

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF CHANGING ATHLETIC  
CONFERENCE AFFILIATION WITHIN THE NCAA

by

Christopher Jason Parker

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this causal comparative study was to provide Division I athletic programs with athletic and institutional fundraising insight when considering a change in athletic conference affiliation. The study provided descriptive data regarding athletic conference affiliation pre and post-conference change. The research evaluated if there was a significant increase in athletic and educational fundraising when changing athletic conferences. The quantitative study compared educational and athletic foundations' IRS 990 forms for 15 NCAA Division 1 institutions that changed athletic conferences between 2012 and 2013. Data was analyzed using an ANOVA and t-tests from the institutions' academic and athletic foundations. The results of pre-conference affiliation and post-conference change were evaluated and they indicated that there is not a significant increase in fundraising for either the athletic or educational fundraising foundations, thus failing to reject the null hypotheses. Suggestions for further research are noted.

*Keywords:* conference affiliation, fundraising, donations, NCAA

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this paper and the completion of my doctoral degree to my family, my peers, and my Heavenly Father. Without any of them, this would not be possible. As a rural community farmer, I made a decision at the age of 19 that I wanted to be a doctor of some kind. It took me a while to decide which kind of doctor I wanted to be, but this process has been timely and exhausting. I personally owe this successful process to everyone who has supported me and encouraged me throughout this endeavor. A very special dedication goes to four people in my life: my wife, my mother, my father, and my daughter. In addition I want to dedicate this my sister, my in-laws, my coworkers, my supervisors, my pastor, and my Lord Jesus Christ who have helped me see this through. Each and every one of them has played a part in this journey and my daughter finally gets to call me Dr. Daddy!

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge all of those who have sacrificed their time and energy with me through this process.

To my family; I am the person I am today because of your support, love, and encouragement through the years. Thank you for always believing in me.

To my chair, Dr. Veronica Sims: thank you for helping me to focus on this study and for providing constant feedback. Your support from the beginning has inspired me to complete this work. I want to thank you for encouraging me along the way. It was divine guidance that brought us together for this study.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

Football Bowl Series (FBS)

Football Championship Series (FCS)

Bowl Championship Series (BCS)

Old Dominion University (ODU)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Educational institutions nationwide rely on the success of their football programs to help economically support their entire athletic programs. Quite often, athletic administrations and college presidents make athletic decisions that are considered to fit the niche of their particular college; however, some instances result in colleges choosing their athletic conference affiliation based on the national recognition of a particular athletic conference. The athletic success, as well as their conference affiliation, may greatly affect the number of donors and supporters an intercollegiate athletic development officer may greatly affect the number of potential donors who will support the intercollegiate development officer, as well as his/her ability to solicit donations from them. Such success can often be seen nationwide on Thursday nights, all day Saturday, and even on some Sunday afternoons. According to research, football programs have proven to be very influential on the overall development and success of a college or institution.

Research conducted by Stinson (2005) discussed the effects of athletic success on private giving towards athletics and academic programs at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institutions. According to Stinson, “as both academic and athletic programs have become increasingly reliant on private support, the relationship between academic and athletic fundraising has drawn research attention” (p.193). Research was conducted to determine annual giving correlated to either athletic or academic success. The linear model analysis showed that strong academic institutions were not susceptible to losing seasons; thus, the annual giving of academic departments was more consistent than that of athletic giving departments (Stinson, 2005). Athletic giving was based upon win verses loss records, postseason appearances, and overall athletic success during a given season of participation.

Previous research conducted by various studies was based on football success (winning percentages), rather than conference affiliation. An original research study on the effects of intercollegiate athletic success and institutional private support was conducted by Robert Frederick (1984) to evaluate a 24-year football season period. This study used an ANOVA to evaluate the correlation between winning seasons and annual giving, as well as the number of individuals who joined the alumni association at Kansas University. Frederick found that a positive correlation existed between football success and the total number of paid alumni association members; however, there was not a significant correlation between the number of voluntary annual givers and either the college or the athletic program.

The financial deficit of the institution and the athletic program is so drastic that some athletic departments have been forced to eliminate athletic teams altogether. Some examples of these situations were presented by Daly (2011) in the instance of Hofstra University and Northeastern University, both four year colleges located in the northeast of the United States. Hofstra and Northeastern University could not sustain the financial burden created by football to keep the sport active at their institutions. Even as a revenue-bearing sport, there was too much strain on their athletic budgets to maintain the levels of spending necessary to support the program. Both of these schools compete in football subdivision categories, which means they do not attend large bowl games that provide substantial financial awards; rather, they have to compete throughout the playoff system with the aspiration of earning a trip to the national championship game. In order to further evaluate the financial status of athletic departments, Daly surveyed 117 Division I football subdivision ticket offices to see how much revenue, if any, was generated in ticket sales each year from Olympic sports. Olympic sports are athletic teams such as baseball, volleyball, and wrestling that typically do not sell a significant number of

tickets, if any at all (Daly, 2011). His research found that very few tickets were actually sold to these sporting events, thus putting more strain on the department's fundraising efforts support athletic teams that are not able to produce a profit or break even, meaning their expenses and revenues at the end of an athletic season are equal.

Intercollegiate athletic conferences serve a number of functions, including providing regular opportunities for members to compete in an equitable environment and aiding the financial well-being of its member institutions. A particular group of athletic conferences have seen growth, reduction, or realignment over the past two decades. One of the first major conference changes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century came in 2004, when North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) board approved the decision to change its athletic affiliation from Division II to the Division I level based on merit and financial stability of the overall college and the athletic department. North Carolina Central University was one of the original founding members of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) under Division II of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, but felt the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference would be an overall better fit for its entire campus. As one of the nation's oldest historically Black colleges and universities, there was a sense of loyalty to provide the best academic and athletic opportunities possible. The college's board of Trustees wanted to align its comprehensive curriculum that included Master's degrees and doctoral degrees, with those of similar historically Black colleges such as Hampton University, Norfolk State University, and Howard University. In regards to this decision, a formal consultant, Andrew Fellingham had this to say to North Carolina Central University to potentially changing athletic conferences:

Increasing North Carolina Central University's sports-fan appeal will in turn increase its competitiveness in attracting high-achieving students and based on 2004 expenses,

moving to the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) would require an annual athletics budget of \$5.4 million. In 2004, NCCU spent about \$2.3 million on athletics (NCCU, 2004, p.B4).

Athletic conference affiliation is an institution's connection to a group of colleges for athletic competition purposes only. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is the largest intercollegiate athletic affiliation in the country. Each NCAA conference has an official conference commissioner, and there are various reasons why schools may or may not change athletic conferences. For football purposes, the Football Bowl Series (FBS) allows college teams to compete within the major bowl system, while Football Championship Series (FCS) colleges must participate in a playoff system for a separate national championship; therefore, creating an FBS champion and an FCS national champion. The FBS schools are ultimately competing for a chance to participate in a Bowl Championship Series (BCS) bowl, as well as the BCS National Championship game.

The Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), formerly known as Division 1-A, is the highest ranking football association within the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Colleges and universities who sponsor football teams in the FBS compete for bids into the major bowl games, with the six major conferences receiving automatic bids to a Bowl Championship Game. These six conferences include the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the Southeastern Conference (SEC), the Big East Conference, the Big Ten Conference (Big-Ten), the Big 12 Conference (Big 12), and the Pacific-12 Conference (Pac-12) (NCAA, 2013). Outside of the six major conferences are the "mid-major conferences," which do not receive automatic bids to the Bowl Championship Series; rather, they have to earn a spot based on their current record and national rankings. In college football, the "mid-major conferences" include the American Athletic

Conference (The American), Conference USA (C-USA), Mid-American Conference (MAC), Mountain West Conference (MW), and the Sun Belt Conference (Sun Belt) (NCAA, 2013).

Additionally, there are a limited number of independent Division 1 FBS colleges, such as Notre Dame, who also must rely on team record and rankings to earn a spot in a BCS game. Other conferences exist that are considered “major” Division I conferences, but do not host football.

An example of this type of conference is the Atlantic 10. The Atlantic 10 earns automatic bids to the NCAA national championship in all other sports; however, the member schools do not typically host football programs. With regard to the college of interest for conducting this research, Old Dominion University transitioned from the Colonial Athletic Conference, a Football Championship Conference member to a Football Bowl Championship member conference, Conference USA for athletic purposes beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. ODU will be the first institution in Virginia to move from an FCS conference to an FBS conference.

Old Dominion University is public four-year college located in Norfolk, Virginia and was formerly a branch of the College of William and Mary. The college was founded in 1930 and did not begin to offer Bachelor’s degrees until 1952. In its prior status, the college only offered the first two years of education for those students who hoped to attend the college of William and Mary to complete their Bachelorette degrees. The exact dates and information of its inauguration began on March 13, 1930, and the college first held classes in September of that year with 206 students with one hundred and twenty five men and eighty-one women. The original Division, as it originally called, started out in the old Larchmont School building and allowed people of lower socioeconomic status to attend a school of higher education for the first two years of a college education (ODU, 2013). Old Dominion University’s name is derived from one of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s nicknames “The Old Dominion” (ODU, 2013).



This nickname was given to the state by King Charles II of England for maintaining loyalty to the British crown during the English Civil War. In 1962, the college began to offer four-year degrees and officially became Old Dominion College with the primary student recruitment built around future educators and engineers. By 1969, the college had seen significant growth and retention from across the state and officially became Old Dominion University. In 1969, the university added research facilities and graduate programs to fulfill and maintain the university status. To this day, ODU serves over twenty-four thousand students through its undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral programs. The university's president is Dr. John R Broderick, who oversees over one-thousand academic staff annually.

Academically, the college offers seventy bachelor's degrees, sixty master's degrees, and thirty-five post-doctoral programs (ODU, 2013). ODU has a specialized TELETECHNET program that serves students from around the country. Many of these program offerings occur in Virginia's Community Colleges, and the number of students participating in these programs comprises of nearly one-third of Old Dominion's total full-time enrollment (ODU, 2013). Old Dominion University also has TELETECHNET partners in Arizona, North Carolina, and Washington State. The TELETECHNET program allows students to complete classes either online or face to face on one of the campus sites where television transmissions are conducted to create a sense of classroom awareness and surrounding for the transmitting student. One of the original ideas of the program derived from military personnel that were deployed for active military duty (ODU, 2013).

ODU established academic credibility by creating and producing several specialized instructional curriculums. Such academic programs include a Master's in Business Administration with concentrations in Maritime, Transportation, and Port Logistics

Management. The Commonwealth of Virginia utilized ODU's programs and location to enhance its efforts in international maritime and commerce. In addition, the college offers specialized academic programs in Marine Science and Coastal Engineering. This program is beneficial and affordable because of the university's coastal location in Norfolk, VA. ODU also partners with National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA) to provide research assistance in aeronautical engineering (ODU, 2013).

Collaboratively, the University is comprised of six different colleges with the Darden College of Education maintaining some of its highest enrollment numbers. The Darden College houses six different academic programs with a total of 23 majors or specializations offered to undergraduate and graduate students alike (ODU, 2013). The Batten College of Engineering and Technology houses many of the engineering and specialized programs listed above and is the first college of its kind to offer all degrees of Modeling and Simulation (ODU, 2013), including Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, Doctorate of Engineering, and Doctorate of Philosophy. The other four colleges include the College of Business and Public Administration, the College of Arts and Letters, the College of Health Sciences, and the College of Sciences (ODU, 2013). Additionally, Old Dominion houses two libraries and the Career Management Center, which assists students with internships and jobs.

Athletically, Old Dominion University supports 18 intercollegiate athletic teams, and the college mascot is a Monarch. A Monarch is a lion with a crown on its head. When referencing women's sports, the mascot is referenced as the Lady Monarchs. The college began its women's athletic competition in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics in Women (AIAW). At the same time the university was also a male member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). During the 1960s and early 1970s, women's athletic teams did not compete in the

NCAA; rather, the two organizations were considered enemies until the late 1970's and early 1980's when most women's athletic teams officially joined the ranks of the NCAA. The title IX Act of 1972 began the slow transformation of equality within U.S. collegiate athletic programs. In 1981, the AIAW disbanded because the NCAA began to support and promote women's athletic national championships, thus creating a much less desire to be a part of two different athletic affiliations. The same year, ODU transitioned its women's athletic programs to the NCAA from the AIAW as well. Throughout the college's athletic program history, their teams have won twenty-eight national team championships and four individual national championships (ODU, 2013). Nine of the twenty-eight national championships have been won in women's field hockey, which is the national record for national championships won by a single school in field hockey.

Old Dominion University is considered to be Title IX compliant in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics by the Department of Education. The college's ratio of athletic teams and student-athletes is representative of its student enrollment, as well as the financial support shown to each sports team. The principles that are evaluated internally by Old Dominion University for athletic purposes include a number of various areas that are evaluated by a variety of factors. Some of these factors include financial assistance, which must be awarded on the basis of the number of male and female student-athletes. The test is financial proportionality to gender. The total amount of financial aid given to each student-athlete must be substantially proportional to the ratio of male and female athletes that are within the entire athletic department as a whole. Any accommodation of athletic interests and abilities must also be adhered to when issues financial assistance. Another factor has that has to be considered is the true participation

opportunism. These opportunities for men and women must be provided in substantial proportionality to their enrolments overall. A question ODU asks itself is:

If there has been under participation at an institution, is the institution making good faith efforts to remedy this? If there has been under participation and programs haven't been expanded, can the institution show that women have been fully and effectively accommodated by their present programs" (ODU, 2014, p.A42).

Other program areas include a number of different things that include but may not be limited to: benefits, opportunities and treatments of sports participants should be equivalent, though not necessarily identical when it evaluating equipment inventory and supplies, scheduling of games and contests, practice times, travel and per diem allowances for all contests and recruitment visits for college coaches, academic tutoring options, coaching (including assignments and compensation), locker rooms and practice facilities, playing fields, medical and training facilities, housing and dining facilities, publicity, administrative and clerical support, recruitment effort and budgets (Old Dominion, 2012). All of these factors are part of ODU's Title IX compliancy review that it evaluates on a yearly basis.

All of this information makes up the history and background of Old Dominion University, thus creating a true scenario and reason for evaluating how or why changing athletic conferences may affect fundraising efforts for both the institution and the athletic departments.

### **Problem Statement**

College athletic programs consider changing athletic conferences for many various reasons, but some are high budget costs, exposure, facilities, sponsorships, growth, and media relations. These changes are often rewarded with financial support through fundraising that aids the development of the entire athletic department as well as other colleges as a whole. Over the

past two years, over a dozen Division I NCAA institutions and a number of other NCAA institutions have made the decision to change athletic conferences, thus leaving a gap to study the causal comparison between conference affiliations and donor support (NCAA, 2014). In particular, Old Dominion University is the first college in the Commonwealth of Virginia to move from an FCS to an FBS conference. In a research study previously completed by U.S. Findings titled ‘Employee and Student-Athlete Responses to Organizational Change in a Division I Football Championship Subdivision Athletic Department’ revealed that forces for change included competitive pressures from conference affiliation, economic conditions in a turbulent environment, and alumni, parents and fans” (Bruening & Preachy, 2011, p. 204). With the nonexistence of this situation in the state of Virginia, the literature fails to show how conference affiliations affect total donation amounts; rather, it only shows how winning affects donations. The problem is that institutions are making athletic conference changes without having any concrete data regarding the impact on fundraising support for both the college (educational foundation) and the athletic department (athletic foundation).

