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This comparative case study examined why one North Carolina Community College fields athletic teams and why a comparable college does not offer sports.

Interviews were conducted with administrators and a student government association representative at each institution. Additional data related to enrollment, sports and funding were provided by the institution that participates in athletics. The researcher made site visits to each campus for interviews. The institution that offers athletics is Rockingham Community College (RCC) and the institution that does not is Cleveland Community College (CCC).

An analysis of the data revealed a variety of elements that included enrollment and admissions, fundraising and funding, and publicity and marketing.

It was clear from those interviewed at RCC that athletics had a higher impact on enrollment due to the number of athletes who are enrolled. However, the carryover to general recruitment was not evident. Publicity was found to have the least impact. While at CCC, publicity was considered an area that would have the most impact if sports were offered.

Fundraising and funding of sports are a combined effort at RCC as fundraising efforts play a major part in budgeting for the athletics program. At CCC, it was perceived that targeted fundraising for sports would be a requirement in order to sustain an athletics program. At RCC, a portion of student activity funds are used to assist the sports budget

and those at CCC agreed that student activity fees could be a possible revenue source to assist funding for an athletic program.

Findings indicate that the main reason why sports are not offered at CCC is that the focus is on academics, workforce training, and a capital campaign to build additional classroom space. At RCC, findings indicate the main reason why athletics were implemented was to provide a well-rounded collegiate environment for all students and an opportunity for athletes to continue their athletic participation and education.

PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION: A COMPARATIVE-CASE
STUDY OF TWO NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) was founded, one of its goals was to provide a skilled workforce with technical and vocational training. Over the past 40 years, this goal has been revitalized by the addition of college transfer programs. The result is that the academic programs of the North Carolina Community Colleges now provide more than just specialized skills for workforce preparedness. Within their curricula offerings, a number of North Carolina Community Colleges are now providing athletic programs. However, unlike the state's university system, these schools are not permitted to levy athletic fees.

The mission of the NCCCS is to open the door to high-quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing:

1. Education, training and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs,
2. Support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry and in collaboration with the University of North Carolina System and private colleges and universities, and

3. Services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life (NCCCS, 2007d).

While the commitment to workforce preparedness is clearly visible, so is the preparation for pre-baccalaureate programs. Finally, services which improve the quality of life provide a broad and sweeping statement for athletics to fit within the system's mission.

Problem Statement

Athletic programs are powerful public relations tools used by higher learning institutions to consistently draw attention from media, community, students, and alumni. North Carolina does not allow community colleges to levy athletic fees to be used in funding competitive athletic programs. However, of the 58 NCCCS institutions, eighteen have now chosen to field athletic teams. In what may be a growing trend, five of the eighteen participants began their sports program within the last two years. Most of the participating institutions only offer a small, select number of sports. Brunswick Community College in Supply, North Carolina offers just men's and women's basketball, while Mayland Community College in Spruce Pine fields a men's basketball team and a women's volleyball team. An example of a larger athletic program is offered at Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington. Cape Fear Community College fields a total of six teams in men's and women's golf and soccer, men's basketball, and women's volleyball. Other sports teams fielded among NCCCS institutions include women's softball, men's baseball, and co-ed golf (NCJAA, 2007a).

Athletics are a common fixture on state college and university campuses as well as junior and community colleges across the country. Athletic fees and booster donations provide the bulk of funding for sports programs at state institutions. Additionally, in the United States, intercollegiate sports have become institutionalized at the vast majority of public schools of higher learning. Financing sports through athletic fees, large booster donations, and through the institutionalization of athletics, are implicit conditions for providing sports at most public institutions nationally, but sports are not a part of collegiate life in most North Carolina Community Colleges.

If a North Carolina Community College chooses to participate in competitive athletics, what benefits can be gained from fielding athletic teams?

