

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

ETHICS WITH REGARD TO COMPENSATION  
AND CURRENT NCAA POLICY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze former NCAA Division I football players' ethical perceptions of current NCAA policy, specifically concerning regulations governing compensation of the student athlete. This quantitative research study collected data using a 20-question survey instrument composed of demographic and Likert type questions. Statistical analysis determined the data failed to establish a statistically significant behavioral trend arguing either for or against current policies. However, data revealed a statistical difference between the opinions expressed by Caucasian alumni as compared to those of other ethnicities. The purpose of this study was to expose illegitimate processes within the NCAA in the hope of prompting change.

*Keywords: Ethics, NCAA, amateurism, compensation*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

## **Introduction**

On the afternoon of November 6, 1869 the sport world in the United States began a revolution. College sport came to fruition as Rutgers and Princeton played the first ever collegiate football game. College Field, New Brunswick, New Jersey hosted the historic event between the two universities, which led to a 6-4 victory for Rutgers (Richmond, 2015). This step-by-step revolution has culminated into the multi-billion-dollar enterprise known as inter-collegiate athletics and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Although the contest between Rutgers and Princeton paled in public attention compared with the more modern sport productions such as the 2016 College National Football Championship between the University of Alabama and Clemson University, that historic contest in New Jersey was equal in magnitude. It was the first step towards what American society today has become accustomed to with regard to official collegiate athletics (NCAA, 2015).

The NCAA was not involved in 1869 when Rutgers and Princeton competed on the football field; in fact, the NCAA was not established until 1906. Smith (2000) described the basic premise for the introduction of the NCAA from an early crew regatta between Harvard and Yale in 1905, when the need for regulation became apparent. This regatta was among the first to utilize commercial sponsorship. Unfortunately, the birth of corruption in collegiate athletics was also introduced. Harvard succumbed to temptation by obtaining services from a coxswain who was not a student, thus securing one of the first unfair advantages in collegiate sporting events (Smith).

In addition to the early corruption seen in collegiate sport, especially after the introduction of sponsorships, was the violent nature of a held competition nearly a century ago. One of the major reasons behind the establishment of regulations and the foundation of the NCAA involved President Theodore Roosevelt and his son, Theodore Roosevelt Jr. or “Ted”. In 1905 Ted was a member of the Harvard freshman football team playing for the championship, when according to some accounts, he was bruised and his nose broken (Klein, 2012). Ted was not the only injured, according to Chicago Tribune. The “death harvest” of the 1905 season resulted in 19 player deaths and 137 serious injuries (Klein, para. 5). The President intervened and added his voice to the 1905 movement to reform football. On March 31, 1906 the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States was formally established and later became known as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (Klein).

### **Purpose of the NCAA**

The NCAA, similar to other successful organizations, has continued to evolve to meet society’s current needs. The NCAA is composed of three major divisions governing student athletes throughout the nation, with its core purpose “to govern competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsman-like manner, and to integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that educational experience of student-athletes is paramount” (NCAA Strategic Plan, 2004, p. 3). A key aspect in this governance, as Lush (2015) highlighted from NCAA constitution, is to emphasize education and amateurism by stressing the athletes’ role in the student body and retaining a clear distinction between

intercollegiate athletics and professional sport. The goals of the NCAA are enforced throughout collegiate sport via rules and bylaws governing recruiting, eligibility, and academic standards throughout all three divisions.

The NCAA is a multifaceted non-profit organization composed of member institutions and their athletic programming. Participation is voluntary for athletes, schools, and conferences. If athletes and the member schools or conferences do not agree to the NCAA bylaws, then they cannot participate. According to Lush (2015) in 2013, the NCAA had 463,202 student athletes, and in 2014 over 1100 colleges and universities maintained a membership to participate. The NCAA awards more than \$10 million in scholarships and grants annually to student-athletes directly, this is in addition to the \$2.4 billion allocated to schools funding athletic scholarships. It provides over \$15 million in grant money in a joint venture with the Department of Defense to study concussion and head impact exposure (NCAA, 2015). The documented allocation of funds to a wide variety of amateur athletes and organizations supports the notion the NCAA is a stewardly organization and upholds the principles of a nonprofit organization (NCAA, 2004).

As a nonprofit organization, the NCAA has grown tremendously since its beginning in 1906. The NCAA generated \$871.6 million during fiscal year 2011-2012 of which 81% was derived from broadcast rights agreement with Turner/CBS Sports (NCAA, 2015). The NCAA also reported that the remaining revenues were derived from championship staging.

In a review of NCAA financial statements during 2012, Lush (2015) noted a distribution of 57% of revenue to Division I members, 9.8% distribution to Division I championships, 19.6% distribution to Division II, Division III, and other association-wide programs. A non-profit's success is mission fulfillment and the NCAA's mission is to support student athletes making them the center of all decisions in accordance with their mission statement (NCAA, 2015). Accordingly, the NCAA claims to put "our money where our mission is... supporting student athletes so they can be successful in the classroom and in life" (Long, 2013, p.142).

### **Amateurism**

As stressed by the NCAA, one of key component of its constitution is to maintain the distinction between intercollegiate athletics and professional sport. One example where this distinction became emphasized to the sport world, can be seen in the case of Jeremy Bloom and his collegiate experience. The case study of Jeremy Bloom is evidence of such. In 2002, Jeremy Bloom, a world champion freestyle moguls skier, Olympian, and Division I football player, showcased specific NCAA policies which significantly hindered him from competing as a skier and ultimately prevented him from participating on the University of Colorado football team. An issue arose when the University of Colorado petitioned the NCAA to waive its bylaw, "prohibiting a student-athlete from receiving money for advertisements and endorsements" (Sharp, 2004, p. 236). The NCAA ultimately declined the waiver, requiring Bloom to give up his endorsements, modeling, and media activities to compete in NCAA sanctioned sport,

even though all of those financial incentives supported Bloom and his personal endeavors on the mountain and allowed him to represent the United States in the 2002 and 2006 Olympics.

Decisions from the NCAA are derived from its definition of amateurism.

According to the NCAA bylaw 2.9, The principle of amateurism states:

Student-athletes shall be amateurs in an intercollegiate sport, and their participation should be motivated primarily by education and by the physical, mental and social benefits to be derived. Students' participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises. (NCAA, 2015, p.4).

Coupled with the notion of amateurism and the clear distinction between amateur athletics and professional sport is the concept of compensation. The NCAA's position is summed up by NCAA President Mark Emmert, "One thing that sets the fundamental tone is there's very few members and, virtually no university president thinks it's a good idea to convert student-athletes into paid employees" (ESPN, 2013, para. 9). Thus the NCAA governs student athlete compensation through two primary bylaws; 15.1 Maximum Limit on Financial Aid-Individual and 15.2.7 Employment,

15.1 Maximum Limit on Financial Aid-Individual states:

A student-athlete shall not be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics if he or she receives financial aid that exceeds the value of the cost of attendance as defined in Bylaw 15.02.2. A student-athlete may receive institutional financial aid

based on athletics ability (per Bylaw 15.02.4.2) and any other financial aid up to the value of his or her cost of attendance (NCAA, 2015, p. 190).