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative causal comparative study was to determine if the changes in athletic conference affiliation affect the total monetary amount of donations that a school received upon making a change to both its athletic department and educational foundation as a whole. This study reviewed both the institutional donation structure, as well as the athletic department structure.

The true purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the total donation dollars prior to, and following, an athletic conference change. There are numerous dynamics that impacted this causal comparative study, and these were identified; however, the research will be very

valuable to intercollegiate athletic directors, directors of athletic development, directors of institutional development, college presidents, and College Board members nationwide. There are other potential institutions that may evaluate the process to move athletics from the Football Championship Series to the Football Bowl Series or who may evaluate changing NCAA divisional conferences upon further research of the advancement implications on financial gain through total athletic and educational fundraising.

### **Significance of the Study**

As athletic programs and athletic directors analyze the potential revenue growth associated with a change in athletic conference affiliation, many factors had to be assessed. The total evaluation of fundraising and revenue goals will be a key for all future decisions on this topic. There is currently minimal scientific analysis of this topic and very little literature written concerning development as it correlates with change in athletic conference. A real understanding of the most current changes in conferences can assist those making these decisions in the very near future. Evaluating the option to change athletic conferences will allow athletic departments and institutions of higher learning to gain a more dimensional understanding of the true revenue and marketing reasons to consider making such a change.

This potential evaluation of change affects student-athletes, program administrators, athletic staff, coaches, fans, alumni, athletic opponents, competing colleges within the same state, other college personnel, and potential students to the college. An article published in 2015 by Jon Morse, titled “Why Do Schools Move to FBS”, provided a quick snapshot into the ever-changing arena of college football programs and their college team’s desire to change athletic football conferences. The author provided some detailed information, but the most significant statement reads, “but the primary driver for a school seeking a move is very simple: cold hard

cash” ( p.9). With regard to information outside of financial means, the author discusses facility upgrades, national prestige, public relations and marketing, and recruitment options.

Athletic conference affiliation is an institution’s connection to a group of colleges for athletic competition purposes only. Each of these conferences collectively reports to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which stated earlier is the largest intercollegiate athletic affiliation in the United States.

The individual conferences which are under the supervision of the NCAA also need access to valuable information to help their administrators recruit new memberships. It would be beneficial for such recruitment if certain conferences could put a fundraising value on their affiliation to both the educational and athletic foundations of member and potential member colleges. Such potential information justifies even more significance for this quantitative research study.

### **Research Questions**

**Research Question #1, RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase total athletic giving donation amounts?

**Research Question #2, RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase the total educational giving donation amounts?

### **Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis #1, H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total athletic giving donation amounts.

**Hypothesis #2, H<sub>2</sub>:** There is significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total educational giving donation amounts.

### **Null Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis #1, H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total athletic giving donation amounts.

**Null Hypothesis #2, H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total educational giving donation amounts.

### **Identification of Variables**

In this causal comparative study, the dependent variables were the total amount of donations the athletic department and the educational institution receive. The fundraised donation totals were listed on each college's 990 form as income and each college had to maintain a separate not-for-profit educational foundation and athletic foundation. The independent variable were the change from one athletic conference to another athletic conference. This study focused on fundraised dollars over time when institutions change athletic conferences. The one controlled variable in this study was the number of sponsored sports at each college remained consistent. One participating college dropped seven sports leading into the first statistical data review year. In addition to the same number of sports, the gender equity remained constant as well.

### **Definitions**

- 1.) Development:** *Development* refers to the ways nonprofit organizations supplement their earned income with donations, grants, sponsorships and gifts-in-kind. In this sense, it is common for nonprofits in the U.S. to have a development department where staff conduct fundraising campaigns and manage related activities (Johnson, 2008).



- 2.) **Fundraising:** *Fundraising* refers to providing related services of fundraising, including prospect research, database management, gift recording and processing, accounting, special-events planning and oversight, and donor relations (Drozdowski, 2010).
- 3.) **Donation:** *Donations* are gifts given by persons, typically for charitable purposes and/or to benefit a cause or not-for-profit organization.. A donation can take various forms, including cash offering; services; new or used goods including clothing, toys, food, and vehicles; and may even consist of emergency relief or humanitarian items. These types of donated items are called gift-in-kind items (Greve, 2009).
- 4.) **Donor:** *Donor* is a concept that revolves around philanthropy derived from relationships, and the most important relationship marketing or fundraising professionals can nurture is the one with the donor, the person who gives (Myers, 2012).

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Overview

Athletic departments nationwide are representatives of their overall institutions on a national basis. Colleges with major athletic programs generate millions of dollars a year in retail sales, athletic-related business, and alumni support. College athletic venues sell thousands of tickets and create exposure for the entire university. Such sports as football and basketball are considered revenue-generating sports and help drive a culture of school spirit and financial stability to the college and the athletic department through sales, sponsorships, marketing, and other strategic methods. One unfortunate aspect of fundraising and alumni support; however, is involved within each institution as a whole. For example, large institutions often have preexisting battles over fundraising resources, thus leading to internal conflict. Many different departments have their own development directors, and each of the individuals who serve these positions feel very passionately about their cause, thus indicating a need to show how athletic success may be able to benefit all departments' fundraising efforts.

College athletic programs investigate options to change conferences in order to meet their high budget costs. This change is often rewarded with fundraising support that aids the development of the entire athletic department. However, this quantitative research is designed to review the causal comparison of the changes in conference affiliations, particularly those associated with football and basketball, to the amount of donations that a school may receive pre and post athletic conference affiliation change. A result of this investigated whether athletic success also aids institutional fundraising for all academic, research, and athletic programs, while also evaluating the process of fundraising and comparing the various levels of academic and athletic donation totals. Through the use of literature research, other areas of campus life may be

affected, as well as branding, visibility and community association. Intercollegiate athletic programs and academic programs routinely fight for financial resources. There is little compliance between the two areas, but this does not result from the advancement of employees; rather, it is an immediate result of the circumstances under which education and athletics play in the United States. Both entities have their reasons for such competition; however, the feuding is constant. Academic programs feel a need to develop new programs and construct new educational buildings; athletics has similar needs, but for athletic-only purposes. Campus fundraising and development are essential to both private and public institutions, but they are also essential to the potential students of each institution. This overall effort needs to be coordinated from the president's position downward in order to create a collaborative fundraising effort to benefits all aspect of the institution.

Academic and athletic fundraising build a college's success practices and its reputation in various ways. The conflict does not belong to the idea; rather it belongs to the purpose and culture of each department and program. Athletics-at-large institutions, mostly Division I members, have been shown to increase the overall revenue of an institution substantially; however, athletic mishaps and bad public relations are often a source of misinformation and misrepresentation of a university as well. The various directors need to have a positive working environment that can cultivate financial gains for all athletic and academic programs. Many students cannot attend college without a scholarship, thus educational and athletic fundraising is very important in the field of education because one of the largest aspects of educational fundraising is scholarship money.

An 2015 article by Jon Morse titled "Why Do Schools Move to FBS" provides a quick snapshot into the ever-changing arena of college football programs and their desires to change

athletic football conferences. The author provides some detailed information, but the most significant statement reads, “but the primary driver for a school seeking a move is very simple: cold hard cash” (Morse, 2015, p. 9). With regard to information outside of financial means, the author discusses facility upgrades, national prestige, public relations and marketing, and recruitment options.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Higher education is a priority in the United States, as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia. Intercollegiate athletics is a unique niche of many public and private institutions’ recruitment and public relation practices. This study is built around the theory of interest, which was first introduced by Cross (1999). This theory is exactly why colleges and universities are considering a change of athletic conference affiliation. The individual colleges and institutions have an invested interest in what athletic conference in which they belong. Financial stability and fundraising is of their institution’s best interest. Cross is given credit for the theory of interest and Cross’ depiction described the true theoretical framework of interest theory that creates the same scenario of this study. Cross believed that there were a number of factors that impacted an institution’s decision to change conferences, with the largest effect based around undergraduate admissions. The theorist stated, “the rationale for changing intercollegiate athletic classification was based on expected benefits for undergraduate admissions, alumni support and development, community relationships, campus life, university visibility, and university association” (Cross, 1999, p.261).

Intercollegiate athletics is a fast paced and growing business within the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as across the nation. According to the Commonwealth of Virginia, state funding has been cut by 13% in the past two years (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2013). In some

schools and colleges, this has even been reduced by more than 13%. Knowing this information, colleges and institutions must find ways to generate private funding that will offset the revenue that has been lost by colleges. Athletic departments assist with branding and the marketability of a college trying to market itself to the general public and those actively reviewing such areas of the college market.

The University of Maryland departed the Atlantic Coast Conference for the Big 10 Conference, and the university's athletic program is suffering from financial drought. The college already over spent its operating revenue streams from ticket sales for revenue-generating sports, but had to find financial means to increase funding and build new facilities. The college immediately looked at its fundraising efforts. In the Atlantic Coast Conference, the college's fundraising had dropped significantly, so there was a serious need to regenerate fundraising activities. According to a 2011 report by a university commission, the athletic department's fundraising declined by a total of \$6 million from 2008 to 2011 (Prewitt, 2013). The school will have to rely on fundraising success to build new athletic facilities seen as necessary to compete in the Big Ten Conference. The president and athletic director discussed the need to use revenues to generate new and renovated athletic facilities for the Maryland Terrapins male and female athletic teams.

The college knew it was taking a risk, but the potential benefit outweighed the risk to increase its fundraising capabilities:

You take a school like Michigan, which has more alumni than any school in the country. Maryland has never been a huge school, and athletics has not been supported well by Maryland alums. They've got a ways to go there. University officials remain steadfast in

the projections, confident they made the right decision to depart the ACC for the wildly profitable Big Ten (Prewitt, 2013, p. B1).

In order to keep this from regularly occurring, fundraising is a must at all institutions. Fundraising not only affects large institutions, but educational fundraising efforts are challenging at all educational levels of higher education. According to Doty (2007), communication of institutional strengths is the most appealing in all fundraising efforts. This article concentrated on research-intensive institutions and the effectiveness of their fundraising efforts. The study showed that effective communication at all times kept the donors up-to-date on what was happening on campus, and it helped promote the successful strategies and acknowledgements of the University (Doty, 2007). This same philosophy can be used in all aspects of fundraising efforts to include academics, research, and athletics. Doty made a strong case for the amount of grant writing that is included in research-based fundraising.

### **Related Literature**

The literature review will provide an overview of the various research regarding why colleges and universities have chosen to change intercollegiate athletic conferences. Reasons often vary as to why there is a need to fundraise for the institution and athletic departments. Also, various reasons for college and athletic branding efforts occur, as well as other various outcomes that athletics may affect the area surrounding overall fundraising success. In the highly competitive intercollegiate athletic environment, many intercollegiate varsity athletic programs have financial systems independent from the academic side of the college or university. These types of programs function on multimillion dollar budgets. Such programs are partially funded through ticket sales, licensed merchandise, television rights, and other marketing venues. However, donations from alumni and boosters account for the most substantial portion

of many athletic budgets through their athletic foundations or in many cases the mascot of the college's Club, such as the "Hokie Club" of the Virginia Tech University athletics department.

According to Holquist (2011), intercollegiate athletics has captured the hearts and attention of individuals all around the world. One of the biggest assets to having a successful athletic program is the third-party donors that support the efforts of both the college and the athletic program. Holquist sought to find a correlation between the alumni donors and their reasons for annual giving to the College. A survey was mailed to 122 athletic alumni who had graduated over a fifty-year span, which was from the years 1960 to 2010. The donations did not have to be athletic specific; rather, they could be to any part of the college, including academics, research, capital campaign, and so forth. Holquist received a 31% response rate and completed a one-way ANOVA to determine the giving measures of these individuals. According to Holquist, "The results suggest that these initiatives should be derived from charitable giving models of altruistic giving, organizational identification, social identification, economic or utility satisfaction, and relationship-marketing strategies" (Holquist, 2011, p. 81). There was not a definitive answer to the exact reason as to why alumni donors would support the college in any of the potential areas, but ultimately individuals did make donations.

Many institutions from community colleges to four-year colleges have athletic and non-athletic foundations that raise money for the college and the athletic department. In particular, the athletic development director is responsible for reaching out to all potential athletic fundraisers. These foundations solicit millions of dollars a year for intercollegiate athletic programs. The Tiger Club at the University of Memphis does more than raise funds; it also has an advisory board that promotes the college. The Board's first president said, "I've never seen anyone who served who didn't understand the importance of the university, and come away

more committed than when they first started” (Williams, 2007, p. 8). This type of board understands the overall meaning of the college and realizes that sports are just one way to create a sense of recognition for the institution itself. The Board also understands that it has an obligation to assist Memphis in its efforts to generate millions of dollars in donations to assist with athletic department needs.

Academic institutions have seen a significant decrease in the financial support of state and local governments over the past eight years due to the effects of the economy. Such effects are tied to job placement struggles, the former collapse of the stock market, and the general overall growth of the United States economy. This financial effect hurts not only the academic sectors, but also the athletic sector. In most instances, Institutions’ 503(c)(3) accounts were tied to the stock market; thus the ability of their accounts to grow naturally was endured, and more personal donations were sought by collegiate athletic and academic departments. A research study conducted by Strode (2006), evaluated the motives of donors who gave to intercollegiate athletic departments. A survey was sent to one thousand three hundred and forty people with a total of six hundred and thirty returned (Strode, 2006). A correlation was found between the level of fan identification and the achievement motive, while using a t-test indicated there was a significant relationship between giving to the athletic department and the school’s athletic productivity, which is based on winning. Individuals feel a sense of togetherness and connectedness when the topic of sports is discussed. Strode stated, “The generous donors often feel as if they are a connected part of something special” (Strode, 2006, p. 140).

Colleges and universities often shed a different light on the investment of time and resources in athletics. In other parts of the country, state supported schools have invested in



athletics to help draw more students and help support their college's "brands." According to Alexander and Kern (2010):

State supported universities have been investing considerable sums in intercollegiate athletics in the hope that such investments will pay off in terms of increased enrollments, improved student quality, and economic benefits such as revenues from ticket sales and bowl and tournament appearances (p. 254).

With this idea in mind, Alexander and Kern's (2010) main question was, does this athletic effort lead to more state appropriations for state-supported colleges because legislators look at athletic impact as a college-wide benefit (Alexander & Kern, 2010)? They found little significance in the overall success of the program and legislative appropriations when comparing all varying levels of NCAA Division I, II, and III institutions. Alexander and Kern also explored the effects of varying conference affiliations of the state supported schools to see if legislative appropriations varied. Again, they found limited evidence of this correlation, thus questioning the continued state-supported efforts to assist any athletic programs that may require additional resources.

