint" visits. The NCAA agreed with that, but you're not going to see that in the contract.

In summary, it appears that the SACS staff members feel that the program has made progress since the original agreement was put in place and that generally presidents support the program. However, as the joint process has evolved into the concurrent process, some updating of the formal agreement should be done and the program could be improved with better staff communications from both organizations.

The presidents were generally supportive of the joint or concurrent process. Three presidents stated that the level of cooperation between SACS and the NCAA had been good. One president stated that he was in favor of moving the whole certification process under the responsibility of the accrediting agencies. Another president had little knowledge of the level of cooperation, but felt like the joint visit to his campus didn't lessen the reporting or the staffing time requirements. One president whose campus had a joint visit stated:

I think the cooperation has been very good. My university went through a joint review and it was very good for us because it allowed us to avoid going through two different visits, since they came and did the campus review in the same time frame. It saved time and was very well done. I would encourage more schools to take advantage of that opportunity.

Another president offered a similar view on the level of cooperation with the following comments:

My observation is there was a good deal of conversation and coordination with SACS leadership and NCAA leadership. I find that when teams go together, SACS pretty well says you do your thing and we will accept your report to meet our requirements. Very frankly, if the NCAA has selected well, those five people have more time and more understanding and can do that job better than the typical SACS committee member would.

Another president stated that the process works well when a coordinated visit takes place. He also expressed surprise the other regional accrediting agencies have not followed this lead as he offered the following thoughts:

If the school under review wants to bring these two bodies together, I think the two organizations work well together. I've noticed at least on the teams I've been associated with there's almost a deferring by the SACS people to the NCAA questions which are more elaborate and detailed. What has really surprised me is that the other regional accrediting groups have not come forward. Part of that may be that with the accrediting criteria of the other regions, there aren't many that focus on athletics. They're just not interested yet and haven't expanded into that area.

In summary, although one president didn't think the coordinated visit helped reduce any staff time or reporting requirements, it appears that there was general agreement among the presidents that the level of cooperation between SACS and the NCAA is good and has had positive results.

Two athletic directors thought the joint process had been positive, while three had not been involved in a joint process and were not sure how well they worked. One who had a joint visit offered the following thoughts:

In our case it was good. What happened, it gave SACS a better report about athletics than it had gotten in the past. SACS athletic stuff wasn't very much so I think SACS benefited more than the NCAA. It made sense to do them together in our case just because the same people were working on the reports.

The other athletic director who spoke positively about the joint review process did have some suggestions for improvement. "There could have been more cooperation and commonality," he said. He did note that their review was one of the early visits in the first year of the program and improvements might have taken place since then.

One athletic director who had not been involved in a joint visit had some reservations about how the process would work. "Schools with small staffs may actually have more difficulty with a joint review because of the large

amount of coordination needed at one time," he said. He also noted a concern that what the NCAA wants and what SACS wants may be two different things and it might be difficult to eliminate some of the duplication required to satisfy both bodies.

In summary, three of the five athletic directors had not had any experience with a joint review and were not sure how well it would work. One even was afraid it would be more difficult at his institution. Two had noted positive experiences with one suggesting that there was a need for better cooperation and coordination as was also suggested by a SACS staff member.

The conference commissioners had not had much involvement in the joint visit issue. Two commissioners stated that to their knowledge no institutions in their conferences had participated in a joint review. Another thought several schools in his conference had, but he really wasn't sure how well it worked.

Another commissioner thought institutions that had been involved in joint visits, might not want to in the next cycle and offered the following comments:

I think the NCAA and the committee were interested in trying to make it happen. But I believe institutions were starting to feel like a separate effort was

better for them because it started to get convoluted. I don't know for sure, but it seems to me that some of the institutions that have gone through it have thought they would rather do it separately next time.

The fifth commissioner had a different perspective. He thought that maybe keeping the two reviews separate provides a checks and balances system and explained his thoughts as follows:

I initially was looking at it from the campus perspective of time management and management of resources. But over the years, I've wondered if maybe they're not a check and balance to each other and maybe SACS validates the NCAA process. I have concerns that the peer-review teams skewed the NCAA certification in a direction which I don't see happening with SACS. So maybe one can be a check to the other.