#### 15.2.7 Employment states:

Earnings from a student-athletes on or off campus employment that occurs at any time is exempt and is not counted in determining a student athlete's cost of attendance or in the institution's financial aid limitations, provided:

- a) The student-athlete's compensation does not include any remuneration for value or utility that the student athlete may have for the employer because of the publicity, reputation, fame or personal following that he or she has obtained because of athletic ability;
- b) The student-athlete is compensated only for work actually performed; and
- c) The student-athlete is compensated at a rate commensurate with the going rate in that locality for similar service. (NCAA, 2015, p. 193).

The importance of these two bylaws is highlighted by the claim the NCAA has violated antitrust law. The latest allegation stemmed from a claim that an artificial limitation was placed on student-athlete compensation (Goodwin, 2013, p.1). Goodwin made this claim based upon the 2006 *White v NCAA* case in which the plaintiff argued that in a free market, student athletes would receive up to the full cost of attendance. This case ultimately ended in a settlement, but according to Goodwin, the *White v NCAA* case was instrumental in increasing compensation for student-athletes, namely in the 2011 miscellaneous expense allowance increase of up to \$2000.

The need for some type of compensation reform was referred to by Meggyesy (2000) who indicated, “It is apparent that the present system of college revenue producing sports needs a radical change” (p.27). This author’s notion stemmed from research demonstrating how large institutions generate more revenue than the value of the standard scholarship at each institution. The researcher proposed a college sport system allowing a handful of selected institutions to operate legitimate professional football and basketball teams, with a major caveat that the athlete be given a variety of options as to how he or she will be compensated for athletic labor (Meggysey).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perceptions of Division I football alumni with respect to NCAA ethical conduct, specifically focusing on compensations of the student athlete. As previously stated, the NCAA as an organization receives and distributes the overwhelming majority of its resources to support its mission, however that will not be the focus of this study. Rather, this study will focus on governing policies affecting the student athlete, such as those which affected Jeremy Bloom. The end goal will be to determine whether these policies are perceived, or interpreted, as ethical. Participants in the study will determine what is ethical, in other words, what they perceive to be right and wrong.

In conducting a study on whether a policy is ethical it is important to take a step back and pose the question, what is an ethic? Ethics for the purpose of this study, shall be defined as the difference between right and wrong (Pojman, 2012). It is important to

remember, as Pasztor (2015) identified, “ethics is not religion...Religion essentially pertains only to those who choose to follow it. Ethics, on the other hand, pertains to everyone and we should expect ethical behavior from everyone, no matter the field or profession they may be in” (p. 31). Pasztor also pointed out that ethics is not necessarily the following of accepted norms - the very concept that constitutes the backbone of this study. Currently, student athletes are governed by NCAA bylaws regarding compensation. Questions posed by this investigation will explore whether or not NCAA governance regarding compensation is ethical and whether it should be modified.

The research study will inform general public knowledge by statistically analyzing the perceptions of former Division I football players from a quantitative approach. By surveying former players, and statistically analyzing responses, the ethics of policy and practice according to current NCAA guidelines will be assessed. In order for policy to be maintained or reconstituted, it is important to consider impressions of those who have been directly governed while competing within the organization. The method for the study, data analysis, and rationale behind selecting the cohort mentioned to address this issue are defined later in the study.

### **Guiding Questions**

To achieve the goal of this study, former Division I football players who competed under the NCAA’s governance were surveyed. By polling former Division I football players, first-hand experiences and opinions contributed to the evaluation of

current NCAA policies and guidelines. Guiding this directive, the following questions were the focal points:

*Are the NCAA rules and policies regarding financial compensation ethical?*

*Do Division I football alumni believe the NCAA takes advantage of college football players by exploiting their talents?*

*Does the NCAA use its revenue effectively to support all college athletics?*

Open-ended survey questions maintained the integrity of the study and were used to collect data. More information will be provided throughout outlining the selected research methods.

### **Personal Perspective**

In an academic study, quantitative and concrete measurable outcomes are primary tools for the analytics. However, in the evaluation of ethics concerning policy, personal perspective and human emotion become key components as well. Before analyzing the opinions of former Division I football players, it is important to reflect on this author's personal experience toward current policies outlined in the NCAA handbook.

As a former Division I baseball player and member of a non-revenue generating team, it could be anticipated that this author's perspective of the current policies would be vastly different than the opinions of the targeted subjects of this study. It is important to note this difference because media support sports such as football and basketball as the primary revenue generating athletics.

This investigator believes this research will reveal that there are fundamental differences between current policy and what former Division I football players believe is ethical. One of the major differences this author predicts is that alumni will tend to believe that policy restricting athletes from producing revenue outside the school environment on their own time is unethical.

The view that athletes are restricted in the ways in which they may produce revenue could potentially emerge as a point of contention because even in this author's experience as a former athlete, this topic was one that was continually debated. It is no secret that thousands of athletes who compete in collegiate athletics would not be able to do so without revenue generating sports, but the means by which NCAA governs may be the ethical question. In evaluating the responses from the study, it is important to keep in mind Proverbs 28:6 indicating, "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways". This study will seek to highlight, from a macro level, whether policies are in fact in question by the former athlete's perspective.

Also, from a personal perspective, one issue concerning policies in question is ethics throughout the collegiate environment. It always bothered this author that students in band or other performance fields could represent their schools on the field, yet were allowed to give lessons and make money off the very talent that just represented the university. The NCAA does not govern activities outside of sport, nor do band or other performance-oriented members volunteer to participate in the NCAA by signing a student-athlete statement (NCAA, 2015). The indifference toward this subject could cause significant ethical debate regarding equality among collegiate entities.

## **Looking Ahead**

Understanding the basis for this research, the focus can now begin to consider what is on the horizon. The following sections will build upon the foundations outlined in the introduction to help answer the proposed research questions.

The literature review will be an extension of the introduction by expounding on literature encompassing the concepts of amateurism, ethics and financial compensation. These three concepts and linkages will be the foundation of this investigation.

The next section will describe the methodology of the study, or the research process, specifically how the research subjects were selected and the survey in which they participated. Additionally, the methodology section will discuss how the data was analyzed and help to statistically provide feedback and fulfill the purpose of this study.

The results section will be a reflection of the data and how the data presents itself, ultimately leading to the finding of the study. Finally, the paper will conclude with the discussion, future endeavors and conclusion section. This section will discuss the limitations of the study and where future studies may be directed, as well as the findings of the study and how they contribute to the body of general knowledge.

## **Literature Review**

There have been studies that focused on similar issues relating to the ethical conduct of the National Collegiate Athletics Association and the relationships the NCAA has with outside agencies, in particular, the student athlete (Afshar, 2014; Beamon, 2008; Kaburaskis et al., 2012; Lush, 2015). The purpose of this literature review is to highlight the gap in the public's general knowledge therein supporting the purpose of this study which evaluates the ethical conduct of NCAA polices from the perception of former Division I athletes. Throughout this literature review, three major themes have emerged: the concept of amateurism; ethics of NCAA polices regarding the student athlete; and the financial compensation package of the student athlete. The following literature review will critically evaluate and discuss these centralized core issues within the collegiate athletic program.