An article from Leonard Sweitzer (2009) titled "Institutional Ambitions and Athletic Conference Affiliations" discussed various settings impacting why institutions are members of particular athletic conferences. Sweitzer knew that the athletic conference in which a university or college competed had to possess meaning beyond what was expected on the playing field. Profiling was preferred for colleges when selecting what conferences for competition. Such factors as size, location, demographics, and success rates often played an enormous role in such decisions. For example, the Ivy League (a premier academic institutional league) comprises eight highly selective private research universities in the Northeast; the Big Ten includes ten

state flagship institutions (and one large private research university) in the Midwest; and in Divisions II and III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), conferences often include institutions of a similar type from within a given state. Many of these colleges have very similar missions and visions; while still being geographically located within a closer proximity to each other. Such commonalities often create a peer group of idea sharing to reach alumni and donors, while also looking at success rates, even though these colleges are often competing against each other on the field. Some of this strategy even creates a tighter sense of competition among administrators and pushes them to perform at higher levels behind the scenes (Sweitzer, 2009). Such aspirations are a pivotal part of a college or university's ability to fundraise, thus a strong correlation as to which athletic conference a college competes in.

In 2014, Paul Keiu provided a research debate on what it takes for an athletic program to move from the FCS level to FBS sponsored sports. He broke the research into several categories: "finding the finances, upgrading the rosters, striking a balance, and moving on up" (Keiu, 2014). Keiu notes that Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, is one of the institutions within the FCS that has publically noted its desire to move to an FBS conference. This article provided the following list of transition schools over the past two decades who have moved from FCS to FBS status: Appalachian State University: 2014 – From: FCS; Georgia Southern University: 2014 – From: FCS; Georgia State University: 2013 – From: FCS; originally began in 2010, South Alabama University: 2012 – From: FCS; founded in 2009, Texas State University: 2011 – From: FCS through the WAC; and Troy State University: 2001 – From: I-AA, which was formerly the FCS (Keiu, 2014).

Martinez, Stinson, Kang, Jenville (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on intercollegiate athletics and institutional fundraising. This study evaluated a wide range of institutions and their

various departments of institutional giving. The analysis showed that the entire institution benefited from higher giving rates when athletic teams were successful. This information was found by looking at the total giving amounts of academic and athletic efforts. Another analysis showed that alumni were more likely to donate when athletic teams were experiencing successful seasons (Martinez, et al., 2010). The two major sports of influence were found to be men's basketball and football, which are also the most viewed college sporting events on television. Lastly, the classification of NCAA level, which can be Division I, Division II, and Division III had an impact on how giving was established. The larger more prominent Division I institutions experienced the most impact because of television deals and the excitement generated by successful athletic programs, as well as the fact that many of these institutions of higher learning are research based institutions. Such institutions are typically publically funded state colleges that require faculty to meet a minimum number of research hours and include Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the University of Virginia, both within the Commonwealth.

According to Cohen, Whisenant, & Walsh, (2011), athletic programs with sustained success did not see a linear relationship between winning percentage and the amount of money raised. Some of the noticeable differences did show that when a football team won 100% of their games during the 2002 season, the total number of donors was 4,503, with an average contribution of \$1,040 (Cohen, et. al., 2011). In 1998, the football team won 45% of their games, while only 2,630 people made contributions. The contribution average was above that in 2002 at an average donation rate of \$1,959, but the significant difference is seen by the number of donors (Cohen, et. al., 2011). When evaluating the overall ten-year correlation, the contributions and donation amounts are relatively similar to when compared to winning

percentage. This research shows that more alumni or fans are still following the teams and making a strong name for the university based on their football team's winning seasons.

The donors who annually reach into their pocket and help meet the fundraising goals of the college are often eager to give. Research by Stinson and Howard has shown that those who give to the athletic department will typically give to the academic departments as well. In the study by Stinson and Howard (2010) there were 65 in-depth interviews conducted with academic and athletic donors alike to evaluate their motives for donations. These findings provided several trends and themes that led to reasons for consistent giving from donors. Stinson and Howard (2010) stated that, "Major donors are likely to support both athletic and academic fundraising efforts at an institution, and retain these high levels of giving" (p. 314). The athletic and academic departments typically must compete against each other for fundraising efforts. This study helps show a correlation among large donors who support both aspects of the institution. According to this study, "Major donors often have their names on academic and athletic buildings around campus, or at least make an effort to equally support both sides of the institution" (Stinson & Howard, 2010, p. 312).

Stinson and Howard (2008) also evaluated patterns in private giving among I-AA and I-AAA institutions, which is one of the divisions in which ODU was formerly a member of. The article was called "Winning Does Matter: Patterns in Private Giving to Athletic and Academic Programs at NCAA I-AA and I-AAA Institutions" (Stinson & Howard, 2008). Such institutional members had to work significantly harder to raise awareness and recognition of their football program and athletic department. The branding campaigns and donor-alumni relations were much more difficult to actively connect with, thus creating a tougher environment to fundraise and "friendraise." Inevitably, winning does have an impact on the ability to fundraise.

There is also a sense of donor loyalty that exists once an initial donation has been made. According to Shapiro (2008), “Fundraising has become an essential resource for college athletic departments and athletic fundraising has grown from 5% of total annual revenue in the 1960s to 18% of the total revenue in today’s athletic world” (Shapiro, 2008, p. 32). Shapiro conducted a survey to determine the perceptions and retention rates of athletic supporters around the athletic department at the University of Northern Colorado. An online survey was sent to over nine thousand individuals, and nearly 2000 were returned. This provided a response rate of approximately 20%. After using a one-way ANOVA to evaluate the data, Shapiro concluded that both relationship fundraising and service quality seemed to have a major effect on donor retention (Shapiro, 2008). This provided evidence that overall relationships with donors were a significant factor in the success of departments’ fundraising activities.

Loyalty is also derived from conference affiliation. A study completed by Havard, Wann, and Ryan (2013) shows how emotions and feelings can be portrayed by fans when a programs changes conferences. Their study quantitatively investigated how fan perceptions and willingness to consider committing anonymous acts of aggression toward participants of the rival teams differed between a rival in a current conference and an anticipated one in a new athletic conference. There was a sample of 168 online fans of teams affected by conference realignment, and they were administered a survey containing the Sport Rivalry Fan Perception Scale (SRFPS) (Havard, Wann, & Ryan, 2013). There were questions regarding willingness to consider committing anonymous acts of aggression on the survey. Their study used a two-way MANOVA that revealed significant differences existed regarding one SRFPS subscale, and ANOVA indicated that fans were more likely to consider committing anonymous acts of aggression toward participants of the current rivalries than anticipated rival teams when a school

changes conferences. Thus, for instance, rivals such as Old Dominion University and Virginia Commonwealth University are more likely to retain feuds than ODU and a new Conference USA opponent. These incidences play pivotal roles in alumni and donor relations.

A research study by Anctil (2009) stated, “Advancement offices all over campuses grasp the concept of utilizing the entire college to benefit its own academic or athletic fundraising efforts” (p. 37). Anctil (2009) presented findings that show how institutional advancement grew through the usage of great athletic teams and the influence in which television ads and televised games made for advancement efforts. Televised sports created a sense of connection to universities and colleges that created opportunities for marketing and media for the advancement offices. Such marketing routines are ultimately free to advancement offices that piggy back their internal marketing venues from. Advancement offices purposefully and accurately approached donors after a successful televised game or match. The majority of these televised sports included men’s basketball and football games, especially bowl games and national tournament games that are seen by individuals all over the country, rather than only on regional television stations.

Stuart (2013) stated:

Athletic conferences with a strong roster of high-profile member colleges generate millions of dollars in game telecast revenue, explaining the conferences distribute the telecast revenue to member schools, and distribution differs by conference. The only way to make sure that you are in a good financial condition is to make sure you are in a good conference. Everyone's trying to get into the right conference (p. 81).

Rutgers University was subsidizing its student-athletes by an amount of \$1,000 per student-athlete, but its change from the Big East to the Big 10 will bring in more funds for the program,

and the college and will lower the support necessary. A lot of this research also depends on state-supported institutions versus non-state-supported institutions. For example, the University of Georgia, a state-supported institution, is a member of the Southeastern Conference (SEC), one of the nation's five major college sports conferences with a pot of gold flowing in from its telecast contracts each year that help secure the financial future of conference members' expensive athletic programs (Stuart, 2013).

From a different perspective, Fort Valley State University is also a state-supported institution, but is not part of a major intercollegiate athletic conference and is losing a million dollars a year on intercollegiate athletics because it lacks a major alumni base, sponsors, and television promotions. Marketing of major NCAA athletic conferences is a process that possibly can fully aid itself; however as a conference and as an athletic department, it still takes time and marketing commitment to deliver the message to the surrounding communities and across the nation. Such a change takes time and careful planning to see the long-term and immediate results of such processes.

An article released in 2015 reviews the true finances of football impact on a college campus. The University of Alabama Birmingham announced in early 2015 that the college would shut down its football program, but on June 1<sup>st</sup>, the college announced that football would be played the fall of 2015 on the Alabama campus. The college president made the following comments:

UAB announced June 1<sup>st</sup> that there would be gridiron games this fall causing many around the country to be perplexed. This announcement came six months after President Way Watts declared the end of the program. Keeping football on campus, it was decided then, was too expensive and took too much away from the rest of the campus 67% of the

\$30 million budget came from the university's school funds and student fees. This also was a school in one of the smaller FBS conferences, Conference USA (Arnett, 2015, p. A1).

This president goes along and talks about the impact of the alumni base that supported football and the college's ability to review the overall direct and indirect income of a college football program. Revenues were viewed as game guarantees, conference support, postseason support, fundraising, television ads, and overall local, regional, and national exposure. The president of UAB stated, "In the current climate of conference re-alignment and the excitement of Cinderellas and March Madness, it is easy to envision what it would be like to increase visibility" (Arnett, 2015, p. A2). Visibility is generated through the marketing efforts and overall television and media coverage of the program.

This marketing effort and athletic success often lead to donor loyalty. Televised games and national presence exhibits the colleges as whole on a regular basis. Such events as television coverage allow fans and spectators to follow their college of choice much more easily and efficiently. The loyalty aspect also allowed development officers on both the academic and athletic side of the college to reach an appreciation for loyalty. Loyalty is always a benefit when donations are being collected. An analysis of relationship fundraising and service quality on donor retention was conducted on athletic fundraising departments. The study was examined to determine if there were any underlying factors that affect donor loyalty. Shapiro (2008) used a one-way ANOVA to determine the differences between two groups of donors. The information was collected using an online survey that contained five different parts. A total of 9,164 past and present donors received this survey via email, and a total 1,844 surveys were useable for the study. When evaluating the findings, the ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference



in expectation performance perception between current and lapsed donors, and their pleasantness with the athletic department aided their continued support through donations (Shapiro, 2008). The results show that the quality of concern and attention truly does matter to people who are willing to donate their personal resources to aid an athletic department.

With this thought of customer service in mind, it is important to include all areas of both the athletic directors' and presidents' roles in athletics. Athletic directors at various institutions hold responsibility for fundraising efforts to increase the athletic budgets. Shaw (2004) sent a questionnaire to all Division III athletic directors that were identified by the NCAA to determine if private fundraising was part of their daily athletic director job duties. According to Shaw, this is nearly always expected at Division III institutions. He stated, "A total of 65% of the athletic directors that returned the questionnaire reported that they were full-time employees and private fundraising was part of their job duties" (Shaw, 2004, p. 31). The position of athletic director at small institutions is rapidly evolving to include fundraising, branding, and marketing production.

Professor Williams (2011), who completed a phenomenological study of intercollegiate athletic directors' experiences at the Division II level, addressed even more responsibilities of the athletic director position. Athletic directors are expected to be successful leaders and innovators, but are caught in between the levels of expectations set forth by Division I and Division III athletic directors. The Division II level possesses the same award status of athletic scholarships as the Division I level, but the department and the college also have to battle to determine where the additional funds are going to be raised. This challenges the time commitment of the athletic director position because only a percentage of Division II athletic departments have their own development officers. Williams says, "Division II college athletic directors' main priority is to

create a balance between academic and athletic expectations” (p. 299). This forces the athletic development back to the college itself.

Throughout the past ten years, colleges have depended on the broadcast rights to produce fees as a significant source of revenue. According to Jenson (2014), “However, given that the industry is dominated by public and non-profit organizations such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association, intercollegiate athletic conferences, postseason bowl games, and institutions of higher learning, empirical valuations of intercollegiate athletic programs have been sparse.” With these rights and financials in mind, conference offices even view these tv rights as a competitive advantage when recruiting new members. Jenson (2015) conducted a study to determine if conferences utilize the fees paid by rights holders to broadcast football games that are held between two teams from the same conference. This study served as an investigation of the factors that may be significant predictors of the value of individual football programs to athletic conferences. When the study was complete, the results showed that variables representing a program's on-field performance, off-field prestige, and academic reputation are statistically significant predictors of its value in broadcast rights fees, thus creating more revenue.

The resulting models used by Jenson were to determine the most valuable college football programs in television media rights fees, as well as identify a number of programs that are currently under or over-valued based on their individual college share of rights fees earned from their athletic conference's current television contracts. These conferences will vary within the National Collegiate Athletic Association. According to Jenson (2015) “Today’s landscape of conference realignment, this study's results include several novel findings for the leaders of non-

profit organizations, such as intercollegiate athletic administrators, seeking to maximize institutional and conference resources” (p. 24).

At the junior/community college level, studies show this can even be more difficult than at the higher levels. Brett Mouron (2014), the author of “Leadership and Management Skills of Junior College Athletic Directors,” cites a number of skillsets that must be present in order for a program to be successful. As funding continues to decline for colleges as a whole, athletic programs must cut funding as well. A quantitative study was completed to determine many of the statistics on how and why athletic directors need and develop certain skillsets in order to become successful. There were 16 athletic directors from community and junior colleges in California were interviewed with open-ended questions about leadership and finances. The results of the study showed that successful community and junior college athletic directors must have the capacity to create an environment that helps all members of the program flourish. They also need the ability to fundraise for the entire athletic program, while also possessing financial savviness with an attitude to promote their entire college and program. In addition, a successful athletic director must be a risk taker who can solve problems on a regular basis, think critically about the entire project and purpose, and be a decision maker that leads to successful and strategic overall decisions. (Mouron, 2014).

Athletic directors understand the challenges that continue to evolve and develop in the world of higher education and intercollegiate athletics, thus the significance of finding the right athletic conference with the right fundraising technics. An article titled “Finances and College Athletics” displays the financial strains that many athletic programs are seeing, while outlaying the necessary goals and ways to implement better strategies to maintain successful bank accounts within the athletic department. Hodge and Tanlu and (2009) demonstrate the real life struggles

that are being experienced in higher education right now to include athletic department struggles and a significant need to increase fundraising efforts.