The NCAA representative thought there was a good working relationship with SACS, but felt that too few schools are participating as he stated:

I think that SACS has been good for us to work with and obviously I think we have had a good relationship. Now our schools have not taken advantage of the ability to have a joint visit as much as either of us would like and I think that may just be due to what's perceived as a more burdened process to have two going on at the same time. Are we working OK with SACS? Yeah, I think the relationship is OK. Are schools taking advantage of it fully? No, but I think the reasons are that there is just too much going on at one time.

A number of differing opinions and outlooks were offered by the participants when discussing the level of

cooperation between the NCAA and SACS in conducting joint reviews. Although SACS staff members refer to the process as "concurrent" reviews, no one from the institutions or the conference offices used that term. It may take another cycle of reviews to orient those involved to the new terminology.

Differing ideas on the value of the joint process seems to be prevalent. It appears that additional coordination between NCAA and SACS staff would improve the process, especially if more continuity can be achieved in the NCAA staff assigned to this project. More success stories will likely be required before other regional accrediting agencies move to collaborate with the NCAA. Also, if other regions do not move to include intercollegiate athletics as part of their accreditation criteria, then there is little need on their part to partner with the NCAA.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the study, findings as a result of the analysis of the information obtained during the study, recommendations that are offered as a result of the findings, suggestions for further research and a conclusion.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NCAA Certification Program during its first cycle of implementation at Division I institutions and the coordination efforts between the NCAA and the regional accrediting agencies. The evaluation was accomplished by conducting interviews with those in leadership positions and obtaining their opinions and observations about the certification process. Included were presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, NCAA staff, and SACS staff.

The NCAA Certification Program is intended to at least cause each Division I institution to conduct an in-depth self-evaluation and open its affairs to the university community and to the public. This self-evaluation is then subjected to a review by a peer-review team. The peer-review team assesses whether the institution has met the standards established by the NCAA in the areas of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare and sportsmanship.

Open and candid discussions with leaders who participated in this study revealed both positives and negatives of the program through its first cycle, with the general sentiment being that it was a worthy undertaking. The findings from this study are summarized in the following section.

Findings

1. The NCAA certification program has done little to improve the perception of intercollegiate athletics in the university community or the general public. The general consensus of the leaders who participated in this study was that few outside the athletic community are aware of this program at all. The exception would be those faculty and

students who were directly involved in the process as campus committee members. It was noted that most of what people know about athletics is what they get from the media and the media hasn't considered this program as being very newsworthy for the public.

2. The major strength of the program that was identified is the campus self-study. This opening of the athletic doors to the larger university community was seen as being a significant strength. It causes institutions to document their activities and provides a cross institutional look at athletics and where it fits in, its needs, and its challenges.

3. There were three prevailing weaknesses that were identified by the participants in this study as follows:

- Peer-reviewers were inconsistent in how issues were addressed from one institution to another.

Institutions in the same conference felt that they were doing things just like a sister institution and yet were treated differently in the peer-review process. It was felt that peer-reviewers had not received adequate training and that the teams varied

to a point that some institutions received better service than others.

- Somewhat related to the above weakness, was the belief that often peer-reviewers had their own personal agendas and were using the certification process as a means to further those agendas. It was noted that some peer-reviewers come to campus and only want to look at one thing because that's the one thing they have an interest in.
- The third prevailing weakness noted was that there is too much emphasis on gender equity. It was thought that the emphasis on gender equity and Title IX had gone well beyond the intent of the member institutions when this program was approved for implementation.

4. The program has contributed to improvement in the major operating principles of governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity, welfare, and sportsmanship. This was attributed mainly to the requirement that processes and procedures be documented for the review teams. The intense scrutiny that an institution receives from the visiting teams was noted as

being an incentive to "get your house in order" and make improvements where needed.

5. The program was not seen as affording much assistance in helping institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules. However, it was noted that this should not necessarily be looked upon as a negative, since the program is not really meant to look at compliance or enforcement.

6. The program is seen as helping institutions identify weaknesses or areas needing improvement that would not have been discovered if the program had not been put in place. It was noted that the program causes institutions to look at themselves and athletic programs in a way they had not done before.

7. A consensus was not reached on whether the costs of the program are worth the benefits. Some leaders thought the program is too costly, while others thought the costs are in line with other institutional and intercollegiate athletic expenditures. There were enough negative sentiments expressed that this issue will need continuing review and scrutiny by the NCAA and the institutions.