This review is composed of recent and dated research attempting to broaden the scope and to avoid limitations created by timeframe bias. According to Solomon (2014), the NCAA has not made significant changes to its policies, or the influence of interpretation by general public since the 1984 Supreme Court hearing, thus making all studies between then and now current and relevant to this study.

### **Amateurism**

Kaburakis et al. (2012), discussed the relationship between the NCAA and revenue noting, "The NCAA maintains a balance between amateurism and the increasing

need for generating revenue” (p. 295). This balance is ever changing, especially as the athletic community and its expectations continue to evolve. Kaburakis et al. discussed this fluctuation by describing the definition in two contexts of “old” and “new” amateurism. He indicates that old amateurism was “student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation...” (Kaburakis et al., p. 296), versus the contemporary definition which accounts for the fluidity of collegiate ethics through the approach that “athletically-related financial aid for participating student-athletes is subject to continuous amendments in amateurism by laws and flexible interpretations” (Kaburakis et al., p. 296). These continuous amendments in amateurism especially coupled with laws directly contribute to the ethical controversies that arise concerning this topic.

Legal theory and the NCAA are key subjects when discussing the “new” amateurism prevalent throughout the current collegiate environment. One of the major issues brought to light by Kaburakis et al. (2012) are the laws governing the NCAA and the student relationship, specifically those concerning intellectual property. The research focuses on the degree to which former and current student athletes possess publicity rights over products that market personal images and likenesses. Organizations, especially the NCAA, use publicity as a primary source of revenue, but the degree to which it is employed lends itself to two very different arguments a) the NCAA retains the rights to these products for the organization’s financial gain, and b) the student himself or herself should be the primary beneficiary from the direct publicity (Kaburakis et al., 2012).

Kaburakis et al. (2012) designed research questions to elicit the student's understanding of his or her rights with regard to personal marketing. The results were significant, demonstrating that only "fifty-three percent of respondents understood that signing the 'student-athlete consent form' granted the NCAA permission to generate revenue from their image/likeness" (Kaburakis et al., p. 299). With only half of NCAA athletes in the study truly understanding the contractual obligation upon which they entered, it is easy to identify the potential ethical dilemma derived from what is considered amateurism in today's athletic atmosphere.

Afshar (2014) shed light on a different perspective concerning amateurism saying, "an amateur is defined as someone who does something for pleasure and not as a job" (p. 107). Although that may be the purest interpretation of amateurism, today's society adheres to multiple degrees of amateurism. In 1948, the NCAA made an initial attempt to modify amateurism allowing students to receive scholarships for collegiate sport participation (Afshar). Over the next 60 years, the NCAA maintained its stance but finally succumbed to another tiny revolution in 2011. Afshar noted in 2011 the organization amended to allow student athletes who play for a Division I institution to receive a \$2,000 stipend.

The current view of amateurism has arguably little effect on the student athlete's perception concerning the "student" aspect of the relationship. Specifically, focusing on Kaburakis' et al. (2012), contemporary amateurism pertains to how institutions employ the revenue produced by athletic competition and how that utilization may or may not prepare an athlete for advancement in his or her athletic career after graduation.

Meggysesy (2000) agreed, the preponderance of student athletes, to include but not limited to revenue producing athletes, will end their athletic careers in college. In other words, less than one percent of Division I athletes will play professional sport, and as Meggysesy alluded, most walk away from their collegiate experience with no money, a worthless degree or no degree, and only memories of their glory days. The physical effort put forth by these athletes and the extent to which they are may or may not be exploited, either with or without adequate compensation, might challenge the premise of amateurism, particularly when a party is seemingly well-equipped to secure a profitable financial gain while the other is expected to achieve financial success individually.

### **Ethics**

The seemingly mutualistic relationship between the ephemeral student athlete and the long-standing universities under NCAA bylaws spurs ethical scrutiny as to how the athlete utilizes the organization and how the association utilizes the amateur competitor for personal or organizational gain, respectfully. Lush (2015) described this relationship by commenting on a bylaw:

Part IV of 13-3a, and its attendant NCAA bylaw sections, while seemingly unfair for student athletes, is probably not unconscionable. The adhesiveness of the agreement, a student athlete's lack of comparable alternatives, and the length to which student athletes must go to understand all the details of the rights he or she is giving up, likely favor procedural unconscionability. (p. 799)

Beamon (2008) capitalized on this idea of a dynamic relationship. The investigator specifically researched African American males competing at the Division I level and what those subjects managed to accomplish in terms of a post-graduation athletic career as a means of determining whether or not the association had exploited talent throughout collegiate years of competition. The idea of exploitation, whether good or bad, is generated from the idea that universities use sport programs to generate revenue. Beamon suggested the increase in recruitment and alumni support places immense pressure on the athlete to perform. The investigator argued due to the aforementioned factors which serve to improve the educational institution's image, exceptional athletes, in particular African American athletes, can be perceived as a greater revenue-generating opportunity. Beamon pointed out that:

As a result of overrepresentation of African Americans in revenue-generating sports, it is estimated that these student-athletes have earned more than a quarter of a trillion dollars over a 40-year period; and even if 100% of African American athletes earned degrees, the economic value of those degrees would only be 5% of the total value of their athletic contribution. (Beamon, 2008 p. 356)

This statistic clearly delineated the economic impact talented young athletes have on the financial success of the member institutions which fall under the governance of the NCAA, but also reveals how the priority is focused on organizational financial compensation and not necessarily on the individual success of the athlete.

Through countless interviews and surveys with former athletes the ethical quandary regarding the exploitation of student athletes without providing appropriate

reciprocity for their efforts is argued in the study. In his findings, Beamon (2008), highlighted that although 90% of African American athletes may not have had the opportunity to go to college without sports, only 20% of those individuals reported as having had a good experience; additionally, most divulged they felt like “used goods”, saying their respective universities were reaping far greater benefits, financially and otherwise (Beamon, p. 362). This disparity among compensatory levels of reward brings to surface an ethical discussion encompassing the relationship between the NCAA and representation of the student athlete.

French (2009) brings to the surface an additional ethical consideration as it pertains to financial compensation, the concept of gender equality. French, conducted a study evaluating the financial implications of ethics in collegiate sport and stated:

As long as universities have football, issues of distribution injustices are inevitable. An athletic director is quoted as having said: ‘gender equality is a joke, they’ll never achieve proportionality because they’ll never be able to rein in football and men’s basketball’. (2009, p. 314)

The investigator further provided valuable insight within the different levels of ethical considerations primarily due to these financial inequalities.

Ethics continue to play a significant role in the governing of collegiate athletics, especially with regard to the business side of sport. Matthew 7:12 reminds us, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets”. The scripture from Matthew along with the findings from French (2009), Beamon (2008), and Lush (2015) make one question the degree of ethical

consideration towards financial composition of the NCAA and its current policies, highlighting the gap in knowledge concerning this field of study.