An article published on the “10 Best Fundraising Athletic Directors in College Athletics” talks about how effective athletic directors and college presidents are in the fundraising world. The easiest fundraising comes from the power five athletic conferences in the country; while smaller FCS schools have a much harder time fundraising (Conway, 2015). Athletic Directors at non-FBS schools have to work even harder to reach fundraising goals and donors because their programs are not in premier athletic conferences. College presidents understand the constant need to fundraise and help support athletics rather than forcing athletic fees upon the students as part of their annual tuition payments. The role of athletic director continues to evolve, and fundraising is going to be one of the main success characteristics in the business (Conway, 2015).

According to Luy (2007), Division III NCAA institutions really began their fundraising efforts to keep up with other areas of concern within the department, such as Title IX, postseason competition expenses, and philosophies that were more rewarding and engaging to all student-athletes. This article embraces and presents the justification for initiating fundraising departments within athletic departments. In order to see how these institutions handled their fundraising efforts, 437 Division III institutions were surveyed to determine their best fundraising practices. These surveys were issued to both the athletic director and development officer at each college. Certain data was gathered for evaluation purposes, such as comparing whether a college was considered a private or public academic sector, student enrollment, and athletic team output, which is based on winning percentage. The survey found that 46.5% of Division III institutions felt that athletic fundraising was part of the overall job duties of the

institutional development officer (Luy, 2007). It is noted that 43.5% felt it was the athletic department's responsibility, while the remaining percentage had mixed feelings about where the development efforts for athletics should originate. Overall, Luy noted that further research would be necessary at the Division III level and comparative analyses could be completed to compare the various divisional levels of NCAA athletic teams and conferences.

Bass, Newman, Clopton, and Gordon (2014) took a close look at influences on fundraising as a whole within National Collegiate Athletic Association fundraising departments. Such factors as boosters, marketing, conference affiliation, and direct college funding were evaluated and taken into consideration. The study concentrated on Big South institutions, Liberty University being one. It was immediately determined that only the major sports such as football and basketball had an immediate reach of only a 2-hour radius (Bass et. al, 2014). The group completed interviews and observations from an organizational ethnography that was conducted within Big South Boosters. The results of the study concluded that members of the Big South that were within a metro city population provide boosters and the college with inherent fundraising advantages. Some of the other findings concluded that metro city college members also had limited competition from other entertainment venues, ability to capitalize on civic pride in the college as a whole and the individual athletic department, and lastly the leverage in negotiations with buyers and sellers (Bass et.al., 2014).

On the academic side of the institution, quite often a vice president of the college or institution oversees the fundraising efforts. According to Eller (2010), this vice presidential position has many challenges to consider, but quite often outside support and college engagement activities create opportunities and success strategies that help aid this position's mission. Eller stated, "A single-site case study was selected because it provided the opportunity

for an in-depth analysis of four vice presidents involved in fundraising at one institution” (Eller, 2010, p. 14). On small campuses, the institutional advancement officer has the challenge of working to support the entire college, but at large institutions, there are various development officers that must work on a collaborative effort to aid the institution. These coexisting efforts should be modeled from the executive staff, down through the entire university hierarchy. Challenges indicated the perception that the vice presidents at times did not work closely together perhaps owing to decentralization in fundraising efforts (Eller, 2010, p. 21).

With the idea of higher administration in mind, college boards, the college president, and recommendations from the faculty and staff play a pivotal role in the existence for athletic programs at all divisional levels. When evaluating funding, typically college presidents work directly with the athletic director and seek approval from the college boards to receive and review funding proposals. There have been several situations where funding is so tight that college presidents have made recommendations that colleges withdraw their funding of intercollegiate athletics. Such instances have occurred in the state of North Carolina with the Junior College Association involving Stanly Community College and Wilkes Community College (NJCAA, 2013). Caudill stated, “We are saddened by this decision; however, funding for academic programs has become more of a priority for our resources here at Wilkes Community College” (Caudill, 2013).

Community college presidents have even been forced to evaluate their budgets and tighten their belts since the economy has taken a toll on educational funding. This has forced community college presidents to rely heavily on foundational support to reach annual college budget needs. Gentile and Jones (2009) conducted a study to review the major needs of community college foundations and the financial stability that can accompany a strong

foundation. The researchers evaluated all educational foundation directors at the community colleges in the state of New Jersey. Some general demographics of the position showed that “Sixty percent of the individuals filling this position were women and the average age was 46 years” (Gentile & Jones, 2009, p. 8). Personal interviews were conducted with each development officer, and the results concluded that neither wealth of the community, presidential background, nor size of the college mattered in the interest of fundraising; rather, effective networking and hard work were the determining factors in fundraising (Gentile & Jones, 2009). This evidence showed that fundraising is possible in all areas of the country.

Once money is successfully raised, a strategic use of these funds must exist. This strategic philosophy is developed by a number of people, but particularly the college president and upper administrative staff. The objective of all parties is to utilize the money in a positive and effective way. The University of North Carolina conducted a study to determine what the most valuable benefits of donations were. The University of North Carolina’s athletic department hosts an athletic foundation titled the Ram’s Club. This club seeks private donations in lieu of athletic support for facilities, scholarships, coaching salaries, and various other departmental needs. Nearly nine thousand Ram Club members were mailed surveys to determine what personal benefits came from making athletic donations. Batt (2009) stated, “Out of the nearly 9,703 surveys were returned” (p. 89). The research showed that many individuals donate to the Ram’s Club for priority seating at football games, priority seating at basketball games, priority parking at football and basketball games, as well as priority notability from the institution (Batt, 2006). While looking further into the data, the researcher did find significant relationships between giving levels and age, gender, and ethnicity, which could play a key role in the fundraising strategies put forth by an institution. Batt did note that the University of North

Carolina is predominantly known for its outstanding athletic teams, particularly those of basketball, football, baseball, soccer, and swimming. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and its campus is in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. UNC has seen well over a million alumni since the college began in 1789 and the college currently hosts a total of 27 intercollegiate athletic teams (UNC-Chapel Hill, 2013).

Virginia Tech is another Atlantic Coast Conference member that encompasses athletic success and student-athlete engagement as part of their mission for intercollegiate athletics. Virginia Tech is a Division I institution settled in southwest Virginia in the town of Blacksburg that has seen over a dozen successful football seasons in a row dating back to 1999 (Virginia Tech, 2013). In addition, Virginia Tech competed for the national championship game in 1999 against Florida State University, and a record of 87 games have been consecutively sold out at Lane Stadium-Worsham Field in Blacksburg (Virginia Tech, 2013). Due to these sellouts, the university's colors of maroon and orange show up among the thousands of fans in attendance on any given Saturday to watch their football game. The local economy also sees an effect of these fans coming to support their team. Along with the local restaurants and venues, visitors will find fans waiting in long lines for souvenirs and official Virginia Tech Hokie licensed merchandise. According to the *Roanoke Times*, "Virginia Tech reported athletic revenues of sixty-five point six million dollars, which is larger than the operating budgets of seven of the university's eight colleges" (Esposito & Thornton, 2008, p. B8).

Through the use of these revenues, the athletic department has found ways to enhance its athletic facilities, scholarship offerings, and even campus-wide promotions of the department. Such improvements include the additions and remodeling of Lane Stadium, the remodeling of



English Field, the remodeling of the soccer complex, and the construction of the new men's and women's basketball practice facility. In the area of scholarships, more scholarship student-athletes were named for the 2012-2013 academic year than any year prior (Virginia Tech, 2013). In the area of promotions and marketing, the athletic department unveiled a new athletic website; while hosting a number of special events and marketing venues at various athletic events throughout the school year. Such marketing schemes aid the development officers in the area of donor recognition and establishment.

Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, which plays at both the Division I and Division III levels in athletics, is the home of the Blue Jays Unlimited (BJU) not-for-profit foundation, which is the fundraising arm for the athletic program at Johns Hopkins University. The not-for-profit organization had a record breaking year for the 2014-2015 fiscal calendar, raising a total of \$988,321.11 dollars from 1,947 BJU members (Kelly, 2015). The entire department only contains three full time employees, which are led by the Director of Athletic Development, Grant Kelly. The nearly one million dollars of fundraised support was a college athletic record and was encouraged by the college joining the Learfield Sports Cup Challenge and finishing second overall. The fundraised support is being used to help athletic facilities, coaches pay, equipment, and travel.

In order to reach these potential donors, there need to be effective and strategic ways of solicitation, as well as some type of systematic approach to reaching individuals. According to Walker (1994), development offices all around campus vary in nature and scope. Quite often, athletic fundraising success is based on the ability of the athletic department to succeed athletically. Walker recommends that "athletic department fundraisers include finding ways to produce and market critical fundraising resources to the development office; emphasizing

negotiation as a strategy to improve exchanges; and working to establish better feedback mechanisms and more open lines of communication with the institutional development office” (Walker, 1994, p. 164). As discussed earlier, winning often sells itself to potential donors, but not everyone is eager to give freely. Potential donors need to be courted and prepped before being asked for a potential large donation or even for a significant donation. Since this sale relies heavily on the success of the team and the development officer, teams need to possess the best student-athletes possible.

Many of these athletic and academic donors are college alumni. Many athletic departments have alumni associations that earn extra perks and incentives to athletic events and venues for paying their membership fees. A study conducted by Ko, Rhee, and Walker (2014) took a closer look at donor behavior related to athletic fundraising. This study found that fundraising efforts in such an environment were not exclusive to such models of donor behavior to truly streamline solicitation efforts. The Existence Relatedness Growth (ERG) theory was used as a guide to report on the development and testing of an integrated model of college donor motives. Another, model called Model of Athletic Donor (MADOM), was used a test plot of a few hundred donors, and the results showed that the SADOM scale is practical and yields solid study implications.

One of the best strategies for success is built around recruitment. In order for athletic departments to have the most successful seasons, the coaches have to recruit the best student-athletes. The easiest recruitment tool is to have the best scholarship offers. Advancement offices are responsible for creating the scholarships for coaches to award to potential student-athlete recruits. A Pearson correlation conducted by Bigler (2009) showed that the awarding of significant scholarships often leads to more winning seasons; and, therefore, more publicity and

success for the team, the athletic department, and the entire school. It is pointed out that this study was conducted on a mid-major conference. Similar research studies could be conducted on major athletic conferences to see if similar or varying results would be found. Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia both compete in athletic conferences that are considered major athletic conferences by the NCAA, while ODU currently competes in a mid-major conference classified by the NCAA. Additionally, this study could vary from the Division I, Division II, and the Division III ranks, not just the various ranks of Division I intercollegiate athletics.

A 2012 study regarding major NCAA bowl colleges involving academics incorporated 27 institutions and a total of 633 student-athletes (Clopton & Finch, 2012). All of these colleges were Division I Bowl Championship Series (BCS) member institutions. The reason for this study was to gather external perceptions of student athletes and their academic progress, which affects the college's APR or Academic Progress Reports. These students completed a questionnaire on college prestige in correspondence with athletic program recognition. Potential donors also want to know that student-athletes are achieving the highest marks in their academic classes as well. The study showed that men's football and basketball, which are the two highest profile sports when it comes to revenue generation by the NCAA, only had a few limitations regarding the aspects of prestige and academic success. Students readily recognized their college of choice and paired their college with the success of the college's athletic program. This study was conducted by Clopton and Finch through the University of Kansas, which is a major Division I institution.

Dodd (2011) took a similar look at athletic performance and the increase in college exposure, ticket sales, and financial donations that an athletic department received. Colleges are

showcased on national television at record-setting rates while online streaming of the events is growing exponentially. Dodd stated,

The online audience for the NCAA tournament games increased from twenty five thousand viewers in 2004 to over one point three million registered viewers in 2006, which resulted in nineteen million streams of live and archived tournament action and more than five million visits to the March Madness website in 2006 (Dodd, 2011, p. 52).

Outside of viewing events, Dodd suggested that the success or failure of an athletic program can affect a schools reputation. This same view can affect not only the athletic perspective but also the academic perspective of the institution. Other factors have been studied and include such studies include the effects of athletics on graduation rates, GRE and SAT scores, increased donations, freshmen enrollment, branding and marketing, and media coverage (Dodd, 2011). All of these factors engage student-athletes and potential student-athletes in which coaches may hope to recruit to their athletic programs. Student-athletes, alumni, and donors may all be actively engaged in television broadcasts of their alma mater.

Even through exposure and success, the overall expenses of such great programs must be reviewed closely. A study conducted by Jones (2013) took an in-depth look at how successful teams were on the field and what their total expense totals were during those years. If colleges are looking to generate more fundraising support, then programs must be able to determine how heavy their expense item lines are going to be. The researcher's sample included an initial group of 335 institutions that were identified as NCAA Division I institutions every year from 2006-2009. His research took the following action to remove two community colleges which incorrectly self-identified as Division I institutions and the three United States Military Academies, to create a final group of 330 institutions to be used for the analysis (Jones, 2013).

In order to determine which overall programs were successful, Jones used the National Association of College Directors of Athletics annual awards ceremony that rates colleges on athletic programs to include both female and male sports. The award is called the Director's Cup and is based on a ranking system through points for each school's sports and how they finish among their peer college conference members from around the country. The conclusion of this study showed the following:

Given the fiscal constraints encountered by most colleges and universities, many commentators decry the fact that institutional athletic expenditures continue to escalate. While several rationales have been proposed to explain this increased athletic expenditure, arguably one of the most salient among college and university athletic directors is their belief that increased spending is needed for their athletic teams to be successful. This study attempted to examine empirically whether increased athletic expenditures are directly correlated with institutional athletic team on-field success, controlling for other factors. The findings indicated that in the aggregate the relationship between changes in institutional expenditures and athletic team on-field success (as measured by institutional NACDA Directors' Cup points) was only marginally significant using more liberal indicators of statistical significance. When examining specific subdivisions within Division I, however, it was evident that among FBS institutions there was a positive, statistically significant relationship between athletics expenditures and team on-field success. This relationship, however, was not found among FCS and DI-NF colleges and universities (Jones, 2013, p. 601).

These results show how FBS and FCS colleges differ in expenditures and will play key roles in fundraising and providing private dollars to colleges.

Once enrollment spikes due to athletic success, branding becomes evident across a campus. Branding is another aspect of advancement that is part of the daily duties of both the academic and athletic development officers. According to Hutchinson (2010), Texas A & M University conducted research to determine perceptions of branding and how this affects the sales of products, the university's image, and the overall perception of the institution, especially that of athletics. Hutchinson felt that attitudes toward athletic department behavioral congruency or in congruency with stated university core values is worthy of investigation in order to determine the consequential impact on the university brand. The true purpose of this study was to investigate stakeholder or donor attitudes toward athletic department behavioral congruency while including the core values of Texas A&M University. Then he would assess the subsequent implications for the university brand as a whole, which is the Texas A & M Aggies. (Hutchinson, 2010).