8. Only the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has entered into a

formal agreement with the NCAA for coordinating joint accreditation and certification reviews. The original concept of "joint" visits did not work and the new term is "concurrent" visit. Language in the SACS and NCAA agreement has not been updated to reflect the current practice. It was generally agreed that the level of cooperation between SACS and the NCAA has been good, but there were differing ideas on the value of the concurrent process. One possible problem has been extensive turnover at the NCAA in this area of responsibility which has hurt continuity of the program. Also, SACS staff would like to have more input on who is assigned to chair the NCAA peer-review teams when a concurrent visit is requested by the institution.

Recommendations

For Division I Institutions

1. Institutions should do more to "get the word out" to faculty, students and the general public about certification. It was generally agreed that only those directly involved in the certification committee knew much about the program. The public hears very little good about what happens in intercollegiate athletics. It could be a

great benefit to let more than those on the athletic inner circle know that the institution is serious about looking at its own operations through a comprehensive self-study and then having that process reviewed by an outside group of peer-reviewers.

2. More institutions should seek a concurrent study from the NCAA and SACS. Institutions should use the concurrent process to reduce time and resource commitments and still meet the objectives and requirements of both certification and accreditation.

For the NCAA

1. The NCAA, as well as the institutions, should do more to publicize the certification program. This program was the centerpiece of the Knight Commission's report, but most of the general public, as well as faculty and students, apparently have little knowledge of the program. The term accreditation has been widely used for many years and most of the public has some idea of what it means if an institution is accredited. However, certification is a relatively new term that as yet does not carry the same weight as accreditation.

2. The NCAA should continue to work on revising and improving its peer-reviewer training program. The inconsistency of peer-reviewers was often cited as a weakness of the first cycle. Somewhat related to this issue is impressing on peer-reviewers to remain objective and not just focus on some particular personal agenda item.

3. An obviously sensitive area is the issue of gender equity and the role of certification in reviewing this requirement. While certainly one of the more important issues facing institutions and the NCAA, special guidance should be offered the peer-review teams in dealing with this issue. Title IX is a legal requirement, but peer-review teams are not OCR officials and federal investigators. NCAA staff participating in the peer-review site visit may need to offer more direct input in reviewing this area.

4. Currently, the certification program is only applicable to Division I institutions. The NCAA should consider requiring this program for Divisions II and III. Opposition from Divisions II and III in the past has centered on the costs of the program. With the move to a ten year cycle rather than five years, the other two divisions might find the requirement more acceptable.

5. It was a general consensus that the certification program does little to help institutions avoid NCAA rules violations. Therefore, the NCAA should evaluate how the program could be improved in order to be a better tool to help institutions avoid NCAA violations.

6. The NCAA should update its agreement with SACS to reflect the current practice of concurrent visits rather than joint visits. Also, efforts should be made to have more staff continuity for personnel assigned to coordinating the concurrent visits. SACS should also be consulted on the certification peer-review team chairpersons so that there is agreement that the individual is from an institution similar to the one being evaluated.

For SACS

1. The Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, should encourage more of the institutions in the southern region to use the concurrent process. Every effort should be made to consolidate the work required for the NCAA self-study and the requirements that must be met for SACS accreditation.

2. The agreement with the NCAA should be updated to reflect the current actual practice of concurrent visits

rather than the term "joint visits" which was in the original agreement and has not been amended to reflect current actual practice.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. The processes adopted in the certification program were modeled after those of the southern regional accrediting agency. A study could be undertaken to compare the NCAA certification program to the SACS regional accreditation processes and identify the strengths and weaknesses of both programs. An objective of such a study could be to determine what are the "best practices" from the two different approaches which could be of benefit to both agencies.

2. A case study could be undertaken at an institution to determine the actual total costs associated with conducting the self-study for certification. A number of officials have voiced concerns about the costs of the program, but actual costs are not easily obtainable other than the direct costs associated with the peer-review visit. Detailed information on the value of committee and staff support time has not been documented.