### **Financial Compensation**

The topic of financial compensation is discussed throughout the literary review. Satisfaction with compensation levels among athletes may be indicated by how much they give as alumni to their respective institutions (O'Neil & Schenke, 2007).

The study by O'Neil and Schenke suggested there may be some degree of adverse or inadequate level of compensation for elite Division I athletes; however, it is the exceedingly small percentage of student athletes that comprise this top tier that makes this an intriguing concept. O'Neil and Schenke examined factors that affect alumni and size of donations to their alma mater.

The thrust of their study is the theory of "social exchange", typically "a broad theory that has been used to explain trust as an outcome of various relationships" (Lioukas & Reuer, 2015, p. 1826). When described in the context of athletic, O'Neil and Schenke said, "athlete alumni think they do not need to give as much because of their time and talent" (2007, p. 72). Contrary to the ultimate conclusion of the study, which was many athletes surveyed in the study indicated having had a positive athletic experience, and that the amount which they choose to contribute is based more upon personal performance and reputation throughout their athletic careers.

According to O'Neil and Schenke (2007), a variable among the defined study subjects is from which sports the alumni originated. Knowing that fact could serve to

further elucidate differences in satisfaction levels with regard to financial compensation between revenue generating sports and non-revenue generating sports.

Another contributing study originates from Stieber (1991), the researcher questions the specific ethical discussion concerning financial compensation. Stieber discusses how students who participate in other activities, such as music and dance, can receive additional compensation from off-campus entities while the NCAA restricts these potential financial resources from “student athletes”. Stieber states:

There are those who believe that all of these recipients are professionals because they are paid for what they do or what they are. Furthermore, all of them deserve the wages they receive. The hook in this menu is that student athletes and only student athletes cannot accept any other kinds of payments, either from the school or from some other source. (1991, p. 447)

The concern that then arises is that this regulation needs to be more clearly defined. Stieber’s (1991) study described an in depth exploration of the core issues behind the ethical behavior of the NCAA with the regards to financial considerations of student athletes both on and off the field. Stieber’s study, although dated, is still relevant to today’s discussion of financial compensation considering, as alluded to earlier by Afshar (2014), the only change in policy since the date of his study is the minimal addition of a \$2,000 stipend for Division I athletes. The balance between fair compensation and exploitation was also explored by Van Rheenen (2012), stating:

This crisis (exploitation) is most prevalent among those colleges and universities which promote the big business of college sports, despite the longstanding

argument that participation opportunities provide the educational rationale for the very existence of intercollegiate athletics. (2012, p. 267)

This exploitation in financial compensation is at the very core of ethical debate. Thus, the following study will analyze the ethical foundation that governs current NCAA policy with regard to the student athlete.

## **Methodology**

### **Explanation of Methodology**

The title of this thesis paper conveys an ethical study on NCAA policies. To analyze personality traits or attitudes that fall under the category of social sciences, one of the most common methodologies used is that of utilized cross-sectional or survey designs. The primary reason for choosing this method is explained by Gratton and Jones (2010) who stated, “the strengths of such a research design are that it is convenient to the researcher with limited resources” (p. 104). Choosing this design is reflective of the social limitations placed upon the researcher in conducting this study and in attempting to gather and interpret the data. Based on the limitation outlined in the introductions and the advantages provided by Gratton and Jones, the following study will be a quantitative study utilizing a survey as outlined in the following discussion.

### **Research Methods**

Pellissier (2010) stresses that methods, tools, techniques and procedures employed in the research are derived around achieving the goal of the research design. One of the challenges with this study was finding a method of quantitatively measuring opinions. Over the years there have been studies and proposed methods of achieving measurable data based on personality traits or opinions. This study’s goal was to determine the opinions of former Division I athletes with regard to certain NCAA

polices. To achieve this objective a Likert Scale, composed of at least five Likert-type questions was utilized.

According to Boone and Boone (2012), Likert developed attitudinal scales in 1932 as a quantitative measure of attitude character and personality traits. The original scales were composed of five responses: strongly approve (1), approve (2), undecided (3), disapprove (4), and strongly disapprove (5). Each question, which gave the five options as a potential response, was known as a Likert-type questions. Each of the questions can individually be analyzed or, if combined with five or more questions, become part of the Likert Scale (Boone & Boone).

This study will utilize similar Likert-type questions; however, the responses will be posed as: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. It is important to identify differences between a Likert-type question and a Likert Scale since the scale and each type of question can be statistically analyzed to quantify the data. The survey, (Appendix A), is composed of 16 Likert-type questions and four demographic style questions diversifying ethics, salary, scholarship status and highest level of education. The Likert-type questions encompassing the Likert Scale displaying opinions of current NCAA policy are encompassed by questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 17, 18, 19 and 20. These questions are worded in such a manner that agreeing with the statement supports an opinion contrary to current NCAA policy (NCAA, 2015). A more detailed explanation of how the data was analyzed is discussed in the data analysis section.

Questions 10,11,12, and 13 are demographic questions, and the remaining questions of the survey are individual Likert-type questions, which will be analyzed

independently. The order of the questions was not selected to influence any responses to later questions, and the length of the survey was capped at 20-questions so as not to overwhelm potential respondents with a lengthy survey.

### **Research Subjects**

Participation in this study was strictly limited to former Division I football players. More specifically, Division I football players who at anytime were on a roster and are not currently on a roster, were eligible for this study. This very specific group of individuals was selected considering Division I football as the mainstay of the NCAA, along with Men's NCAA Division I basketball tournament, as evidenced through both media exposure and revenue (Lush, 2015).

The maximum number of participants for this study was 800. To put the number of potential Division I alumni into perspective, there are currently 115 Division I football programs. Each team is allowed to have 85 full time scholarships (NCAA, 2015), which means there are upwards of 10,000 Division I football players currently playing. It is also important to note that there are a number of athletes who are not playing or attending college on a scholarship. The number of alumni increases each year; thus, in attempt to not lose the original focus of the study, the sample size was capped at a more than adequate 800 respondents. Conversely, it is important to acquire a minimum number of participants. In order to achieve "acceptable accuracy" according to Van Bennekom (2016), the minimum number of respondents was 30 (para. 15). Van Bennekom acknowledges that the proper method of setting a minimum number of respondents is to

take response rate into account based on the number of surveys disseminated. However, recognizing that it is not feasible to confirm how many participants were contacted, the minimum number of respondents to achieve statistically significant data in this case is thirty, even if that represents a very small sample size of the total population.

The number of surveys sent out is unknown because of the method by which the surveys were distributed. To reach former Division I football alumni, personal information, specifically e-mail addresses, were accessed. To combat the challenge of obtaining personal information along with limiting who is contacted, a proportional random stratification process was utilized (Pellissier, 2010). Each conference represents a stratum, and a team within each conference was selected randomly. To select the random team, the researcher used the randomization feature in Excel giving each team in the respective conference the same likelihood of being selected within the respective stratum (Dodge & Stinson, 2007). Once the school was selected, the research contacted the athletic department of the school in order to reach the respective alumni association.

In order to ensure anonymity, below in Table 1 is indicative of the random selection from each conference, to include the independent teams.