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to provide a comparative case study of two community colleges within the NCCCS, one that fields athletic teams and one that does not offer sports. The study investigated the reasons why one college competes, the types of sports it offers, the reason it chose those sports, how they are funded, and the program's benefits. Potential benefits considered include student body pride, alumni loyalty, increases in donations to the college, and increases in college admissions. In comparison, a second college was examined to determine the reasons sports are not offered. The findings of this study can be utilized by other community colleges that may now, or in the future, consider offering competitive athletics.

A number of reasons led to the selection of Rockingham Community College (RCC) for the case study as the institution offering athletics. First, the institution revived

athletics after a 20-year absence from sports. As a result, the time-frame provided a window with a recent history. Second, the majority of the top level administrators currently in place at RCC, were at the school when athletics were revived.

It has been nine years since Rockingham Community College started a competitive athletic program. The college offers men's baseball, basketball and golf as well as women's golf, volleyball and fastpitch softball (NCJAA, 2007d). Along the way, the types of sports offered have changed. Volleyball is a sport that was added after men's and women's soccer events were dropped following the 2001 season (Killian, 2002).

Cleveland Community College (CCC) was chosen as a comparative school for the study in that it does not offer sports. Cleveland Community College is similar to RCC in terms of school size, and demographics. Both are in rural communities that are proximal to larger metropolitan areas. While CCC has at times offered intramural sports and competed in recreational leagues, it has never fielded a competitive collegiate sports program.

Research Questions

1. Have general donations to RCC increased as a result of offering competitive athletic teams and is there a reasonable expectation that CCC could increase its donations if sports were offered?

2. Do athletics enhance the visibility of RCC among its primary constituents who include students, alumni, and community, and is there a reasonable expectation that CCC could increase visibility through sports?

3. Have athletics increased admissions at RCC and is there a reasonable expectation that CCC could increase its admissions through offering athletics?
4. How has RCC financed athletics and how would CCC finance athletics?

Hypotheses:

1. Sports teams at RCC have led to an increase in its monetary donations.
2. Athletics at RCC have led to an increase in its exposure and publicity.
3. Competitive sports at RCC have led to an increase in its admissions

Operational Definitions

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)—The governing body of collegiate sports at most four-year colleges.

A basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body, and, by doing so, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports. (Gerdy, 1997, p. 5)

National Junior College Athletic Association:

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) is the governing body of intercollegiate athletics for two-year colleges. As such, its programs are designed to meet the unique needs of a diverse group of student-athletes who come from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds and whose purpose in selecting a junior college may be as varied as their experiences before attending college. (NJCAA, 2007c)

Within the NJCAA, there are three divisions. DI—A maximum of tuition and fees, room and board, course related books and transportation costs one time per academic year to and from the college by direct route. DII—A maximum of tuition, fees, and course

related books. DIII—No scholarships of any kind (NJCAA, 2007b). RCC chooses to compete at the Division I level even though athletic scholarships are not offered.

Corporate Athleticism—Managing sports programs in such a way to achieve maximum financial return. “In effect, the term bestows new meaning on the popular saying that college sports are simply big business” (Hart-Nibbrig & Cottingham, 1986, p. 1).

Division I—The highest ranking division of intercollegiate sports sanctioned by the NCAA. Division I participants must offer a minimum of seven sports for each gender (NCAA, 2007).

Research Design

A qualitative, comparative case study was used to examine two member institutions of the North Carolina Community College System: Rockingham Community College which fields competitive athletic teams and Cleveland Community College, which does not. Rockingham Community College re-implemented an athletics program in 1999 after a 20-year hiatus while CCC has never offered competitive collegiate athletics. The research questions and related hypotheses will explore the implementation of athletics at RCC and the goals the institution hopes to achieve or has achieved through sports in comparison to the reasons CCC has not offered sports.

Factors surrounding and influencing the start-up and continuance of collegiate athletics at RCC include funding and affordability, prestige and marketing, and enrollment and admissions. Interview questions presented to administrators and staff focused on these factors as they relate to the introduction and maintenance of athletics at

RCC. Administrators included the President, Athletic Director, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Business Affairs, the Director of College Relations and the Development Director. These key positions were selected because of their closeness to the key issues regarding sports, financing, admission, and publicity. In contrast, interview questions presented to the administrators and staff in those same positions, excluding athletic director, at CCC, focused on the same factors and how they relate to sports not being offered at CCC.