3. An assessment could be done comparing the cases of major infractions for five years prior to the certification with the number of cases of major infractions for the five years of the first cycle. Although certification was not meant to be an enforcement program, one of its basic purposes is "to ensure the NCAA's fundamental commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics" (NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook, 2000, p. 7). To that end, an analysis of trends in major infractions since the implementation of the certification program would be valuable information for those in leadership and decision making roles relative to intercollegiate athletics.

4. The certification program is currently not a requirement for institutions that are members of NCAA Divisions II and III. Institutions in these two divisions have resisted implementation of the certification program citing costs of the program as the main reason for not approving the program at their levels. A study focusing on Divisions II and III could be done in order to assess the adequacy of this reluctance to implement the program.

Conclusion

As this study was reaching its conclusion, the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics had been reconvened to determine what progress had been made in the major reforms recommended by the commission nearly a decade ago. In explaining this action, Hodding Carter III, the Knight Foundation's current president stated, "What motivates the commission is clear evidence of substantial progress outlined in the final reports and evidence of disturbing, leftover issues, and even more intense ones than those explored at the time. Most notably the flood of money that has risen since the first edition of the Knight Commission convened. That has become a force whose power influences a number of aspects of intercollegiate athletics" (Suggs, June 26, 2000, p. A45).

The commercialization aspects of intercollegiate athletics appear to be as problematic for colleges and universities as they have been for most of the history of collegiate sports. "The commercial aspect of college sports has become even more pervasive since the commission published its reports," said William C. Friday, former president of The University of North Carolina, and chairman

of both the original and current Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. "No one who has any interest in college sports can fail to see the power of money—it's greater, much greater than it's ever been. In my opinion, it's the No. 1 problem college sports has," he added (Suggs, June 26, 2000, p. A45).

At its first meeting in September 2000, the commission heard from NCAA staff that the certification process put in place as a result of the Knight Commission's earlier recommendations has forced colleges to put in place policies on gender equity and institutional responsibility for athletics. However, alarming news was presented concerning the revenues and expenses of athletic programs. According to Mr. Jim Isch, NCAA Vice President for Finance and Administration, athletic revenues had increased 60 percent since 1993 while expenses had increased 70 percent during this same period. Even more alarming was that capital costs had gone up 260 percent and only 25 percent of Division I institutions take in more than they spend on athletics (Suggs, Sept. 8, 2000).

Many and varied recommendations for reform have been discussed by the reconstituted commission. Dr. James Duderstadt, former president of The University of Michigan,

doesn't think the NCAA can reform college sports. "The groups that oversee sports, such as the National Collegiate Athletics Association, have too much at stake in the current system to reform it," he told the commission (Suggs, October 27, 2000, p. A54). He suggested that a prestigious academic association, such as the Association of American Universities, should take an active role in cleaning up college sports.

Another approach was suggested by Dr. Myles Brand, president of Indiana University, who had been through his own sea of athletic controversy in the past year after he had fired his legendary-yet controversial-basketball coach, Bobby Knight. His suggestion was to unite the six major conferences to effect reform as he stated:

The NCAA is limited in its ability to make serious changes because its membership is so diverse. The American Council on Education cannot take a leadership role in sports for the same reason, while the American Association of Universities is too small to effect change in big-time sports. Thus, the leaders of the Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-10, and Southeastern Conferences should unite around common goals to preserve college sports while trying to improve problems like athletes' graduation rates (Suggs, Feb. 2, 2001, p. A41).

Cedric Dempsey, NCAA president, expressed his concern with finding a way to curb the "arms race" in spending on facilities and coaches salaries that is causing athletic

budgets to skyrocket. He suggested that giving colleges greater financial authority over athletics-department spending and educating their administrators on how to manage it would bring some sanity to the continuing arms race (Suggs, January 19, 2001).

Roy Kramer, commissioner of the Southeastern Conference, was asked his opinion of Mr. Dempsey's recommendation. "There's the philosophical and there's the real world. It's a lot easier to make speeches about the philosophical world," he said (Suggs, January 19, 2001, p. A37). His response indicated little confidence in this approach as a means of slowing athletic spending.

The work of the reconvened Knight Commission had not been finished as of the conclusion of this study. Many issues are being studied by the commission such as finances, graduation rates, gambling, coaches' outside income, and demands on student-athletes' time for practice and actual competition. Obviously, much still remains to be done to bring about total reform in intercollegiate athletics.