Table 1

*Example of Schools Selected From Each Conference.*

Conference	School
ACC	Boston College
Big 12	Oklahoma State University
Big East	Rutgers University
Big 10	University of Nebraska
Conference USA	University of Houston
MAC	Akron
MWC	Air Force

PAC 12	UCLA
SEC	Georgia
Sun Belt	Troy
WAC	Utah State
Independent	BYU

*Note.* The schools may or may not be the schools selected for the study. The athlete's affiliation will not be disclosed due to the confidentiality of the study.

In case alumni associations were unwilling to release email contacts of its members, the researcher requested that the association distribute the survey itself. This option made it impossible to validate the number of respondents who actually received the survey, thus deriving the requirement for a minimum and maximum number of respondents for the survey (Van Bennekom, 2016). During this study, seven schools declined participation or did not reply with positive feedback. For those seven schools' respective divisions, the randomization process in Excel was repeated to choose the next school for the study (Dodge & Stinson, 2007). During the study, the Big 10 Conference went through four iterations prior to receiving positive feedback. Ultimately each conference had a school reply with positive feedback to include the independent schools as their own stratum for this study.

Each participant received the e-mail as seen in Appendix B, whether it was directly from the researcher or forwarded from the athletic alumni association. The e-mail emphasized the purpose of the study, how the study would further general public awareness, of the compensation of student athletes, and guaranteed that the responses would remain completely anonymous in accordance with the guidance from Liberty University Institutional Review Board. Additionally, the e-mail included a statement of consent, which is accomplished by clicking the link to the survey (see Appendix B).

## **Data Analysis**

The challenge with statistically analyzing opinions and thoughts is quantifying the data collected. Fortunately, the Likert Scale allows a researcher to accomplish exactly that. As alluded to in earlier, discussion questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 17, 18, 19, and 20 which encompass current NCAA policies, will be analyzed using a Likert Scale. In order to quantify the data, each ‘strongly agree’ response will be scored as 5, ‘agree’ as 4, ‘neutral’ as 3, ‘disagree’ as 2, and ‘strongly disagree’ as 1. Assigning value to the Likert-type questions will allow responses to be measured, but the means by which they are measured needs to be made clear. As these values are assigned, they represent a “greater than” opinion not a “how much greater than” opinion. In other words, according to Boone, they only indicate order so as to reflect a meaningful distance from points on scale but do not communicate the magnitude (Boone & Boone, 2012). Thus, one will be able to conclude that if the average response is 4, this would indicate a respondent agrees that the current policy is wrong and perhaps should be changed, but the degree to which they believe that opinion is relative because of the nominal value added to the response.

Additionally, the data from the Likert Scale will utilize the T-test, in which a “statistical significance indicates whether or not the difference between two groups’ averages most likely reflects a ‘real’ difference in the population from which the groups were sampled” (Statwing, 2016, para. 2). This is where the demographics are involved. Each demographic will be compared against each other, for example, those respondents on scholarship versus those not on scholarship. To demonstrate if there was statistical

significance between demographics a two-tail, two-sample unequal variance T-test was utilized (Mann & Lacke, 2010). If a result of less than .005 statistically was observed, then the respective demographic indicates an impact on the survey (Mann & Lacke). This will be exhibited to see if the data is skewed one way or another or to evaluate the different opinions of the respondents based on their demographics.

According to H.N. Boone and Boone (2012), another way to analyze the data collected from this short, yet effective, survey will come from the data collected by the individual Likert-type questions. There are various ways to analyze the individual questions, but the one utilized in this study was frequency. For example, in the findings one could say 96% of former Division I athletes enjoyed their collegiate experience. Again those questions will primarily be the questions not involved in the Likert Scale, but it is also important to note that every question excluding the demographics are Likert-type questions, thus subject to frequency analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As in any study, but especially one reviewing ethics, it is important to discuss the challenges concerning ethical and legal issues. As the subjects of this study are human, the researcher received proper approval from Liberty University Institutional Review Board to engage with the subjects. The approval from the Board is a method of ensuring that the rights of the subjects are protected and indicated the proper procedure was performed based on the guidance from Liberty University (see Appendix C).

Each subject's identity is anonymous and confidential. This study involves minimal risk, and everyone who participated in the study consented to it. The consent terms are outlined in the letter to the subjects (see Appendix B). A signed consent form was not used in this study because of the potential to link the result back to the participants (see Appendix C).

### **Evolution of Research**

In any academic venture it is important to not only focus on the positives of a research project but also to recognize the limitations of a study prior to analyzing data. The primary research method associated with this study, as previously discussed, was a survey. Surveys, as mentioned earlier, are simple and an effective resource for a researcher to reach one's objective with a lack of resources and time at their disposal (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Specifically, the survey employed was developed based on the Likert Principle which made it easy to construct, and reliable and easy to complete by the participants (Boone & Boone, 2012).

The Likert Scale however, does have disadvantage as pointed out by Bertram:

Central tendency bias

-participants may avoid extreme response categories

Acquiescence bias

-participants may agree with statements as presented in order to 'please' the experimenter

Social desirability bias

-participants portray themselves in a more socially favorable light rather than being honest

Lack of reproducibility

Validity may be difficult to demonstrate

-are you measuring what you set out to measure? (Bertram, 2015, p. 7)

Bertram's limitations are valid discussion points and relevant to this study. The biggest concern with this study is central tendency bias. With a Likert-type question only offering five responses, it would be easy to default to answering 2 or 4 thus failing to reveal disparity in the data. The researcher must then ask the question, what does the number mean? As previously discussed, the difference in the data is not a matter of how much more one disagrees or agrees but purely that the athlete does. In other words, the magnitude of opinion is not measurable by the study, thus even if the data leans one way or the other it is still considered significant due to the nature of the design.

The next concern is brought to light by Beamon (2015) that the validity may be difficult to demonstrate. The structure of the survey is constructed in such a manner as to deliberately challenge policy that is continually debated. In doing so, the respondents could not add the "BUT". In other words the athlete may agree with part of the statement in part they may not, however the structure of the survey did not allow for them to reply with anything but the five basic responses. Beamon identified this is merely a difficulty, but not a limiting factor, to the study. The researcher simply highlighted the differences in data and emphasized the trends in responses in order to make the data meaningful.

Challenges are a reality of everyday life, and a research project is no different. If properly recognized the appropriate action may be taken in order to best mitigate potential limitations for this study.

## **Results**

In order to analyze opinions regarding current NCAA policies concerning financial compensation of the student athlete, a cross sectional research method was utilized. To make up the cross sectional-research method, a simple 20-question survey composed of demographic and Likert type questions was presented to the target market, former Division I football players as the target market. Likert type questions allowed the researcher to group similar questions to create a Likert scale. This scale was then utilized to quantitatively highlight behavioral trends, or in the case of this study, the opinions towards the NCAA and its current policies. It is also important to note that the frequency in which a specific answer was highlighted could also be used to follow behavioral trends (Boone & Boone, 2012).