An athletic logo carries significance towards sales, and as long as the athletic teams are successful and remain out of public scrutiny, the branding effort is safe and will continue to carry significant weight. It is estimated by Hutchinson (2010) that "Athletic departments and universities as a whole spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on the initial branding efforts of the department and the college" (p. 19). Hutchinson also stated that "It is evident that this money is a great investment and typically pays for itself within one year's time" (p. 19).

King (2011) also evaluated donors' motives to give to athletic and academic programs. The concept of branding reflects towards giving and donors because it identifies true meaning of the brand with the college itself. The brand and college name all become one to its followers. A small school, such as Northeast College, understands that branding their name and logo both academically and athletically is the number one recruiting tool available (King, 2011). In order

to test this idea, King developed a survey at Northeast College and sent it to 400 alumni. The conclusions of this research show that nearly a third of the variation in total lifetime giving really was in-kind gifts that include such things as talent, time, athletic experience, and minor gifts that are not of significant monetary value (King, 2011). A closer look was taken at the donations from former student-athletes and non-former student-athletes and their overall philanthropy. Additionally, on the academic end, specialized programs such as business would often lead to Business College donations to help the business department. There was a correlation shown between academic programs and their alumni donations. This correlation signifies successful programming and pride in a person's degree.

Social media also is a factor that requires attention to detail and has proven to be an effective marketing tool for fundraising and brand management. A study conducted to examine the uses of social media at National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II athletic departments was conducted by Truman, Cottingham, Bogle, and Lynch in 2014. The study specifically examines which social media outlets NCAA Division II athletic departments are using, how they are using it, and their perception of social media as a marketing tool. NCAA Division II athletic departments are using the most common social media sources, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These media are being used to communicate with current students, increase word-of-mouth marketing, and drive people to the athletic department websites to find out new and exciting stories. According to Truman et. al. (2014) "Given these findings the results of this study also indicate that NCAA Division II athletic departments perceive social media as a marketing tool and currently devise new ways to implement social media in marketing plans. This research contributes to the current academic research on social media, and encourages future research on the measurement of social media marketing activities

in collegiate athletic departments” (p.112). The investigators’ research showed that all of the institutions agreed by 45% or more that marketing and solicitation of consumers and donors were significant to their institutions. In addition, less than 1% thought that social media was not effective for marketing and creating new ways to reach all athletic audiences (Truman, et. al., 2014, p.113).

Ko, Rhee, Kim, and Kim (2014) also conducted a study regarding the perceived corporate social responsibility and donor behavior in college athletics, while evaluating the mediating effects of trust and commitment. The researchers felt that branding of the college’s athletic department was very important, and the factor called CSR, or Corporate Social Responsibility, has become one of the most effective marketing strategies to reach donors. The group used a target population of donors to a Division I athletic program and actively engaged them in a number of CSR activities. An email was sent to 7,500 donors of which 816 responded, which was only an 11% response rate (Ko et. al., 2014). After evaluating the data using SPSS software, the researchers used 12 different modes of evaluation and found that the most successful donor recruitments are going to be through a strong fan base developed by successful athletic seasons and successful target-based consumer relations.

According to Ko et al, (2014),

“The findings reported above provide additional insights into the strategic understanding of the donors' decision-making process. Fundraisers may be able to enhance significantly their understanding of CSR communication and its role in building trust and commitment among their key donor groups. Developing a clearer understanding of donors' decision-making processes is critical because donors may already have a certain level of organizational commitment. The goodwill generated by well-designed CSR initiatives



may lower donors' defense mechanisms and skepticisms against organizations' pre-existing marketing communications" (Ko et. al., 2014, p. 81).

As previously discussed, marketing is a major factor that drives donors and donors' intent to give. Zullo (2013) conducted a research study to examine marketing relationships between Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association athletic departments and outsourced companies. This study looked specifically at restricted sponsorships in order to narrow the data needed. This source looked at gambling and alcohol sales from these athletic departments. Such sponsors are state lotteries and major beer companies. The research was broken into two categories: BCS member colleges and FBS member colleges. The Big East was closely examined as it has eight member football colleges, and its basketball programs are comprised of ten institutions. A total of 69 FBS colleges were solicited via questionnaire and out of the 69, only 13 handled all marketing internally, while seven colleges were in the process of signing outsourced deals for the future years, leaving 49 colleges that completely outsourced their marketing resources (Zullo, 2013). As far as non-FBS colleges were concerned, only 19 FCS member colleges replied, and they do their marketing completely internally.

The study found that the primary goal of outsourced marketing companies is to represent the department as an extension of an institution's athletic department in a truly competitive sales capacity. This tactic is consistent with the literature review and past research conducted by Zullo in 2010. Many outsourced marketing companies do have existing relationships with alcohol vendors and sponsors. Such sponsorships are typically limited by the school and athletic department and are often presented in a subtle fashion to fans through a radio commercial or a simple ad in the game program. These tactics are found to be useful and beneficial to the athletic department. Signage, video board advertising, and game day promotions by alcohol sponsors are

typically limited even if it means reduced earnings from the sponsorship; much of this is because there is still a huge influence of underage drinking on college campuses. State and federal lotteries or casino sponsorships are also restricted by athletic departments due to concerns of gambling in college sports; signage is more permissible in the sponsorship package, along with radio commercials. This is because the NCAA has very strict policies regarding gambling and holds student-athletes and departments responsible when such poor behavior occurs. However, casinos and internet gambling sites are not found to be involved in gambling sponsorships to the same extent as state-supported lotteries. This research study indicated that state-supported lotteries are much more frequent sponsors of intercollegiate athletic events because many of them give back to education in one form or another. It is obvious that lifting restrictions on alcohol and gambling sponsorships would generate additional revenue, but more so for alcohol sponsorships because of the high demand (Zullo, 2013).

In 2013, Meer conducted a study regarding the habit of giving regarding why and how individuals give to charities but, in this case, concentrated on a single university giving program. He began by examining whether habit forming has an effect on the average gift given when the giver is older in age. The study shows marginal effects for the average gift given from the alumnus's 20th year since graduation through 2009 (Meer, 2013). According to Meer

“The elasticity of giving between young and old is about 0.30, meaning that a 10% increase in giving when young is associated with a 3% increase in giving when old.

Given the means of giving, this implies that an approximately \$4 increase in the average amount given when young is associated with an approximately \$44 increase in the average amount given when older. Being a frequent giver when young is associated with

a statistically insignificant 5.0% higher average giving when older” (Meer, 2013, p. 2002).

When Meer (2013) limits the sample to the 20th year after graduation and later leaves relatively few giving opportunities for each alumnus, it makes the average gift from the 15th year after graduation through 2009 for those who, by 2009, graduated more than 20 years previously. This scenario causes a reduction in the likelihood that the results are not being driven by those alumni who traditionally give smaller gifts routinely than those compared to individuals whom did not (Meer, 2013). Meer (2013) stated:

These uninstrumented results imply that universities' policies of pursuing frequent small gifts when alumni are young in an effort to create a habit may not pay large dividends. In essence, being a frequent giver when young does not seem to exert influence on the amount given when older; one possible explanation for this result is that the amount given when young proxies for true affinity, while frequent givers either fail to form habits, form habits that lead to small gifts, or give small amounts often to avoid social pressure. Other explanations cannot be discounted, and one cannot draw causal conclusions from these results, as they do not correct for the fact that giving when both young and old is likely to be driven by unobserved affinity (Meer, 2013, p. 2003).

The research shows that habit forming also has implications for assessing the impact of the charitable deduction in the personal income tax. Meer (2013) also noted that, “Lowering the cost of giving may induce much larger lifetime effects than those typically estimated using short panels or cross-sectional data. The charitable deduction is, of course, available to all who itemize” (p. 2003). This creates an important topic for future research, which is to determine whether these sorts of long-term effects can arise in older individuals and vary from college to

college or nonprofit to nonprofit. Nearly all nonprofits solicit donations on a regular basis. To take a deeper look, this article examines habit formation over a relatively long period; there may also be shorter-term effects to be examined and determined. For example, giving in one year may affect giving in the next by providing a reference amount or simply the routine of giving a certain amount on an annual, monthly, or weekly basis. All of this research could either be conducted on the same group or different research groups.

### **Summary**

There is mixed information on athletic and educational academic fundraising and how they affect one another. Various levels of athletic divisions and classifications provide different levels of understanding and a need for overall athletic development. Institutions clearly understand that development and fundraising are an important part of their existence and potential future growth, but how to unite and understand that one cannot exist without the other will remain a question. Branding efforts will also continue to be a university-wide effort that can be both positively and negatively affected by either academics or athletics. There clearly needs to be further research to determine if athletic success aids the overall effort of institutional development from the community college level to the largest Division I level institutions. Athletic directors and development directors need this valuable information to make solid decisions regarding changing athletic conferences. In addition, this same information is important for college presidents to have readily available for conference affiliation decision making.

Intercollegiate athletic conference affiliations will continue to recruit new college members and change the dynamics of athletic departments nationwide. The current research cannot truly bridge the gap between fundraising for the university as a whole and the athletic

department and athletic conference affiliation. The theory of interest from Cross (1999) is applied here based on the personal interest of fundraising when coordinated through athletic conference affiliation.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

Institutions of higher education routinely make decisions on whether their college will attempt to change athletic conferences. Athletic programs have to make such decisions for a number of reasons: to meet their high budget costs, construct new facilities, renovate older facilities, provide scholarships, and address other various departmental needs. This change is often rewarded with fundraising support that aids the development of the entire athletic department. The purpose of this quantitative causal comparative study is to determine if the changes in athletic conference affiliation affect the total monetary amount of donations that a school may receive upon making a change to both its athletic department and educational foundation as a whole. This chapter will provide a quantitative methods research study to investigate the causal comparison between athletic conference affiliation changes and the effects on college-wide and institutional/educational advancement, as well as athletic advancement.

### **Research Design**

The following design implemented a causal comparative research study (ex post facto). Causal-comparative research is described as a type of non-experimental investigation that allows researchers to identify relationships between independent and dependent variables after an event has already taken place (Brewer & Kuhn, 2010). The study evaluated the relationship between athletic conference affiliation changes and the positive or negative difference in athletic department fundraising, as well as overall educational fundraising outcomes that may occur when an athletic program changes athletic conference affiliations. In this type of research, it is often hard to control the independent variable because the change has usually already taken place. In this case, the ex post facto research results from the conferences having already

changed their conference affiliation. The independent variable was the actual change in athletic conference affiliation between 2012 and 2013.

The purpose of this study was to determine if conference change had an effect on fundraising at the educational and athletic levels. This information can be used by other institutions when considering an athletic conference change. The casual-comparative method is good practice for this study because the institutions being studied have already made athletic conference affiliation changes within the last five years. The most effective methods are going to be determined through evaluating the total amount of donations to the athletic and educational department through Guidestar, a public information account system that stores all not-for-profit organizations Federal 990 tax forms. The 990 forms present the income of all donations and the total of the individual endowments on an annual basis through the Freedom of Information Act.

In the case of causal-comparative research, the colleges were not randomly assigned to control and experimental groups; however, the researcher provided clear evidence that certain controls were being utilized in order to accurately and effectively manage external variables. Without control, the dependent variables could have been affected, thus changing the outcome of the study. In addition, causal comparative research did not allow variables to be manipulated. The one controlled variable was the number of sports that each school sponsored. No single participating schools added a sport during the time frame evaluated, while one school dropped seven sports at the very beginning of the time frame resulting in a constant number of intercollegiate sports throughout the study (20).

In this casual-comparative study, the research is comprised of 15 different NCAA institutions that made changes in athletic conference affiliation. These schools may have changed from a Division I conference to another Division I conference (lateral move), from one

level of the NCAA to another (vertical up or down), or even from a FCS to a FBS program (vertical up). The one consistency is the fact that all schools are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and they may range with the following levels of NCAA Rank: Division III, Division II, Division I FCS, and Division I FBS. The research purpose was to determine if there was a difference in total fundraised dollar amounts and the total endowment when NCAA-member colleges changed athletic conference affiliations.

### **Research Questions**

**Research Question #1, RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase the total athletic giving donation amounts?

**Research Question #2, RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase the total educational giving donation amounts?

### **Null Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis #1, H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total athletic giving donation amounts.

**Null Hypothesis #2, H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total educational giving donation amounts.

### **Participants**

The following NCAA member colleges consisted of the participant pool for the research study: Old Dominion University, Rutgers University, George Mason University, University of Maryland, University of Nevada (Reno), Fresno State University, Louisville University, University of Memphis, Texas A & M, East Carolina University, Butler University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Georgia Southern University, Western Kentucky University, and Georgia State University. All of these institutions have intercollegiate NCAA sports and have



changed athletic conferences during the data collection period, which occurred during the fall of 2015. In addition, there was a combination of public and private institutions, but each participating institution must have had a separate not-for-profit educational foundation and athletic foundation. The 990 IRS forms that were completed and audited by the executive directors and finance committees of each athletic foundation and educational foundation provided the necessary research data that was used to conduct the appropriate data analysis. The changes in conferences were either made from the Football Championship Series (FCS) level to the Football Bowl Series (FBS) level or from one FBS conference to another FBS Conference. The participating colleges and their information are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

*Participating schools and their locations and conference affiliations*

| <b>College</b>              | <b>Location</b>     | <b>Conference</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Old Dominion University     | Norfolk, VA         | Conference USA    | FCS to FBS    |
| Rutgers University          | New Brunswick, NJ   | Big Ten           | FBS to FBS    |
| George Mason University     | Fairfax, VA         | Atlantic 10       | FBS to FCS    |
| University of Maryland      | College Park, MD    | Big Ten           | FBS to FBS    |
| Fresno State University     | Fresno, CA          | Mountain West     | FCS to FBS    |
| University of Nevada (Reno) | Reno, NV            | Mountain West     | FBS to FBS    |
| University of Memphis       | Memphis, TN         | American          | FBS to FBS    |
| Louisville University       | Louisville, KY      | ACC               | FBS to FBS    |
| Texas A &M University       | College Station, TX | SEC               | FBS to FBS    |
| Georgia Southern University | Statesboro, GA      | Sun Belt          | FCS to FBS    |
| Western Kentucky University | Bowling Green, KY   | Conference USA    | FBS to FBS    |
| Butler University           | Indianapolis, IN    | Big East          | FBS to FBS    |
| University of NC-Charlotte  | Charlotte, NC       | Conference USA    | FCS to FBS    |
| Georgia State University    | Atlanta, GA         | Sun Belt          | FCS to FBS    |
| East Carolina University    | Greenville, NC      | American          | FBS to FBS    |

The 990 forms for each foundation were collected through Guidestar and are accessible at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

### **Setting/Site**

This research was conducted using internet access and professional Microsoft software tools through the access portal for Guidestar for each of the 15 participating institutions. These NCAA Division I institutions are located throughout the United States to provide a variance in both region of the country and conference change affiliations. IRB approval was sought and approved due to the fact that human beings were not a part of the research and can be found in the Appendix.