NCAA certification was a product of the first Knight Commission's recommendations in the early 1990s. It was deemed important enough to continue after completing the

first five-year cycle. Hopefully, the program will prove over the long-term to be a reform tool that helps institutions identify and solve the complex problems that have plagued intercollegiate athletics for many decades.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

List of Participants

Division I Conference Commissioners

Mr. Roy Kramer
Commissioner
Southeastern Conference

Mr. Dan Beebe
Commissioner
Ohio Valley Conference
Former Member of NCAA Certification Committee

Mr. Wright Waters
Commissioner
Sunbelt Conference

Mr. Michael L. Slive
Commissioner
Conference USA

Mr. Jim Delaney
Commissioner
Big Ten Conference

Division I Presidents/Chancellors

Dr. Joe Johnson
President Emeritus
University of Tennessee

Dr. James E. Walker
President
Middle Tennessee State University
Current Chairman of NCAA Certification Committee

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Appendix A (cont.)

Dr. Fred Obear
Retired Chancellor
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Member of Original NCAA Certification Committee

Dr. Lane Rawlins
President
University of Memphis

Dr. Angelo Volpe
President
Tennessee Technological University

Division I Athletic Directors

Mr. Doug Dickey
Director of Athletics
University of Tennessee

Mr. Gene Bartow
Director of Athletics
University of Alabama Birmingham

Mr. Lee Fowler
Director of Athletics
Middle Tennessee State University

Mr. Oval Jaynes
Director of Athletics
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Dr. David Larrimore
Director of Athletics
Tennessee Technological University

continued on next page

Appendix A (cont.)

Other Relevant Sources

Dr. John Thelin
Professor, Department of Education Policy Studies
University of Kentucky

Mr. Kevin Lennon
Vice President for Membership Services
National Collegiate Athletic Association

Two Staff Members
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Opening General Question:

What is your general impression of the NCAA Athletic Certification Program?

Specific Questions to be Used if Not Addressed in Answer to General Question:

1. The NCAA Certification Program has been widely publicized in the athletic community. However, do you think the self-study and peer-review program has led to an improved perception of intercollegiate athletics in the eyes of faculty, students, alumni, and fans?
2. Do you think the certification program has contributed to improvement in athletic governance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and commitment to equity?
3. Do you think the certification program helps identify weaknesses or areas that need improvement that would not be discovered if the program had not been implemented?
4. Do you think this program helps institutions avoid violations of NCAA rules?
5. Critics have complained that the costs of this program do not justify the benefits. Do you think the benefits justify the financial resources that must be committed to conduct the study, prepare the report, and accommodate the peer-reviewers?
6. What is your impression of the level of cooperation between the NCAA and SACS in avoiding duplicative work on self-studies?

continued on next page

Appendix B (cont.)

7. Some athletic officials have criticized the process as focusing undue pressure on gender equity issues and support for minority student-athletes? Do you think this is a valid concern for the program?
8. The initial program was set up to have the self-study completed every five years. After the first cycle this interval was extended to ten years. Do you think this is the proper time period for conducting the studies?
9. What do you see as strengths of the certification program?
10. What do you see as the weaknesses of the program?
11. Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the current program?

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

NCAA Athletics Certification Program

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the NCAA Athletics Certification Program in its early years of implementation. Your participation in this research will involve an interview that will last approximately one hour.

Key to this evaluation will be the opinions and observations about the certification process from those in leadership positions such as presidents, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and NCAA staff. It is also a purpose of the study to evaluate the coordination efforts of the NCAA and the regional accrediting agencies. This study may have no personal benefits to you. However, participation in the study will benefit higher education as a whole by assisting in the gathering of this important information. Participants in this study will not be exposed to risks that are greater than that of daily life.

As a participant, your identity and office you represent will be kept confidential unless you give your permission to be identified. Your agreement to participate in this study will be through signing and returning one of the enclosed Consent Forms. Confidentiality of your responses during the interview will also be maintained by returning one of the Consent Forms in the envelope provided. You may keep the second Consent Form for your records. Confidentiality of the material from the interview will be maintained by limiting access to the interview information to the researcher. The results of this study will be presented as part of my doctoral dissertation. The signed Consent Forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Leadership Studies Unit at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for a period of three years, after which they will be destroyed. The interview tapes and transcriptions will be stored in a locked cabinet, while not being interpreted or transcribed. After completion of the transcriptions, the interview tapes will be destroyed. After completion of the study, the transcriptions will be

destroyed. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Choosing not to participate will have no adverse effects. You may withdraw at any point during the study without penalty. If you have questions about the research, either now or later, please contact Bob Adams, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 1900, Nashville, TN 37243 or call 615-741-7575 (work). If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Compliance Section of the University of Tennessee Office of Research at 423-974-3466.

