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The Student-Athlete Newsletter

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PROMOTING THE ACADEMIC, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

ISSUE ONE
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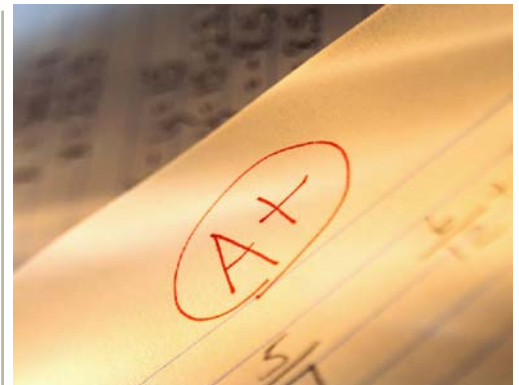
Why Some Student-Athletes are more Prone to Under- Perform Academically

By: Gerry Trapp, former Student-Athlete and Advocate for the Well-Being of the Student-Athlete

Research Studies point us to new areas of the student-athlete environment that need to be looked at closer

As explained by Marcia (1966), *identity foreclosure* occurs when individuals prematurely make a firm commitment to an occupation or an ideology. These individuals have not allowed for an exploration of their internal needs and values; instead they have conceded to the demands of their environment and adopted a socially accepted role identity. Thus, they have avoided an identity crisis and done so at the expense of their personal freedom and opportunities for growth and creativity.

Our schools and athletic departments have been and continue to be challenged by roughly 20% of the student-athlete body who under- perform academically. In a short time many from this group will find themselves out in the career world unaware of and unprepared for their new environment, soon to be another low career maturity level statistic. Of this 20% we are challenged by, many have committed to being athletes first and foremost. Their belief is their athletic skills and status will continue to take care of their immediate and future needs. In their academic environment they accept sub-par performance believing they are not inclined to be "good students". They believe their academic development is not as important for their future needs for they are athletes first. *Identity Foreclosure* promotes the blocking of exploratory behaviors limiting student-athlete interests and knowledge in areas outside their athletic environment. This particular group of student-athlete has been slipping through the cracks for too long.



We need to do more for this group. Tutoring and study halls are an important part of the solution but alone are not enough to meet the needs of this group. Bringing Awareness to *Identity Foreclosure* and *Exclusive Athletic Identity*, along with identifying those *Unique Challenges* that are exclusive to the student-athlete environment is an approach that will assist the student-athlete in making more informed decisions an ultimately improve in their academic growth and development.

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low levels
career

A Newsletter Promoting the Well-Being of the Student-Athlete



The Student-Athlete Newsletter

Discussing Issues Affecting the
Student-Athlete

A Complimentary News Letter

Providing Awareness to Student Athletes at risk of Exclusive Athletic Identity
Providing Awareness to the Unique Challenges Student-Athletes Encounter
Improving Decision Making Abilities: Improve Academic Performance



Exclusive Athletic Identity

If you are unable to identify and describe your self worth outside of athletic descriptions, you may be said to have an Exclusive Athletic Identity (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993) EAI occurs when the student-athlete ascribe great importance to the role of being an athlete and does not acknowledge an identity beyond sports

- These Student-Athletes are having needs met in their athletic environment, influencing their decision making abilities.
- They are inclined to take advantage of their athletic status and of the system
- They may believe they are not academically inclined
- They may believe their athletic skills will be transferable to their future careers promoting them to "Put all their eggs in one basket"
- They probably don't feel as comfortable and self assured when anywhere other than in their athletic environment
- It's a good chance they neglect accountability and responsibility in areas outside their athletic environment
- When outside their athletic environment they identify "short cuts" and often take them.
- In comparison with their peers they find most things outside of their athletic environment "boring, unexciting and uninteresting"

Early in the development of their athletic identity this student-athlete has been having important needs met, **Accomplishment and Acceptance needs.** For some in this group having these needs met early on may contribute to poor decision making skills that occur more when outside of their athletic environment. With accomplishment and acceptance needs being met its not uncommon for some student-athletes when encountering a challenge outside their athletic environment to put forth a weak effort and then look past their poor performance and poor decisions without evaluating effects and impact their decision may have had on their growth and development. Eliminating exploratory behaviors, taking advantage of their athletic status, and accepting the belief they are not academically inclined are just some of the poor decisions student-athletes in identity foreclosure may make. Your accomplishment and acceptance needs that are being met in your athletic environment will serve you in the short term only! Their usefulness will vanish with your athletic eligibility and with your athletic talents, leaving you unprepared and unaware in your career environment feeling overwhelmed facing the difficult challenge that is ahead- Successfully Transitioning into your future career that will serve you for your lifetime!

*Exclusive
athletic
identity
Academic Performance
Unique Challenges*

“Those with the highest levels of athletic identity almost always have lowest levels of Career Maturity” (Baille & Danish, '92; Etzel, Ferrante, Pinkney, '91)

Come graduation or when their eligibility is exhausted this particular group of student-athlete will attempt to make the difficult transition into the career world Unprepared for and Unaware of the challenges they are about to encounter

Blocking emotional thoughts diminishes thinking abilities. Concealing your feelings requires mental resources that reduce your ability to remember, communicate and reason. "Typically, people conceal feelings to foster the illusion that they are cool, calm and collected", writes psychologist Jane Richards of the University of Texas at Austin.

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