### **Instrumentation**

By the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, all not-for-profit foundations and organizations are required to file a Federal 990 form that states the total contributions/income through donations, as well as total assets for the entire organization. The actual IRS law (2015) states, in general, exempt organizations are required to file annual returns, although exceptions apply. If an organization does not file a required return or files late, penalties may be assessed. In addition, if an organization does not file as required for three consecutive years, the law provides that it automatically loses its tax-exempt status. Institutions of higher learning and athletic members of National Collegiate Athletic Association are all not-for-profit organizations; however, only institutions who maintain separate foundations for educational and athletic purposes were be utilized in this study. There are some organizations that manage and operate one not-for-profit foundation that houses all donations to include educational and athletic donations. In those cases, the college could not be used for this study.

As described in the definitions, *development* refers to the ways nonprofit organizations supplement their earned income with donations, grants, sponsorships and gifts-in-kind. In this sense, it is common for nonprofits in the U.S. to have a development department where staff conduct fundraising campaigns and manage related activities (Johnson, 2011). *Fundraising* refers to providing related services of fundraising, including prospect research, database management, gift recording and processing, accounting, special-events planning and oversight, and donor relations (Drozdowski, 2010).

Guidestar maintains the 990 forms for all not-for profit organizations for up to four years, thus, data is available from 2011 to the current close of fiscal year 2014. In this case, the data has been vetted by the foundations, audited by law and made accessible to the researcher. The data is direct and it never passed through anyone's hands but those of the researcher after publication and collection by the researcher on Guidestar. This information is public, but for data collection purposes, the researcher directly inputted the information onto an excel sheet before using SPSS to evaluate the statistics.

### **Data Collection/Procedures**

After submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) packet and gaining approval, the research process officially began. In this particular study, IRB was not needed and waived because there were no human subjects involved in the research process and a copy can be found in the APPENDIX. The original questionnaire was not found significant through the use of collecting data, thus the justification and decision to use the IRS 990 forms from Guidestar and collect and analyze the data using SPSS.

Phase One: Information was collected from Guidestar, which is the not-for-profit public website that produces the tax information regarding income for all non-profits. The total number

of contributions for each foundation is publically available for individuals to view. There are three levels of membership available to the public for Guidestar access. In addition, the development officers of both the athletic department, as well as the academic institutional development officer of each of the 15 colleges must submit their information to Guidestar for public access.

Phase Two: The research data was collected for all 15 colleges who had both an educational foundation and an athletic foundation. The two foundations had to be separate entities and solicit funds separately. This data was loaded into an Excel spreadsheet for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The conference changes for all participating institutions occurred during 2012 and 2013.

Phase Three: All statistics and data were reviewed and examined to provide insight and theory on whether the research questions and hypothesis were accurate and support or reject the statements. In order to review the data, an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and t-tests were used. In addition, a correlation factor was determined and presented in other analysis. This data was then be shared with the development officers of the 15 institutions for their own personal use, as well as being possibly shared with other NCAA colleges who may be considering making an athletic conference change or realignment.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted to provide valuable insight into the research. A pilot study can be used as a “small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study” (Polit, Beck, & Hunger, 2001, p. 467). Such a study will typically help to eliminate some human error as the study is conducted and provide the researcher a feel for the comfortableness of colleges to reply and the colleges’ sense of the data collection while retrieving data from Guidestar.

Typically, this study is needed to detect possible flaws in measurement procedures, which may include: data collection and readability and reliability to separate the educational and athletic foundations within Guidestar; however, in this case, all information is considered secondary data. The best case scenario is to evaluate the schools that were chosen to be sure they meet the criteria. The following criteria were reevaluated to be certain that individual schools were applicable to this study.

1. Each school had changed athletic conference affiliations within the 2012-2013 academic time period.
2. Each institution had a separate foundation for its athletic funds and its educational funds. Example: School A has a foundation for education called Bird Educational Foundation and a foundation for athletics called the Bird Club Athletic Fund. Each foundation files its own 990 IRS forms and each operates as a not-for-profit foundation.
3. Finally, all of the necessary information was loaded and updated within the Guidestar system and available to the researcher.

This information for the 15 schools was accurate and available to the researcher, thus a true pilot study was not completed, but the information and data was confirmed.

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used. The 2011 to 2014 fiscal year data on athletic funds, athletic fund total endowments, educational funds, and educational funds total endowment for 15 institutions that have recently changed conference affiliations in 2013 and 2014 were collected. The institutional profiles such as age,

enrollment, Carnegie classification, academic programs, the number of sports sponsored, and alumni strength were examined and included in the study.

Data collected on the effects of change in conference affiliation on athletic department and educational donations/funds were analyzed using multiple statistical methods. Descriptive statistical analyses (mean, minimum, maximum) were carried on educational and athletics' donations by institution, trend in number of sports sponsored by institutions, and a pre and post conference affiliations of the institutions. A correlation analysis was done to examine if there were autocorrelations between athletic funds, educational funds, total athletic endowments and total educational endowments across the institutions.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to establish if there were significant variations in athletic funds and education funds by the fiscal years and by institution. To establish the impact of change in conference affiliations pre (2013) and post (2014) on athletic funds and educational funds, an independent sample test of mean difference was carried out to compare the mean values of athletic and educational funds raised by the institutions. T-tests helped to determine if the mean scores for institutional advancement officers' expectations and athletic development officers' expectations regarding donations, as referred to in both Hypotheses, were significantly different.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine if changing athletic conference affiliations had a positive effect on fundraising for both the educational institution and the athletic department. This study will help athletic directors, athletic and educational directors of development, and college presidents make decisions regarding their ability and desire to change athletic conference affiliations. Such research will be applicable to anyone within an NCAA, NJCAA, or NAIA athletic organizations, or to anyone who may be interested in intercollegiate athletics and conference affiliations.

This chapter focuses on analysis of donation data that were collected from 15 different NCAA institutions, all of whom have changed athletic conference affiliations within the past four years. These academic institutions made the athletic conference change over the past few years, specifically 2012-2013 and their Guidestar data for development have been reviewed. Guidestar is a public data base that is available to individuals and the program reviews the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) 990 reports for not-for-profit foundations. In this study, the Guidestar reports were collected on both the athletic and educational foundations associated with each participating college. Each school represented changed athletic conferences with a variance of NCAA levels within in the Division I level. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

To ensure a seamless understanding of the data, the analyses of the findings in this chapter were presented under the following section: Institutional Profile, Sponsored Sports, Conference Affiliation, Educational Funds, and Athletic Funds.

### **Research Questions**

**Research Question #1, RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase total athletic giving donation amounts?

**Research Question #2, RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase the total educational giving donation amounts?

### **Null Hypotheses**

**Null Hypothesis #1, H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total athletic giving donation amounts.

**Null Hypothesis #2, H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total educational giving donation amounts.

### **Institutional Profiles**

The 15 participating schools in the study were located in 11 different states across all regions in the United States. These schools have significantly different profiles. Of the 15 participating colleges, 14 are public institutions and one is private. Of the 15 colleges, five are starting at the FCS level and 10 are moving from one FBS conference to another FBS conference level. The average age of these institutions is 127 years with George Mason University (58 years) as the youngest school and Louisville University (217 years) as the oldest in the group. Collectively, these colleges enroll an average of 24,000 students per year and have an average of over three quarter of a million alumni. Table 2 summarizes the profile of the schools participating in the study.



Table 2

*College Profiles*

| <b>College</b>              | <b>Type</b> | <b>Level</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>State</b> | <b>Enrollment</b> | <b>Alumni</b>    |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Old Dominion University     | Public      | FCS          | 120        | VA           | 28,000            | 1,000,000        |
| Rutgers University          | Public      | FBS          | 190        | NJ           | 65,000            | 3,000,000        |
| George Mason University     | Public,     | FCS          | 58         | VA           | 34,000            | 1,000,000        |
| University of Maryland      | Public      | FBS          | 159        | MD           | 38,000            | 3,000,000        |
| Fresno State University     | Public      | FBS          | 104        | CA           | 23,000            | 1,000,000        |
| University of Nevada        | Public      | FBS          | 141        | NV           | 20,000            | 1,000,000        |
| University of Memphis       | Public      | FBS          | 103        | TN           | 21,000            | 750,000          |
| Louisville University       | Public      | FBS          | 217        | KY           | 22,000            | 3,000,000        |
| Texas A &M University       | Public      | FBS          | 159        | TX           | 62,000            | 3,000,000        |
| Georgia Southern University | Public      | FCS          | 109        | GA           | 21,000            | 950,000          |
| Western Kentucky University | Public      | FBS          | 109        | KY           | 21,000            | 975,000          |
| Butler University           | Private     | FBS          | 160        | IN           | 4,000             | 500,000          |
| University of NC-Charlotte  | Public      | FCS          | 69         | NC           | 27,000            | 550,000          |
| Georgia State University    | Public      | FCS          | 102        | GA           | 32,000            | 550,000          |
| East Carolina University    | Public      | FBS          | 108        | NC           | 27,000            | 750,000          |
| <b>Averages</b>             |             |              | <b>127</b> |              | <b>29,667</b>     | <b>1,401,667</b> |

### Sponsored Sports

The total number of sponsored sports for each participating college varied from 15 to 22 during the years 2012-2014. Maryland University and Rutgers University had the highest number of teams with 22 intercollegiate athletic sports. UNC Charlotte and Georgia Southern University had the fewest intercollegiate sports at 15 per college as shown in Table 3. The average number of sports per college for the 15 participants was 17.67. The number of sponsored sports remained constant at the participating institutions throughout the conference change time period.

Men's and women's basketball, men's baseball, and women's softball were the most consistent sponsored sports, as all 15 participating colleges sponsored and competed at the

Division I level for all four years in these four sports. Football was present at all but two participating colleges - George Mason University and Butler University - and is considered the highest revenue generating sport by *Athletic Business Magazine*. Other sports varied in consistency from different Olympic-style sports, but women's volleyball was sponsored at a rate of 85%.

Table 3

*Number of Sponsored Sports: 2012-2014*

| <b>College</b>              | <b>2012</b>  | <b>2013</b>  | <b>2014</b>  |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Old Dominion University     | 16           | 16           | 16           |
| Rutgers University          | 22           | 22           | 22           |
| George Mason University     | 20           | 20           | 20           |
| University of Maryland      | 22           | 22           | 22           |
| Fresno State University     | 18           | 18           | 18           |
| University of Nevada (Reno) | 16           | 16           | 16           |
| University of Memphis       | 16           | 16           | 16           |
| Louisville University       | 21           | 21           | 21           |
| Texas A &M University       | 17           | 17           | 17           |
| Georgia Southern University | 15           | 15           | 15           |
| Western Kentucky University | 17           | 17           | 17           |
| Butler University           | 17           | 17           | 17           |
| University of NC-Charlotte  | 15           | 15           | 15           |
| Georgia State University    | 16           | 16           | 16           |
| East Carolina University    | 17           | 17           | 17           |
| <b>Average for Each</b>     | <b>17.67</b> | <b>17.67</b> | <b>17.67</b> |

### **Conference Affiliation**

The pre-conference affiliations of the 15 colleges comprised of eight different conferences and the post-conference affiliations comprised of nine different conference affiliations (Table 4). The pre-change conference affiliations came from the year 2012 and the post-change conference affiliations derived from the year 2014. The original eight pre-conference affiliations included the Atlantic 10, Big 12, Big East, Conference USA, Colonial

Athletic Association, Southern Conference, Sun Belt Conference, and Western Athletic Conference. Of those eight conferences, the Colonial Athletic Conference had the highest number of pre-change conference affiliation figures with four member institutions (N=4), while the Big 12, Southern Conference, and Sun Belt conference only had one team per conference represented. These conferences are located in different regions/cities throughout the United States.

The 15 schools post-change conference affiliations were made up of the following nine conferences: Atlantic 10, Atlantic Coast Conference, American Conference, Big 10, Big East, Conference-USA, Mountain West Conference, Southeastern Conference, and Sun Belt Conference. Conference-USA attracted the highest number of colleges (N=3), while the American East, Atlantic-10, Mountain West, and Atlantic Coast Conference each had one post conference affiliation member. As seen in Table 4, these four post-conference affiliation institutions that obtained one new member were the Atlantic Coast Conference, Southeastern Conference, Big 10 Conference, and the Big East Conference. The percentages and frequencies of these pre and post-conference affiliations are also available within the same table.

Table 4

*Pre and Post Test Conference Affiliation*

|                            |              | Frequency | Percent    |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Pre Conference Affiliation | A-10         | 2         | 13.3       |
|                            | Big 12       | 1         | 6.7        |
|                            | Big East     | 2         | 13.3       |
|                            | C-USA        | 2         | 13.3       |
|                            | CAA          | 4         | 26.7       |
|                            | So-Con       | 1         | 6.7        |
|                            | Sun-Belt     | 1         | 6.7        |
|                            | WAC          | 2         | 13.3       |
|                            | <i>Total</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>100</i> |

|                             |              |           |            |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Post Conference Affiliation | A-10         | 2         | 13.3       |
|                             | ACC          | 1         | 6.7        |
|                             | American     | 2         | 13.3       |
|                             | Big 10       | 1         | 6.7        |
|                             | Big East     | 1         | 6.7        |
|                             | C-USA        | 3         | 20         |
|                             | Mountain W   | 2         | 13.3       |
|                             | SEC          | 1         | 6.7        |
|                             | Sun-Belt     | 2         | 13.3       |
|                             | <i>Total</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>100</i> |

### **Educational Funds**

The trends in educational funds for the years 2011-2014 were evaluated to determine the descriptive statistics. The educational funds for the years 2011-2014 ranged from \$2,333,438.00 that was raised by Georgia Southern University in 2011 to \$120,874,792.00 raised by Texas A&M in 2013. The mean educational funds combined for the 15 schools between 2011 and 2014 was \$30,598,232.57. When examined yearly, the educational funds raised by the 15 participating schools have increased significantly over the years. In 2014, the schools collectively raised the highest educational funds of \$527,371,159.00. This represents a 38% increase over \$383,374,314.00 that was raised in 2011. The average educational funds raised yearly by the schools also increased from \$25,558,287.60 in 2011 to from \$35,158,077.27 in 2014. The statistical data for Educational Funds can be seen in Table 5.