I have read and understand the explanation of this study and agree to participate.

Name (Please Print)

Date

Signature

Contact Phone number

I agree to have my name and office identified with my transcript.

Signature

Appendix D**FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS**

404 James Robertson Parkway
Parkway Towers, Suite 1900
Nashville, TN 37243
January 22, 2001

(Interviewee)
(Organization)
(Address)

Dear (Name of Participant)

Enclosed is a transcript of the interview you assisted me with on (date) concerning my dissertation research related to the NCAA certification program. I am requesting that you review the transcript and advise if you note that I have misstated any of your comments. This is a quality control measure I am employing to verify the accuracy and validity of the information I am using in summarizing the results of the interviews.

Thank you so much for assisting me with this project and offering your candid comments.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Adams
Ed.D Candidate
University of Tennessee

enclosure

Appendix E**AUDITOR AGREEMENT LETTER**

404 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
February 23, 2001

Mr. Alan Thomas, Controller
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as the auditor for my dissertation project. As we have discussed, this is an important component in the establishment of trustworthiness for this project. I am forwarding with this letter the following documents and information: audio tapes of interviews and transcriptions, researcher's notes and journal, results of the unitization and categorization process, and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 from this study.

After you establish familiarity with the above components, please address the following points:

- Can audibility of the data be confirmed? Is the data complete, comprehensive and useful?
- Can confirmability be established? Are findings grounded in collected data? Is there any evidence of researcher bias in the findings?
- Can dependability be established? Was the concept of purposeful sampling followed?

Again, thank you for agreeing to help me with this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have regarding this process.

Sincerely,

Robert H. Adams
Ed.D Candidate
University of Tennessee

Appendix F**AUDITOR OPINION LETTER**

**Finance Office
105 Cope Building
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132**

March 9, 2001

Dear Mr. Adams:

I have reviewed the information you furnished me concerning the supporting documentation for your dissertation research. In regard to the specific items you requested that I review, the following is provided:

- Can audibility of the data be confirmed? Is the data complete, comprehensive, and useful?

On a sample basis, I reviewed and listened to the audio tapes and compared to the typed transcriptions. The transcriptions were accurate and reflected what was recorded during the interviews. The transcriptions were complete, comprehensive, and in my opinion were useful in regard to the subject matter and the focus of this study.

- Can confirmability be established? Are findings grounded in collected data? Is there any evidence of bias in the findings?

I reviewed the transcriptions of the interviews and compared that information to the findings presented in the written document. Additionally, it was noted that the transcriptions had been returned to the participants for their review, thus supporting the validity and confirmability of information. The summarized findings were supported by information provided by the participants. I did not detect any evidence of bias in the findings.

- Can dependability be established? Was the concept of purposeful sampling followed?

In my opinion, dependability was established because the participants were knowledgeable about the issue being studied which also supports the concept of purposeful sampling because the participants selected were "information-rich" cases who knew a great deal about the NCAA Certification Program.

If any additional information is needed, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Alan R. Thomas
Controller

VITA

Robert Hunter Adams

Robert Hunter Adams was born September 5, 1950 in Clarksville, Tennessee. After graduating from public schools in Clarksville, he attended Austin Peay State University where he received an accounting degree in 1973. He earned an MBA from Middle Tennessee State University in 1978 and an Ed.S there in 1994. He is also a certified public accountant. He began doctoral studies at the University of Tennessee in the Fall of 1995 and received the doctoral degree in May 2001.

His professional career has been primarily in higher education finance. He has held various finance, budgeting, and accounting positions at Austin Peay State University, Middle Tennessee State University, and The Tennessee Board of Regents. He also served over 22 years as a finance officer in the Tennessee Army National Guard, retiring at the rank of Major.

He is presently the chief financial officer for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in Nashville, Tennessee where he coordinates all operating and capital funding for Tennessee public colleges and universities.