## **Research Subjects**

Participation in this research study was strictly limited to former Division I football players. Specifically, individuals formerly listed on Division I football team roster and are no longer actively competing were eligible for this study. Subjects were contacted via a proportional random stratification process where each conference

represented a stratum (Pellissier, 2010). Using the randomization feature in excel one school from each conference was selected and contacted through email (Dodge & Stinson, 2007). If the school decided not to participate in the study, then another randomly selected school was contacted within the conference. In order to maintain anonymity, the specific schools in which former athletes were contacted will not be released (see Appendix C). However, disclosure will include that seven total iterations, four alone in the Big 10 Conference, of sought after participation were required in order to reach Division I football alumni from every conference, including independent schools. Based on the design of the study, which focused on a simple survey that protected the identity of the participants, it is impossible to derive whether each conference is represented in the reportable data even though there was positive feedback from at least one school in each conference.

The survey provided in Appendix A was digitally formatted using Survey Monkey software and the survey was open for two weeks after initial contact with potential participants had been established (see Appendix C). Within the second week a reminder was sent to all parties who might potentially participate in the study. At the close of the study, 85 surveys (N = 85) had been returned with 1700 data points collected for this investigation.

### **Data Analysis and Coding**

In order to use the data from the survey, results were translated into an analytical format which allowed for a quantitative review. The survey offered five options for

Likert type questions: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. For the purpose of analyzing the results, 'strongly agree' was represented with an arbitrary value of 5, 'agree' with a 4, 'neutral' with a 3, 'disagree' with a 2, and 'strongly disagree' with a 1. It is important to note that although these responses were assigned numerical values, the difference between them remains theoretical. Thus, if a response average is 4.3, this merely indicates that, in fact, the average opinion lies between 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. Since values to the survey responses were subjectively assigned, the magnitude to which the participant agrees was not measurable, merely the trend.

To further quantify results from the survey, frequency, mean average and T-test scores were used analyze the data. These methods were applied to the Likert scale and Likert type questions.

### **Likert scale**

The questions that comprised the Likert scale which ultimately measured the primary behavioral trend in subject opinion (Boone & Boone, 2012) were questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 17, 18, 19, and 20 from the survey as seen below:

1. Student athletes should be paid by the University in addition to a traditional scholarship.
2. Student athletes should be allowed to utilize their athletic talents outside of the University for financial gain
3. Scholarships are not sufficient compensation for athletic contributions to the University.

4. Athletes should receive royalties for athletic memorabilia sold utilizing their athletic identity.
  9. Booster clubs should be able to provide athletes or their families with financial incentives.
  17. I would rather receive financial compensation than support non-revenue generating sports programs.
  18. Financial compensation outside of a traditional scholarship would increase my likelihood of graduating.
  19. I would rather receive a paycheck based on my depth chart position than a scholarship.
  20. Off-season financial compensation should not be governed by the NCAA.
- (Appendix A).

These questions were specifically selected because of their relation to the topic of current policies in the NCAA. Each statement contradicted a current NCAA policy. For example, question one stated, “Student athletes should be paid by the University in addition to a traditional scholarship” (Appendix A). According to the NCAA Division I Manual (2015), universities are not able to pay a student athlete in addition to a traditional scholarship. With 85 (N = 85) respondents and nine questions forming the Likert Scale, there were 765 data points. If a subject replied with ‘strongly agree’ he actually strongly opposed a select NCAA policy.

To analyze the overall behavioral trend, the Likert Scale average and standard deviation was utilized, with the final results shown below:

*Likert Scale Average 3.21 with a standard deviation of 0.765*

In addition to the mean average and standard deviation, the data was analyzed further to determine what trends, if any, were based on the predominate demographic compared to the combination of other demographics within in each respective category consisting of ‘ethnicity’, ‘salary’, ‘education’ and ‘scholarship’. Table 2 shows the evaluation of demographics for this study.

Table 2

*Demographic Evaluation*

Ethnicity		Salary		Highest Degree		Scholarship	
White	73%	\$0-\$50,000	16%	High School	4%	None	11%
Hispanic or Latino	1%	\$50,000-\$100,000	41%	Associates	0%	Partial	12%
African American	21%	\$100,000-\$150,000	19%	Bachelors	50%	Full	72%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	\$150,000-\$200,000	12%	Masters	35%	Other	4%
Other	4%	\$200,000 +	12%	Doctorate	11%		

*Note.* Percentages derived from the total number of surveys N=85.

To demonstrate if there was statistical significance between demographics a two-tail, two-sample unequal variance T-test was used. If a result of less than .005 was statistically observed, then the respective demographic indicates an impact on the survey. The results for the comparison are modeled in Table 3 below.

Table 3

*Likert Scale Comparison Data*

Demographics	Average Dominate	Average Other	TTEST
Race (White vs other)	2.99	3.63	.002
Salary (\$50K-\$100K vs other)	3.24	3.11	.443

Education (Bachelors vs other)	2.99	3.01	.075
Scholarship (Full vs other)	3.21	3.05	.356

*Note.* Data T-test results less than .005 show a statistical significance between the two data results being compared.

### Likert type questions

Each question, with the exception of the demographic questions, was designed as a Likert type question. Frequency analysis, the rate at which an event occurs (Mann & Lacke, 2010), was provided based on percentage of total responses per question. For example, 32% of respondents (27 out of 85) strongly agreed with question one. The results for the frequency analysis and the 1360 data points are shown in Table 4 below. Additionally, included in Table 4 are the averages and standard deviations of each question.

Table 4

#### *Analysis of Likert Type Questions*

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation
*1	32%	31%	14%	18%	6%	3.65	1.253
*2	25%	46%	9%	15%	5%	3.71	1.136
*3	27%	27%	19%	21%	6%	3.48	1.252
*4	38%	41%	7%	11%	4%	3.99	1.090
5	7%	14%	32%	36%	11%	2.71	1.061
6	13%	38%	29%	14%	6%	3.38	1.062
7	32%	39%	11%	14%	5%	3.79	1.169
8	16%	15%	14%	36%	18%	2.76	1.352
*9	8%	15%	15%	36%	25%	2.46	1.242
14	21%	31%	20%	24%	5%	3.40	1.190
15	36%	40%	8%	14%	1%	3.96	1.057
16	41%	46%	7%	6%	0%	4.22	0.817

*17	11%	26%	26%	28%	9%	3.00	1.158
*18	5%	25%	25%	34%	12%	2.76	1.092
*19	4%	14%	11%	49%	22%	2.27	1.067
*20	22%	40%	14%	15%	8%	3.53	1.223

*Note.* The total number of responses was 85 (N = 85). The full question can be referenced by referring to question number and the questions in Appendix A. \*Indicates questions involved in the Likert Scale.

### **Summary**

The data provided and the analysis completed in this portion of the research study facilitated a logical discussion concerning the ethics of NCAA policies with regard to their impact on former Division 1 football players. The overall Likert average represents the behavioral aspect of the study, while the T-test was used to compare the significance of demographics in relation to subject responses. Additionally, each question was presented as a Likert type question, thus the frequency in which an answer is selected may also be used to for analysis within the discussion section.