Emergent themes will suggest whether athletics at RCC have achieved the benefits related to funding, prestige, and enrollment, and whether sports will be considered in the near future at CCC.

Limitations

The focus of this study was two North Carolina Community Colleges. Although these institutions may be similar to other community colleges and junior colleges across the nation, their makeup is most closely aligned with colleges within the NCCCS and therefore should not be generalized to other institutions. Additionally, the make-up of these institutions may differ in some ways (size of population served, number of students, community make-up, and some variation in course offerings) from other institutions within the NCCCS system. Information gathered from administrators and staff includes the perceptions and biases held by these stakeholders.

Another limitation that should be noted is that the researcher is a staff member at one of the participating institutions, CCC. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the President of CCC; however, no one was required to participate in the study. The

interview protocol (see Appendix B) for participants at CCC corresponded with the interview protocol for participants at RCC (see Appendix A). Questions asked were designed to elicit open-ended responses from the participants. Themes that developed were based on participant responses and not the opinion of the researcher.

Significance of the Study

This study comes at a time when administrators within the North Carolina Community College System are discussing sports in North Carolina Community Colleges. Due to the growing number of member institutions offering competitive sports programs, athletic programs cannot be overlooked by the NCCCS.

If the NCCCS wishes to have input in how sports programs are formulated, overseen, funded, and run, then input from the community college presidents and the NCCCS administration is needed. As a result, North Carolina Community College presidents have discussed whether or not athletic fees should be levied. The result of the discussion was that a task force on intercollegiate athletics was formed to study the issue (NCCCS, 2007c).

While this may seem to favor additional provisions for athletic funding, this may not necessarily be the case. North Carolina community colleges have previously relied on student activity fees and/or private donations as a source for funding athletics. If student activity fees are increased, then athletics could benefit from additional funding without adding athletic fees.

While this speaks to the timeliness of the study, other factors are of considerable importance. They include strategies for starting a program, the reasons behind starting a program, funding, and benefits of sports.

North Carolina community colleges that are considering a sports program, or may consider one in the future, may benefit from the study in making a determination of cost versus value. While barriers to participation in sports are known, the benefits of participation should be weighed before a decision to participate or not is made.

The North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges did approve a Student Activity Fee increase from the current maximum rate of \$38 to \$65 at their September 21 meeting (NCCCS, 2007b).

The final report of the athletics study was completed in November 2007. No recommendations were taken on the issue of administering athletics fees. As such, current funding strategies for athletics in North Carolina Community Colleges remain in place (NCCCS, 2007b).

Organization of the Study

The introductory Chapter I is followed by four additional chapters. Chapter II contains a review of the literature on athletic programs in collegiate settings, providing insights into the goals of these programs as mentioned in Chapter I. Chapter III describes the research methodology of the study. The methodology section provides a description of the target institutions; the subjects interviewed, and the procedures for collecting and analyzing the data. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the data, presentation of dominant

themes, and an explanation of the results. Chapter V discusses the conclusions of the study and provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research was to provide a comparative case study of two community colleges within the NCCCS, one that fields athletic teams and one that does not offer sports. Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, North Carolina participates in collegiate athletics, while Cleveland Community College in Shelby, NC does not. The study investigated the reasons why RCC competes. In comparison, CCC was examined to determine the reasons sports are not offered. The findings of this study can be utilized by other community colleges that may now, or in the future, consider offering competitive athletics.

Justification for implementation and institutionalization of collegiate athletics in today's society is seemingly without need for such justification. Athletics on college campuses are as common as freshman English classes, residence halls, and dining halls. It is simply woven into the thread of the collegiate experience. Negative aspects, such as recruiting violations, academic fraud, reduced admissions standards for athletes, and athletes violating the law, are regularly portrayed by the media. Despite the numerous ways that athletics can shed bad light on institutions, sports thrive. This review focused on the reasons for such justification and did not delve into the literature and theories in regards to such negative aspects. The literature review focused on why institutions have teams, and highlighted themes related to financing, fundraising, publicity and admissions.