Table 6 provides the statistical data of all 15 schools for the collective years of 2011-2014. When evaluating the maximums for all four years, the total sum equaled \$6,597,565,910. Old Dominion University did experience a significant increase when its educational funding tripled from \$6,893,377 in 2013 to \$18,670,430 in 2014. A total of seven individual institutions

experienced a decrease from the years 2012-2013 in educational funding. The fiscal years 2011-2012 were the most consistent two years regarding educational fund giving.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Educational Funds by Year*

| <b>Athletic Fund Year</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Sum</b>   | <b>Mean</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2011 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 2333438.00     | 59079107.00    | 383374314.00 | 25558287.00 |
| 2012 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 3230751.00     | 86289894.00    | 434438514.00 | 28962567.00 |
| 2013 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 036507.00      | 120874792.00   | 490709967.00 | 32713997.00 |
| 2014 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 3546571.00     | 96341606.00    | 527371159.00 | 35158077.27 |

Table 6

*Educational Funds: Mean, Minimum, and Maximum for 2011-2014*

| <b>College</b>                         | <b>Mean</b>          | <b>Minimum</b>    | <b>Maximum</b>      |
|--|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| University of Maryland                 | 40203611.0000        | 1128744.00        | 43520026.00         |
| Old Dominion University                | 9100715.0000         | 3002173.00        | 18670430.00         |
| University of NC-Charlotte             | 12191171.5000        | 2929171.00        | 16365391.00         |
| East Carolina University               | 12175107.7500        | 5330936.00        | 13776603.00         |
| George Mason University                | 38191353.0000        | 2253024.00        | 47432496.00         |
| Rutgers University                     | 72388476.2500        | 2987652.00        | 96341606.00         |
| Louisville University                  | 46153571.0000        | 31080222.00       | 55949088.00         |
| Butler University                      | 16894856.0000        | 326194.00         | 28981691.00         |
| Fresno State University                | 45238699.2500        | 3100195.00        | 47144982.00         |
| University of Nevada (Reno)            | 28098423.2500        | 206067.00         | 41699571.00         |
| Georgia State University               | 15758260.5000        | 17973400.00       | 22437708.00         |
| Texas A & M University                 | 89257540.0000        | 37433487.00       | 120874792.00        |
| Western Kentucky University            | 7982428.0000         | 2067873.00        | 11500279.00         |
| University of Memphis                  | 22052458.0000        | 935737.00         | 29816322.00         |
| Georgia Southern University            | 3286816.7500         | 1458612.00        | 4036507.00          |
| <b>Total Mean (Highest and Lowest)</b> | <b>30598232.5667</b> | <b>2333438.00</b> | <b>120874792.00</b> |

### Athletic Funds

The trends in athletic funds for the years 2011-2014 were evaluated to determine the descriptive statistics. The athletic educational funds for the years 2011-2014 ranged from \$206,067.00 that was raised by the University of Nevada at Reno in 2011 to \$255,717,565.00 raised by Texas A&M in 2013. The mean educational funds combined for the 15 schools between 2011 and 2014 was \$12,696,490.60. When examined yearly, the educational funds raised by the 15 participating schools have increased significantly over the years. In 2013, the schools collectively raised the highest educational funds of \$354,138,484.00. This represents a 311% increase over \$113,540,497.00 that was raised in 2011. The average educational funds raised yearly by the schools also increased from \$27,569,366.47 in 2011 to \$11,010,648.70 in 2014. The statistical data for Educational Funds can be seen in Table 5.

Table 6 provides the statistical data of all 15 schools for the collective years of 2011-2014. When evaluating the maximums for all four years, the total sum equaled \$368,241,506. Texas A & M University did experience a significant increase when its athletic funding went from \$38,810,379 in 2012 to \$255,717,565 in 2013. A total of four individual institutions experienced a decrease from the years 2012-2013 in athletic funding. The fiscal years 2011-2012 were the most consistent two years regarding athletic fund giving.

Table 7

*Athletic Funds: Mean, Minimum, and Maximum for 2011-2014*

| College                    | Mean         | Minimum    | Maximum     |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| University of Maryland     | 3657958.5000 | 1128744.00 | 5528535.00  |
| Old Dominion University    | 5625664.5000 | 3002173.00 | 6893377.00  |
| University of NC-Charlotte | 5498386.0000 | 2929171.00 | 10324617.00 |
| East Carolina University   | 5868739.7500 | 5330936.00 | 7423062.00  |
| George Mason University    | 2645920.0000 | 2253024.00 | 3224652.00  |
| Rutgers University         | 4129085.0000 | 2987652.00 | 5480200.00  |

|                             |                     |                  |                  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Louisville University       | 33828849.7500       | 31080222.00      | 37227142.00      |
| Butler University           | 446751.5000         | 326194.00        | 566766.00        |
| Fresno State University     | 4895601.7500        | 3100195.00       | 6255467.00       |
| University of Nevada (Reno) | 285942.7500         | 206067.00        | 447871.00        |
| Georgia State University    | 18927362.2500       | 17973400.00      | 20494842.00      |
| Texas A & M University      | 97672283.2500       | 37433487.00      | 255717565.00     |
| Western Kentucky University | 2290507.2500        | 2067873.00       | 2502350.00       |
| University of Memphis       | 1006809.5000        | 935737.00        | 1058176.00       |
| Georgia Southern University | 3697497.2500        | 1458612.00       | 5096884.00       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>12696490.600</b> | <b>206067.00</b> | <b>255717565</b> |

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Athletic Funds by Year*

| <b>Athletic Fund Year</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Sum</b>   | <b>Mean</b> |
|---------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2011 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 326194.00      | 37433487.00    | 113540497.00 | 7569366.47  |
| 2012 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 280280.00      | 38810379.00    | 128950724.00 | 856714.93   |
| 2013 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 20607.00       | 255717565.00   | 354138484.00 | 23609232.27 |
| 2014 Athletic Fund        | 15       | 209553.00      | 58727702.00    | 165159731.00 | 11010648.73 |

**Results****Null Hypothesis #1**

Null hypothesis one states that there is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total athletic giving donation amounts. An exploratory data analysis was conducted to determine if there were autocorrelations between normally distributed the athletic funds and the educational funds. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in total athletic giving donation amounts among the 15 colleges in the fiscal years 2011 through 2014. The analysis showed there was no statistically significant difference between group means of total athletic giving donations among the 15 colleges in the four years considered ( $F(3,14) = .696, p=.559$ ). Furthermore, the 2013 and

2014 total athletic giving donations were compared using independent sample t-tests.. The result of the mean comparison showed that the 2013 (pre-conference affiliation) ( $M = 23,609,232$ ;  $SD = 64,838,260.1$ ) total athletic giving was not significantly different ( $t(28) = .730$ ,  $p = .471$ ) from 2014 (post- conference affiliation) ( $M = 11,010,648.1$ ;  $SD = 16,219,058$ ) total athletic giving. It can therefore be concluded that although there was decrease in the mean total annual athletic giving donations from \$23,609,232 in 2013 to \$11,010,648.73 in 2014, the change in conference affiliations of the 15 colleges have not led to a statistically significant decrease in the total athletic giving donations of the colleges. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis and no true determination can be made that changing athletic conference will create significant difference in fundraising donation amounts for the athletic foundations. A complete summary of the t-test results can be seen in Table 9.

Then, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in total athletic giving donation by college in the fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and the data is located in Table 10. The analysis revealed that there was a significant effect of the differences in colleges on the mean total annual athletic giving ( $F(14, 45) = 3.359$ ,  $p=.001$ ). To identify where there are differences in the total annual giving, a Games-Howell Post hoc analysis was conducted that revealed significant differences as shown on Table 11.

The total annual giving of both Georgia State University and Louisville University contrast significantly with all the other participating schools. Butler University and Memphis University on the other hand contrast with six different schools, while George Mason University, University of Nevada Reno, and Western Kentucky University contrast significantly with five participating schools. The University of Maryland, Old Dominion University, Rutgers University, and Fresno State University annual total athletic giving differ significantly with two



schools each while Texas A & M University did not show any significant difference in total annual giving when compared to all other fourteen participating schools. Table 11 which is called Athletic Funds: Post Hoc Analysis Table presents the significant differences in total annual athletic giving by institution.

Table 9

*Athletic Funds: Independent Samples Test*

|               |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|------|
|               |                             | F                                       | Sig. |
| Athletic Fund | Equal variances assumed     | 2.161                                   | .153 |
|               | Equal variances not assumed |   |      |

| t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |                 |                       |   |                |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |                |
|                              |        |                 |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper          |
| .730                         | 28     | .471            | 12598583.53333  | 17256994.36877        | -22750766.97758                           | 47947934.04424 |
| .730                         | 15.745 | .476            | 12598583.53333  | 17256994.36877        | -24032780.68575                           | 49229947.75241 |

Table 10

*Athletic Funds: Analysis of Variance*

| ANOVA            |                |                       |    |                      |      |      |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----|----------------------|------|------|
|                  |                | Sum of Squares        | df | Mean Square          | F    | Sig. |
| Educational Fund | Between Groups | 800176370413642.000   | 3  | 266725456804547.000  | .392 | .759 |
|                  | Within Groups  | 38073505045710900.000 | 56 | 679884018673408.000  |      |      |
|                  | Total          | 38873681416124500.000 | 59 |                      |      |      |
| Athletic Fund    | Between Groups | 2475383338176150.000  | 3  | 825127779392051.000  | .696 | .559 |
|                  | Within Groups  | 66421553286279200.000 | 56 | 1186099165826410.000 |      |      |
|                  | Total          | 68896936624455400.000 | 59 |                      |      |      |

Table 11

*Athletic Funds: Post Hoc Analysis Table*

|      | MU | ODU   | UNCC  | ECU   | GMU   | RU    | LU    | BU     | FSU   | UNR   | GSU    | TAMU  | WKU   | Mem   | GSO   |
|------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| MU   |    | 0.929 | 0.996 | 0.734 | 0.993 | 1     | .000* | 0.36   | 0.992 | 0.327 | .001*  | 0.827 | 0.941 | 0.507 | 1     |
| ODU  |    |       | 1     | 1     | 0.348 | 0.954 | .000* | 0.095  | 1     | 0.087 | ..001* | 0.839 | 0.273 | 0.128 | 0.9   |
| UNCC |    |       |       | 1     | 0.849 | 0.999 | .000* | 0.414  | 1     | 0.391 | .028*  | 0.839 | 0.771 | 0.506 | 0.995 |
| ECU  |    |       |       |       | 0.063 | 0.668 | .001* | 0.018* | 0.988 | .017* | .000*  | 0.841 | 0.056 | 0.026 | 0.622 |
| GMU  |    |       |       |       |       | 0.619 | .001* | 0.014* | 0.348 | .010* | .000*  | 0.82  | 0.913 | .039* | 0.961 |
| RU   |    |       |       |       |       |       | .000* | 0.083  | 0.999 | 0.074 | .000*  | 0.83  | 0.416 | 0.128 | 1     |
| LU   |    |       |       |       |       |       |       | .001*  | .000* | .001* | .008*  | 0.971 | .002* | .002* | .000* |
| NU   |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        | 0.066 | 0.703 | .001*  | 0.806 | .001* | .005* | 0.224 |
| FSU  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       | 0.06  | .000*  | 0.835 | 0.25  | 0.095 | 0.988 |
| UNR  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       | .001*  | 0.805 | .000* | .004* | 0.2   |
| GSU  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |        | 0.914 | .001* | .001* | .000* |
| TAMU |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |        |       | 0.818 | 0.81  | 0.827 |
| WKU  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       | .007* | 0.83  |
| Mem  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |       | 0.335 |
| GSO  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |

\* = Significant difference in athletic funds

**Null Hypothesis #2**

Null Hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference between pre and post athletic conference affiliation total educational giving donation amounts. Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was employed on the educational funds as well, and it was confirmed that the variances in educational funds by fiscal year were statistically the same ( $F(3) = .245, p = .865$ ).

As conducted in Hypothesis #1, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was completed to determine if there was a significant difference in total educational giving donation amounts

among the 15 colleges in the fiscal years 2011 through 2014. The analysis showed there was no statistically significant difference between group means of total educational giving donations among the 15 colleges in the four years considered ( $F(3,14) = .392, p=.759$ ). Furthermore, the 2013 and 2014 total educational giving donations were compared using independent sample t-tests.. The result of the mean comparison showed that the 2013 (pre-conference affiliation) ( $M = 32,713,997$ ;  $SD = 30,908,967.3$ ) total educational giving was not significantly different ( $t(28) = -.228, p = .821$ ) from 2014 (post- conference affiliation) ( $M = 35,158,077.3$ ;  $SD = 27,623,321.1$ ) total educational giving. It can therefore be concluded that although there was an increase in the mean total annual educational giving donations from \$32,713,997.80 in 2013 to \$35,158,077.27 in 2014, the change in conference affiliations of the 15 colleges have not led to a statistically significant increase in the total educational giving donations of the colleges. Therefore, the researcher fails to reject the null hypothesis and no true determination can be made that changing athletic conference will create significant difference in fundraising donation amounts for educational foundations. A complete summary of the t-test results can be seen in Table 12.

Then, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in total athletic giving donation by college in the fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and the statistical data is available in Table 13. The analysis revealed that there was a significant effect of the differences in colleges on the mean total annual educational giving ( $F(14, 45) = 26.828, p=.000$ ). To identify where there are differences in the total annual giving, a Games-Howell Post hoc analysis was conducted that revealed significant differences as shown on Table 14.

The total annual giving of both the University of Maryland and Georgia Southern University contrast significantly with all the other participating schools. Western Kentucky

University and Old Dominion University on the other hand contrast with five and four different schools respectively, while University of North Carolina-Charlotte, East Carolina University, Louisville University, Fresno State University, and Georgia State University contrast significantly with three participating institutions. The University of Memphis, Rutgers University, and Butler University's annual total educational giving differ significantly with one school each while Texas A & M University and the University of Nevada did not show any significant difference in total annual educational giving when compared to all other 14 participating schools. Table 14 which is called Educational Funds: Post Hoc Analysis Table presents the significant differences in total annual athletic giving by institution.

Table 12

*Educational Funds: Independent Samples Test*

|                  |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|
|                  |                             | F                                       | Sig. |
| Educational Fund | Equal variances assumed     | .042                                    | .839 |
|                  | Equal variances not assumed |   |      |

| t-test for Equality of Means |        |                 |                 |                       |   |                |
|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| t                            | df     | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |                |
|                              |        |                 |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper          |
| -.228                        | 28     | .821            | -2444079.46667  | 10703308.30138        | -24368812.63204                           | 19480653.69871 |
| -.228                        | 27.654 | .821            | -2444079.46667  | 10703308.30138        | -24381190.80336                           | 19493031.87003 |

Table 13

*Analysis of Variance*

| ANOVA            |                |                       |    |                      |      |      |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----|----------------------|------|------|
|                  |                | Sum of Squares        | df | Mean Square          | F    | Sig. |
| Educational Fund | Between Groups | 800176370413642.000   | 3  | 266725456804547.000  | .392 | .759 |
|                  | Within Groups  | 38073505045710900.000 | 56 | 679884018673408.000  |      |      |
|                  | Total          | 38873681416124500.000 | 59 |                      |      |      |
| Athletic Fund    | Between Groups | 2475383338176150.000  | 3  | 825127779392051.000  | .696 | .559 |
|                  | Within Groups  | 66421553286279200.000 | 56 | 1186099165826410.000 |      |      |
|                  | Total          | 68896936624455400.000 | 59 |                      |      |      |

Table 14

*Educational Funds: Post Hoc Analysis Table*

|      | UM | ODU   | UNCC  | ECU   | GMU   | RU    | LU    | BU    | FSU    | UN   | GSU   | TA&M | WKU   | Mem   | GSO   |
|------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| MU   |    | .011* | .001* | .003* | .1.00 | .290  | .963  | .076  | .806   | .523 | .009* | .256 | .001* | .065  | .003* |
| ODU  |    |       | .999  | .997  | .029* | .039* | .011* | .939  | .007*  | .290 | .914  | .067 | 1.000 | .390. | .8490 |
| UNCC |    |       |       | 1.000 | .045* | .058  | .022* | .989  | .000*  | .366 | .983  | .083 | .735  | .405  | .098  |
| ECU  |    |       |       |       | .055  | .061  | .029* | .981  | .000*  | .358 | .960  | .085 | .497  | .370  | .015* |
| GMU  |    |       |       |       |       | .256  | .949  | .155  | .869   | .892 | .071  | .231 | .030* | .259  | .027* |
| RU   |    |       |       |       |       |       | .474  | .057  | .410   | .121 | .062  | .991 | .049* | .086  | .043* |
| LU   |    |       |       |       |       |       |       | .046* | .1.000 | .385 | .025* | .343 | .017* | .070  | .017* |
| BU   |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | .040*  | .844 | 1.000 | .088 | .710  | .995  | .343  |
| FSU  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        | .312 | .003* | .323 | .000* | .024* | .001* |
| UNR  |    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |      | .641  | .140 | .211  | .993  | .130  |



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Overview**

The results of this quantitative study regarding the effects of changing athletic conferences on fundraising are discussed within this chapter. This chapter includes a complete discussion of both research questions and provides an evaluation of the findings and implications resulting from the study. Lastly, the limitations and recommendations for potential research are noted and suggested.