## **Discussion, Future Endeavors, and Conclusion**

Throughout this research journey the goal has been to analyze the perceptions of former Division I football players and their perspective of current NCAA policies with regard to ethical conduct, specifically focusing on the financial compensation of the student athlete both on and off the field. After reviewing the NCAA as an organization it is important to evaluate previous research completed on this topic in order to highlight the gap in the public's general knowledge concerning this ethical dilemma. Three emerging themes surfaced from the literature review: amateurism, ethics and compensation. These themes were grouped together into one idea focusing on a specific population, in this case former Division I football players, and formulated the foundation for this study.

The research design utilized a cross sectional research method comprised of a 20-question survey. The survey had sixteen Likert type questions and four demographic questions. Likert type questions coupled with the demographic questions allowed the researcher to develop a study capable of quantitatively measuring the opinions of the subjects with regard to current NCAA policy.

### **Discussion**

Three main questions helped focus the research and yielded particularly meaningful results.

#### **Question one**

*Are the NCAA rules and policies regarding financial compensation ethical?*

In order to provide an objective response, it was necessary to quantify the opinions of the former Division I football players involved in the study. The participants answered the Likert type questions on a scale with the following responses: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). When multiple Likert type questions are combined, they create a Likert Scale (Boone & Boone, 2012). This scale was then used to quantify a behavioral trait, in this case the opinions of the participants. It is important to point out that with this scale, the magnitude with which a participant agrees or disagrees cannot be measured because the values are subjective, but what can be deduced is the existence of a difference between the opinions. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the design of the study was created so that by agreeing with questions that comprised the Likert Scale, specifically questions 1,2,3,4,9,17,18, 19 and 20 (Appendix A), the subject maintains an opinion that opposes current NCAA policy.

As referenced the 'findings' section of this study, the data gleaned from the Likert Scale produced a mean of 3.21 with a standard deviation of 0.765 between responses. Therefore, it was concluded that ninety-five percent of the average responses fell between 2.39 and 3.92. As previously discussed, the results do not show a magnitude in opinion but rather a trend. A mean response value slightly above neutral indicates the average opinion lies somewhere between 'neutral' and 'agree'. Thus, the average opinion does not support current policies but adopts an overall indifferent attitude towards governing regulations with a slant towards opposing current policy. The standard deviation

demonstrates there are individuals with response values of four who feel more strongly toward disagreeing with policy; conversely, there are also those who tend to favor policy albeit not definitively enough to yield a strong average of two.

Two ideas become apparent. First, with a mean Likert Scale average response value greater than three, the majority opinion is indifferent with a trend favoring an opposition to current policy. The second is the question of “why” don’t the alumni agree and since there is opposition, what, if anything, can be done to rectify it? To further investigate where an opposition may occur one must look at the individual questions verses the aggregate.

Four of the Likert type questions (questions 1, 2, 4, and 20) in the Likert Scale provide an enhanced perspective of where the opposition may occur as they have an average responses greater than 3.5, indicating more of a slant towards a disagreement towards NCAA policy. From question 1, 63% of respondents believe that athletes should be paid by the university in addition to receiving a traditional scholarship. From question 2, 71% believe athletes should be allowed to utilize their athletic talents outside of a university for financial gain. Question 4 indicates the highest opposition to current policy with an average of 3.99 with 79% of respondents saying they should receive royalties for athletic memorabilia sold utilizing their athletic identity. The final noteworthy response is from question 20, where 62% agree that off-season financial compensation should not be governed by the NCAA. The common trend highlighted by analyzing the individual questions shows an opposition towards current policy with regard to limitations imposed by policy regarding financial benefits for the student athlete.

Defining what is ethical and unethical is challenging and in and of itself is its own research project. However, based on the idea that ‘doing what is right’ constitutes being ethical, should the responses and the average opinion of the respondents have been different? Simply stated, the participants are indifferent with the policies set forth by the NCAA according to the Likert Scale developed for this research project, however individually analyzing the Likert type questions a more definitive opposition is revealed with regard to specific aspects of the current policy.

### **Question two**

*Do Division I football alumni believe the NCAA takes advantage of college football players by exploiting their talents?*

The second proposed question appears to be simply stated, but in reality, requires a much more thoughtful look. Taking advantage of a player by exploiting his talents is reflective of compensation in the form of scholarships or restrictions limiting activities off the field. To address this, a series of Likert type questions helped reveal the prevailing opinions of former athletes, specifically questions 4, 7 and 16.

Overall, question 16 indicated 87% of participants said they enjoyed their collegiate experience. That is a significant number figure and begs the question as to who the survey concerns if the majority of subjects enjoyed their experience. This may be explained by question 7 which highlights that 71% of former Division I football players believed they were exploited to some degree despite the overlap in some subjects still answering that they enjoyed their collegiate experience as a whole. To further investigate

this question one can simply look at question 4 which has already highlighted that 79% of respondents agree that they should receive royalties for athletic memorabilia sold utilizing their athletic identity.

A sense of exploitation is revealed by the majority of subjects which could be coupled with the sense of being taken advantage of in a multitude of areas, specifically as highlighted from the survey in question 4 regarding royalties. A potential area of study that remains unexplored is that one can feel exploited yet still enjoy their athletic career.

### **Question three**

*Does the NCAA use its revenue effectively to support all college athletics?*

When asked if the NCAA utilized its funds efficiently, according to the responses from question 5, less than half of the respondents agreed, while it was demonstrated that the majority simply didn't know. The neutral 30% of responses implies that many of the respondents aren't savvy enough regarding NCAA funds allocation or its supportive functions. One question this research intended to pose in hope of determining whether alumni thought the NCAA utilized its revenue efficiently was whether or not former Division I football players believed the additional revenue from their program should support other collegiate programs which did not accumulate as many earnings. Interestingly enough, results from question 6 were similar in nature, with nearly 30% responding neutrally; however, this time over 40% agreed with the statement that funds should be allocated toward coverage of non-revenue generating sports.

Based on frequency analysis, there simply was not enough concrete data leaning strongly in one direction or another to state whether or not alumni felt strongly about the aforementioned statement. It is however noteworthy to point out that from question 15, 76% of respondents believed the vast majority of athletes have the opportunity to play collegiate sport due to scholarships which is a win for the NCAA in terms of supporting all collegiate athletes.

### **Limitations**

The limitations on this study can be attributed to magnitude of the questions being posed. Ethical contemplations span thousands of years; however, in this modern day study, the ethical practices of the NCAA and how its rules and processes are geared towards managing young student athletes is a significant topic. Kaburaksi et al. (2012) talks specifically about how the NCAA is adhering steadfastly to its definition of amateurism, but there have been some acts of compromise when fears of exploitation surface. Thus, in taking into consideration the limitations of this study, a larger audience is required.

Another limitation within this study was overcoming the difficulty of not being able to confirm how many respondents were actually contacted by their alma maters due to privacy reasons. When performing a quantitative review, knowing how many respondents did not reply is pertinent information that could lead to establishing statistically significant data.