Early History

Guttmann (1991), Davenport (1985), and Chu (1989) provide historical descriptions of how sports first became a part of institutions of higher learning in the United States. Consistently within this context, sports were first instituted by students before being overseen by administrators. Athletic events were viewed as a means to publicize institutions, attract students and increase tuition revenue, and soon became a vital part of collegiate life.

Guttman (1991) notes that collegiate athletics began in 1829 with a rowing match between Oxford and Cambridge and in the United States in 1852 with a rowing match between Yale and Harvard. These first rowing contests, which were later followed by track and field and baseball, were organized by the students, but administrators began to take control by the beginning of the twentieth century (Guttman, 1991).

Publicity and Prestige

Gerdy (1997), Guttmann (1991), Chu (1989), and Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham (1986) contend that collegiate athletics cross social barriers and bring a central focus and identity to an institution. The result is publicity and prestige with a tangible benefit in terms of funding from constituents including legislatures, alumni, the public and students (in the form of increased admissions and tuition).

Gerdy (1997) notes that the early university presidents believed that a successful football team promoted their schools as big time institutions. “Athletics was formally incorporated into higher education’s structure because academic leaders believed that a

successful athletic team could serve an important public-relations function for the university, which in turn would result in increased financial support” (p. 29).

Chu (1989) notes that University of Chicago founding President William Rainey Harper brought in Yale’s famous former football player, Amos Alonzo Stagg, to coach in an attempt to bolster the schools football program. Harper believed that a successful sports program would go a long way in promoting a quality institution in the late 1890’s and early 1900’s.

According to Duderstadt (2000) the popularity of athletics extends well beyond the college’s physical landscape, students, and graduates providing a sense of identity to many. “This sense of community and engagement surrounding athletics extends far beyond the campus to include not simply alumni, but hundreds of thousands of fans with otherwise little direct connection to the university” (p. 71)

Chu (1989), and Sack and Watkins (1985) agree that sport is a central part of campus life to students and alumni. Chu (1989) contends that not having sports forces the perception that an institution is not a true member of higher education in this country.

Financing

While some perceive that athletic programs bring in revenue to the institution as a whole, a review of the literature finds that most individual athletic departments operate with a deficit budget. Zimbalist (1999) contends that collegiate athletic programs are rarely self-supporting and do not always generate revenue and positive exposure for their campuses. Gerdy (1997) and Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham (1986) determined that most

collegiate athletic departments, with the exception of the largest Division IA, programs, run at a deficit.

According to Sperber (1990), most athletic programs lose money annually.

If profit and loss is defined according to ordinary business practices, of the 802 members of the NCAA, the 493 members of the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), and the 1,050 nonaffiliated junior colleges, only 10 to 20 athletic programs make a consistent albeit small profit, and in any given year another 20 to 30 break even or do better. The rest—over 2,300 institutions—lose anywhere from a few dollars to millions annually. (p. 2)

Shulman and Bowen (2001) note that the 1998-1999 athletic season was a very successful year for the University of Michigan's Athletic Department. Several teams fielded a winning season, and the football team shared the Big 10 title and won a bowl game. However, by the time the financial records were audited, the department showed a loss of \$3.8 million.

Hart-Nibbrig and Cottingham (1986) contend that only a small number of teams are classified in the most prestigious NCAA Division I and of those, only a small number earn a profit. Instead, most lose money.

Duderstadt (2000) foregoes the myth that colleges make lots of money from athletics. While this myth may be held by the general public and media, athletic departments must fund their own operations, with few making profits and most unable to balance their budgets.

Guttmann (1991) documented that winning seasons can produce increases in alumni giving to the institution as a whole. Sack and Watkins (1985) found that successful or losing seasons produced inconclusive changes in alumni giving. Hart-

Nibbrig and Cottingham (1986) note that strong booster clubs are a part of successful collegiate sports programs.