### **Research Questions**

**Research Question #1, RQ<sub>1</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase total athletic giving donation amounts?

**Research Question #2, RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Does changing athletic conferences increase the total educational giving donation amounts?

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this quantitative causal-comparative study was to determine if the changes in athletic conference affiliation affect the total monetary amount of donations that a school may receive upon making a change to both its athletic department and educational foundation as a whole. Intercollegiate athletics have been a part of NCAA colleges at all levels for over 100 years. Colleges and institutions will continue to make difficult decisions on the positions of their athletic teams with regard to athletic conference affiliation. One of the most consistent conferences is the Ivy League Conference, which consists of schools that are considered to have the most rigorous academic admissions and programs. These types of schools rarely, if ever, change athletic conferences; however, the other athletic conferences are

often recruiting new institutional members to join their conference. Affiliation changes of this nature occur at various levels of the NCAA.

After reviewing the literature, it is noted that a gap exists regarding the evaluation for changing athletic conferences and its effects on fundraising. There was evidence that research is available on winning percentage and donation totals, but not on conference affiliations. The previous research showed that athletic and educational fundraising foundations are eager to make “an ask” if their athletic teams are excelling on the playing field. This study reviewed both the institutional donation structure and the athletic department structure.

Though all of these participating colleges changed athletic conferences within the NCAA Division I level, there is no formal way to completely control the size of colleges or the numbers of fundraising professionals within each educational and athletic department, or limit other external factors. The external validity for this particular quantitative study did examine the conference affiliation changes. Another area of concern and limitation would involve focusing on one particular conference change. For example, this study evaluated eight pre-conference affiliations that converted to nine different post-conference affiliations. If each college evaluated were similar in size and changed to the same conference affiliation, then a closer view of the data and statistical resources could be evaluated.

A recent study completed by Havard, Wann, and Ryan (2013) on conference realignment discussed the impact on rivalries and how these conference changes would potentially affect those scenarios. The research presented in this study discussed the financial impact, but this study discussed the internal and external factor of why schools may or may not change conferences based on which teams they may compete against. The researchers reference the theory of disposition of mirth, which evaluates how individuals may feel joy or jubilation from



others not being successful (Havard, et al., 2013, p. 225). The researchers used the same type of data analysis in an ANOVA to evaluate their statistics.

Additionally, Sweitzer (2009) completed research regarding how and why institutions select their conference affiliations. “Institutions generally desire to compete against others that are similar to them in profile, including their approach to athletics, as well as being in the same geographic region” (Sweitzer, 2009, p. 55). The researcher evaluated the so called “move up” from FCS to FBS or Division II to Division I status. Many of the same factors that were evaluated in this study by Sweitzer correlated to those in the current study. Media relations, fundraising, scholarship status, academic status, and conference placement were all discussed and part of the evaluation for changing affiliations. Sweitzer yielded that a number of reasons exist as to why institutions of higher education desire a change in conference, but stated “conclude that intercollegiate athletics has an influence on the prestige of an institution. Indeed, associating in a division or athletic conference with institutions that bring the most strategic advantage to a university or college is a critical consideration” (Sweitzer, 2009, p.61).

### **Research Question #1 Discussion**

The first research question focused on changing athletic conferences and a significant increase in athletic donation amounts. For this study, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis as there was not a significant increase in total athletic giving donation amounts from 2013-2014; rather, there was a decrease in the average mean of the 15 participating colleges. In the field of fundraising, individuals search for ways to increase their exposure and ability to increase financial support, thus the researcher expected the total amount of donation value to significantly increase in this study. There was an increase from 2012-2013, but the data does not support a significant increase from 2013-2014.

A few factors that were evaluated played a key role in this research and some of those factors include: the number of sponsored sports, the size of the student enrollment, the size of the alumni base, the age of the institutions, and the actual sponsored sports. Those schools who had similar qualities, had similar success rates in general athletic fundraising. The largest schools, such as Texas A&M, Louisville, and Maryland all saw similar results when broken into smaller comparison groups. Institutions that moved to similar conferences also had similar statistical data when looking at the athletic funding donation amounts.

An article by Bass, Schaeperksetter, and Bunds (2015) titled, “The “Front Porch”: Examining the Increasing Interconnection of University and Athletic Department Funding.” This article evaluated reasons how overall college exposure and fundraising efforts for the college were engaged and recruited from the athletic department serving as the “front porch” of the university. This relates to the current study because the athletic conference affiliation helps shape those perceptions. The authors stated, “Another example, think of a major university for which you have minimal familiarity. What is the first image or phrase that comes to mind? Rock Chalk Jayhawk (University of Kansas)? Roll Tide (University of Alabama)? The blue turf at Boise State University? Mike Krzyweski (Duke University)? These are all illustrations of athletics symbols, traditions, and individuals for which major colleges and universities are known nationally and internationally” (Bass, et al., 2015, p. 65). This article relates to the efforts that athletic departments use to correspond to fundraising efforts in association with conference affiliations.

Additionally, the other study completed by Bass et. al (2014) reviewed those schools within the Big South Athletic Conference and found that football and basketball both impacted donors, but the other sports did not have a significant influence on fundraising. In this causal-

comparative study athletic conference affiliation affects all sports, but many of the changes were influenced and impacted by these same two sports: football and basketball. This correlates with the research that Bass and his colleagues collected.

Overall, research question one has many different possibilities of influence on athletic fundraising, but current research and past research provide a combination of factors that may or may not influence individuals to provide donation funding to athletic programs. Continued research on smaller scales will be very influential in determining more external and internal factors.

### **Research Question #2 Discussion**

The second research question focused on changing athletic conferences in relation to a significant increase in educational donation amounts. There was a slight increase in the mean donation amounts; however, the researcher still failed to reject the null hypothesis. This slight increase was not different in annual percentage when viewed in comparison to any of the other pre and post-conference individual years' growth. Some of the various factors are similar to those of the athletic funds, but it is difficult to target exactly which ones are most significant. Traditionally, as noted by Virginia Tech (2013), academic foundations employ a large number of individuals to recruit donors, including call centers where student workers reach out to request foundational support. Such calls are constant and occur routinely on large campuses.

Academic foundations are constantly fundraising for various reasons and athletic conference affiliation does not seem to play a part in their donation totals. The increase also does not seem to play a role in their constant desire to fundraise and reach new and past donors for various academic reasons. In addition, academic fundraisers have a larger base of recruitment needs, when comparing them to athletics needs on scaled viewpoint. For example,

the academic department may fundraise scholarships for any and all academic programs, while athletics is only fundraising scholarships for those competing on an athletic team. The educational foundations concentration remains on academic and institutional needs of the entire institution, which may include a series of different colleges or departments within the overall university.

As seen in their athletic funds, larger sized institutions maintained a higher mean of annual contributions from 2011-2014. If broken down by conference and school size, the individual colleges' educational foundations were relatively equal; however, this was impacted by the size of alumni, size of the college, and years of existence.

An article that was noted in the research by Stinson (2010) discussed the outcome that intercollegiate athletics may attract new donors and potential donors. The study by Stinson evaluated how institutions used intercollegiate athletics to attract new donors and to leverage further donations from current donors. The research in this study failed to show that changing athletic conferences would significantly increase donations to both the athletic and academic departments of the college, but Stinson proved that it would help create exposure by marketing athletics for fundraising efforts.

Overall, research question two also has many different possibilities of influence on academic fundraising, but current research and past research provide various factors that may or may not influence individuals to provide donation funding to academic programs that may have been influenced by changing athletic conference affiliations. As noted in the first research question discussion, continued research on smaller scales will be very influential in determining more external and internal factors that influence donor giving.

## Conclusions

As noted earlier, Martinez. et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on intercollegiate athletics and institutional fundraising. This study evaluated a wide range of institutions and their various departments of institutional giving. The analysis showed that the entire institution benefited from higher giving rates when athletic teams were successful. In this research study, the researcher wanted to determine if changing athletic conferences would lead to the same scenario, but this was found to be inaccurate. Pre and post-conference athletic change did not significantly impact the donation totals for either foundation.

There is no immediate way to evaluate the entire impact of donor giving totals during conference change without removing all external factors and asking individual donors if they are giving because of the athletic affiliation change. This study will open new doors for research to be conducted for the individual conferences, especially for those schools who have separate educational and athletic foundations to evaluate donation totals. It is very important to compare schools that are of similar size, alumni base, and age.

A recent article published by Minium (2015) on Old Dominion University and UNC-Charlotte discussed the decisions that the individual institutions made to change athletic conferences. “ODU made a quick decision in 2012 to move up to FBS and join Conference USA” (p. C9). ODU made a rash decision without long term vision and goals, while UNC-Charlotte evaluated the effort for years and finally making the decision once Old Dominion confirmed its conference change. “UNC-Charlotte made the same decision knowing that it would join ODU in Conference USA” (Minium, 2015, p. C9). Both of these participants were similar in structure of college, age, and overall makeup, but it is evident that ample research and evaluation is necessary before making such a decision. Minium (2015) noted, “The moreal of

the story for ODU and Charlotte is that there will be bumps as you move up, but you can come through this in great shape” (p. C9).

Overall, both schools made the change and evaluated their decisions relevant to their athletic climate and conditions. Charlotte was a charter member of Conference-USA in 1995 when the conference began, but migrated away from the conference before rejoining in 2013. Future colleges will need to do the same and fundraising can certainly be a part of those conditions.

### **Implications**

This research cannot serve as the primary reason for institutions to consider changing conferences; however, it can be used as a factor to determine if a desired conference change could possibly increase donation totals. This research could also be used for institutional collaboration between educational and athletic fundraisers to target strategic fundraising efforts. The directors of development should promote open and constant communication among the upper administration, which may consist of the college president, vice presidents, and athletic directors. Such strategic fundraising can be implemented when a college makes a decision to change athletic conference affiliations.

This study does not eliminate the need to evaluate other areas of consideration for athletic conference change, but it does provide statistical insight regarding the amounts and overall means of the 15 participating colleges and how it is ultimately necessary to compare each conference individually. The effects of larger conferences vary when compared to those of smaller conferences. The individual fund amounts presented the maximum and minimum raised money leading up to their conference change and the immediate year following, but research is needed to compare these figures conference by conference.

### **Limitations**

Fundraising will always exist within higher education. There will never be a time when colleges and universities are not actively seeking donations to enhance their academic institutions. When examining this procedure and study for further limitations, it is important to note that fundraising exists in many different realms. Additionally, income that is listed on the 990 forms are considered any type of financial gains that was entered into the accounting system of these foundations. There may be other possible income generating sources that did not go into the foundations. In such a case, marketing income may have went into an overall marketing support budget for the college or department.

It is a challenge to look at so many varying institutions. As noted in other sections, these schools all vary in size and number of sports. Size is considered the number of students and their number of fundraising professionals. In addition, the majority of schools who changed conferences have football programs, only two do not. Some of the schools are located in metropolitan areas, while others are located in rural areas of the country. A key example would be comparing George Mason to East Carolina. George Mason is located in Northern Virginia, where the population and surroundings are considered metropolitan, while East Carolina is in the rural county of Greenville, North Carolina. Greenville County's infrastructure is built around the location of ECU in their county.

When reviewing the research questions, the ex post facto data was significant because it showed the changes that had occurred. This information is factual and accurate, but some of these institutions may have held large campaigns that led to strong fundraising efforts before the actual changes in conference.

## **Summary**

Data from this study does not suggest that significant increases in fundraising exist when NCAA member colleges change athletic conference. However, the research does show a positive correlation between both the educational and athletic foundation donations totals as they increase within these 15 participating schools. As the size and conference affiliations differ, it is very important that future studies more accurately reflect and evaluate similar size colleges and athletic conferences to complete such research upon.

The researcher does feel strongly that this information is important to consider when colleges are considering making athletic conference changes. More and more research can and should be done to evaluate these type of cause and effect scenarios for NCAA affiliated institutions at all three varying levels of the NCAA. This research could also be valuable to NJCAA and NAIA institutions around the country.

## **Recommendation for Future Research**

As more and more NCAA programs evaluate their options to change athletic conferences, this data and research can continue to be expanded. Several of these future research ideas can include the following:

1. One of the initial thoughts was to review the total number of donors, but the information was not available. This can be conducted as a quantitative study for athletic and educational perspectives of the institution during the necessary years of data collection and evaluation.
2. Complete a qualitative study to determine if the feelings of individuals are consistent with the data and results of this study from the first thought process of changing athletic conferences through the actual conference change process.



3. Break down each conference change to conduct a correlational study and collect data to compare particular conference-to-conference changes. An example would be from the FCS to FBS only.
4. Evaluate a donor's or a group of donors' perspectives in a qualitative or quantitative method to see the impact of conference change on a donor's decision to give.
5. Conduct a quantitative study of smaller NCAA or NJCAA programs to see if the same philosophies or theories exist at those levels of competition, conference affiliation, and fundraising.
6. Evaluate fundraising effects on those schools who collect athletic and educational donations into the same not-for-profit foundation.

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## APPENDIX

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 15, 2015

Christopher Jason Parker  
IRB Application 2309: An Analysis of the Financial Impact of Changing Athletic  
Conference Affiliation within the NCAA

Dear Christopher,

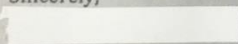
The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because it will not involve the collection of identifiable, private information.

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in identifying whether possible changes to your protocol would change your application's 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

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UNIVERSITY.  
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