The final noteworthy limitation is the research method employed. A survey is an efficient method of gathering results quickly with limited resources (Gratton & Jones, 2010). However, if a sizeable grant was approved in conjunction with an extended timeline of completion, a thorough purification of the scale using advance statistical measures would be utilized. Due to various constraints, this process was not available during this study leading to potential bias in the scale. The initial data collection from the study is valid, however it is only initial data for future research. As Reardon, Miller, and Coe (2011) stressed, the burden for constructing a valid scale falls on the researcher who has both resources and the ability.

### **Future Endeavors**

The most important yield from a study such as this is that it establishes a future direction or area of interest upon which to expand the results. The ultimate goal with regard to this study's intent is to establish a policy in which everyone, including the student, member university and member conferences affected agrees upon the ethical nature of the regulations. This study was limited to purely former Division I athletes due to the scope of this paper; however, with extended resources and time, the cohort could require expansion to be more inclusive. Additional potential subjects include other Division I athletes, other athletes in the NCAA not restricted to division, coaches, administrative staff, and all participants that voluntarily participate in the NCAA.

Additionally, based on the results of the study that suggest the targeted population does not agree with current NCAA policies, a future study could involve questions

pertaining to potential modifications to policies to further investigate which policies register with larger audiences, thereby not merely identifying a problem, but also providing a solution. Investigating the respondent's level of knowledge of NCAA policies would be of interest as well. From the results it is apparent is that there is a fair amount of former alumni who are not intimately aware of NCAA policies and practices. Future studies should focus on the athlete's understanding of the NCAA as an organization in order to help educate the participants who compete under its banner.

Personality and opinion-based studies will always be limited in some form or fashion, typically driven by a fear of failed anonymity. Regardless, it would be interesting to know why many respondents answered the way they did. The results of the study, revealed only one statistically significant demographic response: whether the subject was Caucasian or not. A future study could further evaluate whether it is believed that racism is still perpetuated within collegiate athletic programs and why, seemingly, race is still a factor in influencing, on a statistically significant scale, survey results regarding practiced policies (Mann & Lacke , 2010).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

As a novice researcher, this research project represents countless nights and many weekends studying, while maintaining a professional position outside of the academic arena, ultimately hoping to contribute to the general body of knowledge. The goal of this paper was to challenge the norm, make the reader think and narrow the gap between the three emerging topics of amateurism, athletics and financial compensation. This study

supports that some alumni do have a problem with the current guidelines and directives currently practiced by the NCAA. The next step in the research process is to evaluate why there is dissension. With continued effort, future researchers will be able to offer solutions to mitigate and amend policies that alumni do not feel are presently ethical.

This author proudly presents this thesis as a culmination of three years of hard work and dedication to the study of sport management. This journey has been very rewarding, especially for a student who naturally gravitates towards technical work. However, expanding the breadth of knowledge has allowed this author to be more diversified in academic works and have a greater appreciation toward scholarly work completed in the past, present and future.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**SURVEY**

1. Student athletes should be paid by the University in addition to a traditional scholarship.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
2. Student athletes should be allowed to utilize their athletic talents outside of the University for financial gain.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
3. Scholarships are not sufficient compensation for athletic contributions to the University.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
4. Athletes should receive royalties for athletic memorabilia sold utilizing their athletic identity.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
5. The NCAA makes efficient use of its revenue to support collegiate athletics.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
6. The revenue generated from football programs should be used to cover the deficiencies created throughout other athletic programs.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
7. The NCAA exploits student athletes for financial gain.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
8. If student athletes are paid by the university, all student athletes should be paid equally.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

9. Booster clubs should be able to provide athletes or their families with financial incentives.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
10. Current salary
- |              |                    |                     |                     |             |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| \$0-\$50,000 | \$50,000-\$100,000 | \$100,000-\$150,000 | \$150,000-\$200,000 | \$200,000 + |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
11. Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity
- |       |                    |                  |                        |       |
|-------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------|
| White | Hispanic or Latino | African American | Asian/Pacific Islander | Other |
|-------|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------|
12. Highest level of education
- |             |            |           |         |           |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| High School | Associates | Bachelors | Masters | Doctorate |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
13. Scholarship status
- |      |         |      |                                       |
|------|---------|------|---------------------------------------|
| None | Partial | Full | Other (Not associated with Athletics) |
|------|---------|------|---------------------------------------|
14. I would rather play for a top 25 school and receive a traditional scholarship than get additional financial compensation and play for a losing team.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
15. Scholarships provide the vast majority of athletes the opportunity to play collegiate sports.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
16. Your college athletic experience was satisfying.
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
17. I would rather receive financial compensation than support non-revenue generating sports programs
- |                |       |         |          |                   |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
18. Financial compensation outside of a traditional scholarship would increase my likelihood of graduating.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

19. I would rather receive a paycheck based on my depth chart position than a scholarship.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

20. Off-season financial compensation should not be governed by the NCAA.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

## **APPENDIX B**

### EMAIL SEEKING PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT

Subject: Ethical involved in the NCAA

Hello,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a study involving research on ethics and the NCAA Enterprise. This research study is composed of a short, 20-question survey in an effort to investigate the ethics behind the NCAA's current policy with regard to financial considerations of student athletes both on and off the field. I am conducting this study as a student in Department of Sports Management at Liberty University as part of my Master's Degree.

As a former Division I athlete at the United States Air Force Academy and current F-16 pilot in the United States Air Force, it is my goal to further the knowledge of the general public on current NCAA policies and how those policies affect, specifically, Division I football players based on former players' perspectives both during their time playing the game and after college. The overall purpose of this study is to analyze Division I football alumni and their perceptions of the NCAA with regard to ethical conduct, specifically focusing on financial considerations of the student athlete and on- and off-the-field conduct.

There will be no compensation for participating in this study. This study is considered minimal risk, and participants will not receive a direct benefit. If voices are heard and data represents a potential problem in the NCAA policy, especially concerning ethics, the NCAA will now have the data to back a positive change in policy.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and 100% anonymous, additionally you may withdraw from this study at any time prior to the completion of the survey. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. The records of this study will be kept private, and any potential publication will not include any information that can be directly or indirectly tied back to your efforts in this study.

The data will be stored for three years on my personal hard drive and then permanently deleted, but it is important to note that I will not have the capability to trace the data back to you.

I can be contacted at the email below for more information and any questions you may have at any point during the research study. Additionally, you may also contact my research faculty advisor, Dr. Chrystal Porter, at [cdporter3@liberty.edu](mailto:cdporter3@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Thank you for your time and consideration of participation in this brief survey. Below is the link to the survey.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. If I had questions, I have asked them and have received answers. By selecting the link below and completing the survey I consent to participate in this study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL  
INFORMAITON WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS EMAIL)

Survey link: [HERE](#)

Very Respectfully,  
Tyler McBride  
Student  
Department of Sports Management  
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA  
Email: [tmcbride3@liberty.edu](mailto:tmcbride3@liberty.edu)

## APPENDIX C

### LIBERTY UNIVERSITY IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 4, 2016

Tyler McBride  
IRB Exemption 2416.020416: Ethics and the NCAA Enterprise

Dear Tyler,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
  - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
The Graduate School

**LIBERTY**  
UNIVERSITY.  
*Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*