Admissions

According to Simon (1991), a central question surrounding collegiate sports is whether or not they are desirable in the collegiate environment. If athletics are, in fact, desirable, the question is that of costs versus benefits in terms of whether or not money spent on college sports could be better spent elsewhere.

However, there is another factor in terms of publicity and its effect on admissions which must be considered. Davenport (1985) notes that while the early presidents did not condone the first crew races, the events did serve to publicize the universities involved which helped admissions.

According to Sandy and Sloane (2004), it is believed that sports bring in more students because some students are friends of athletes and want to attend the same school. And the publicity gained from sports gets the name of the school out to those who might attend. Another example of a more tangible increase would include schools that attempt to increase the number of students by offering sports that bring additional student athletes to the campus. In 1997, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, a former women's college, started a Division III non-scholarship football team in an attempt to bring in more male students. "The new team attracted 200 additional men who wanted to play football, enrolled in Mary Hardin-Baylor, and tried out for the team" (Sandy & Sloane, 2004, pp. 89-90).

Osborne (2004) notes that there are two positions that promote increased admissions through athletics. The first states that by simply participating in sports, the increase in publicity draws students to the campus. “Another version of this enrollment-drive view is that athletic success brings with it increased admissions from would-be students who seek the consumption benefits of attending games, rooting for successful teams, and so on” (p. 55).

Fundraising

The first fundraising efforts for college athletics started outside the bounds of institutional control (Smith, 1988). The early crew teams raised their own funds from student donations, alumni, and friends of the college. In the 1860’s, Harvard raised thousands of dollars in order to travel to Oxford to compete in crew.

Gerdy (1997) notes that athletic fundraising should be incorporated into a college’s office of institutional advancement. However, most athletic fundraising efforts are designed to raise money solely for the athletic department. “If a fundamental justification for athletics is that it generates exposure and resources for the university, then all efforts related to these functions should be subject to the direct oversight and control of the university’s office of institutional advancement” (p. 121).

According to Sperber (1990), a common belief that college sports raise a lot of money for schools cannot be substantiated. While booster dollars may be substantial, it cannot always be counted on, as wins and losses can sway donations. Negative publicity in an intercollegiate athletic department can also cause a dip in donations. “Publicity from

intercollegiate athletics is a two-edged sword that can easily swing back and injure a university, costing it millions of dollars” (p. 81).

Frey (1985) notes that boosterism has long been intertwined in collegiate athletic fundraising efforts and contends that boosters can be defined through three forms of organization. The first is the booster club which usually takes the name of the team mascot and is under the control of the college with the disbursement of funds raised also under the control of the institution. A second type of booster coalition operates separately from the institution, usually with the goal of securing dollars for land purchases or capital development. A typical example would be a non-profit group raising funds to build a new stadium or ball field. The third type of booster group is also incorporated independently from the institution and its mission is to fund the athletic department. Frey further notes that while these groups may have been started with the intention of functioning within the general interest of the institution, the central focus is now on fundraising for athletics.

Community and Junior Colleges

According to Ashburn (2007), community colleges have added sports as a means to boost enrollment. The push for sports is a result of traditional-aged college students (18-24) who prefer a community college experience complete with athletics. “In North Carolina, the push to increase the number of athletics programs is so strong that the state’s community-college system formed a task force to examine the issue and develop guidelines for sports teams” (p. 2).

According to Ashburn (2007), presidents of North Carolina Community Colleges who field athletic teams are receiving calls from other presidents asking about adding

sports. Robert Keys at Rockingham Community College is one president who has received questions. “Mr. Keys started varsity sports at Rockingham in 1998 to meet the demand of local high-school athletes who wanted to play in college. Many were leaving the county, which borders Virginia, to play at other two-year or small four-year colleges. Adding athletics also helped legitimize the college” (Ashburn, 2007, p. 2).

Enrollment increases are a central focus of sports at Iowa Central Community College (Ashburn, 2007). Athletics are used as a means to attract local students, but student athletes are also recruited from out of state. Athletes at Iowa Central come from nearby surrounding states as well as from states throughout the country.

Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC) became the first junior college in the state of Virginia to join the NJCAA in August of 2007 (Melwood, 2007). With the move to the NJCAA, PHCC hopes to keep more talented athletes in the area and bring greater recognition to the school. “With area residents facing a lack of high-paying jobs and high unemployment, PHCC hopes to increase its enrollment and thus educate more people. Its hope is to help spark economic growth and bring more people back to the area.” (p. 2)

Hood (2007) sees a contradiction in the view that North Carolina Community Colleges create athletic programs in order to increase enrollment. Hood notes that community colleges in North Carolina promoted high enrollments as a need to pass a higher education bond package which included \$600 million for community college campuses. “But now, it is said, the colleges need to pretend to be state universities to convince students to attend them. Which is it?” (p. 6A).

Wayne Baker, Executive Director of the NJCAA, spoke to the State Board of North Carolina Community Colleges in January of 2007 (NCCCS, 2007a). “Baker told State Board members and community college presidents that athletic teams enhance community college life and can bring more students and more money to the college. He encouraged those colleges that are not involved in athletics to start a team” (p. 1).

Baker noted that sports bring people to campus who might not otherwise come, who then may come back and enroll (NCCCS, 2007a). He also pushed that sports are great publicity for colleges. “Questions from the audience focused on funding. Baker made it clear that state funds cannot be used to support athletics. Student fees and private support are the most common sources of financing athletic programs” (p. 1).

According to Hines (2005) at least 18 of the 58 community colleges in the NCCCS participate in intercollegiate athletics. “Some schools have recently added athletics in the past five years or so while others have had programs for over 10 years” (p. 1).

Williams and Pennington (2006) surveyed community college presidents to determine their perceptions of sports around four major topics. These included pride, increases in enrollment, financial and administrative procedures, and whether athletics support the mission of the college. The leaders strongly agreed that institutional pride was promoted through sports for both students and the community. The majority agreed that athletics help boost an institution’s enrollment. The majority agreed that athletics do not have a good base for funding, budgeting for sports is not well understood, nor is the process for starting new teams. Finally, the presidents at schools with sports believed that

athletics support the mission while those without sports did not have strong opinions on the issue. “Leaders at institutions with teams may use the comprehensive mission of the community college to justify or rationalize the existence of intercollegiate teams” (Williams & Pennington, 2006, p. 8).

Summary

A review of the literature suggests that the early collegiate administrators felt that collegiate athletics would provide an increase in admissions, publicity, and revenue to their colleges. In reality, the literature only lends credibility to some of those assumptions.

The most evident topic relating to the value of athletics is that of publicity and prestige. Whether a team wins or loses, publicity is generated in some form, whether from word of mouth, newspaper or radio descriptions. In the case of larger schools, and popular sports such as men’s basketball and football, television is an even greater form of publicity. Successful teams provide increased exposure and publicity to the schools. High profile wins over rivals or top teams also secure short-term publicity to the winning institutions. This publicity extends to students, alumni, and the general public.

The literature reveals less evidence that athletic teams build collegiate prestige by simply fielding teams. Whether or not colleges can be considered legitimate by their constituents based on whether sports are offered is up for debate. Prestige is, like publicity, more readily evident through success or big wins.

The question of financing is clear on one topic. Most schools which field athletic teams operate at a deficit in relationship to their athletic departments. The idea that

athletics make money and help support their institutions financially is a myth. The literature review also reveals that winning seasons do not ensure financial gains and very successful athletic programs lose money.

Admissions related to athletics is another subject that reveals few conclusions from the literature. If one holds the tenet that sports is a requirement for an institution to be considered a “real” college or university, then it is likely that one would believe that admissions are increased by simply fielding teams. While it is clear that athletic teams publicize an institution, it is not clear whether or not this publicity is directly related to admissions, though the assumption is that it does bolster admissions. In the case of a college that adds sports to increase its student population, as in the case of Mary Hardin-Baylor, then sports can directly lead to an increase in admissions.

Fundraising is the least conclusive of the questions related to athletics in the collegiate environment. If most athletic departments are losing money, how can they contribute financially to the college in general? In fact, they can’t if the institution has to subsidize the athletic department. Another gray area relates to the general contributions to the institutions as a result of athletics. The literature points out that most booster donations go directly to the athletic department. In some cases, these booster groups and the monies they administer, operate outside the bounds of institutional control.

The questions of finance, publicity, admissions and fundraising can all be contained in one element. That element is a matter of perception. If a person, whether a college student, alum, administrator, or member of the general community believes that athletics are an integral part of collegiate life, then athletics are an integral part of

collegiate life. The end result is that the answers surrounding the questions related to financing, publicity, admissions and fundraising are a means to an end. They form a circle that justifies the other.

If athletic departments lose money, they still create publicity for the institution. If fundraising efforts only help the athletic departments, those athletic programs help draw students to campus. As a result, the circle continues and perceptions on collegiate athletics, whether reality based or not, whether conclusive or not, continue to exist.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to provide a comparative case study of two community colleges within the NCCCS, one that fields athletic teams and one that does not offer sports. Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, North Carolina participates in collegiate athletics, while Cleveland Community College in Shelby, North Carolina does not. The study investigated the reasons why RCC competes. In comparison, CCC was examined to determine the reasons sports are not offered. The findings of this study can be utilized by other community colleges that may now, or in the future, consider offering competitive athletics.

Creswell (2003) notes that in the field of qualitative research, the types of research have become more visible with five major approaches identified. The approaches include ethnographies, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative. Creswell (2003) cites Stake (1995) in defining case studies:

Case Studies, in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. (Creswell, 2003, p. 15)

According to Crowl (1996) case studies usually involve the researcher observing the subject in a setting that explains the case through a qualitative description. “No

attempt is made in case studies to control any aspects of the environment in which the individual is being observed.” (p. 324)

Creswell (2003) states that the qualitative researcher can use several research methods that are interactive and humanistic. The researcher seeks active involvement from the subject(s) in data collection. “In addition, the actual methods of data collection, traditionally based on open-ended observations, interviews, and documents, now include a vast array of materials, such as sounds, e-mails, scrapbooks, and other emerging forms” (p. 181).

Case Study Design

Two institutions were chosen for this case study. As a result, a comparative-case study design was used. According to Yin (2003), a study may yield itself to more than just one case. “When this occurs, the study has used a multiple-case design, and such designs have increased in frequency in recent years” (p. 46).

Merriam (1998) notes that several terms can be used to describe a study when there is more than one case to be described. “These are commonly referred to as collective case studies, cross-case, multicase or multisite studies, or comparative case studies” (p. 40).

While 18 of the colleges within the NCCCS currently offer athletics, 40 of the member institutions do not offer sports. Whereas a greater number of colleges within the NCCCS may eventually offer competitive sports, the majority do not participate. This discrepancy lends itself to a comparative study of one member institution that offers sports (RCC) in comparison to one that does not (CCC).

The Researcher

During this study, the researcher was the sole evaluator, performing data collection and conducting the analysis. The researcher's experiences as a public information officer and continuing education administrator in a community college setting provided the researcher with an understanding of the stakeholders of the two institutions that were studied. As an employee of one of the two institutions studied, CCC, the researcher knew the participants who were interviewed and has an in depth, personal knowledge of the college. As an employee within the NCCCS, the researcher felt that he was able to gain support from both institutions in order to conduct the study.

Since the researcher knew the participants from CCC, he took great responsibility in implementing means to reduce researcher bias and to increase trustworthiness of the collected data. The data were triangulated from a variety of sources including interviews, documents, and media articles. Further, member checks were instituted with those interviewed to ensure that information was correctly stated.

Research Settings

Rockingham Community College is located in Rockingham County. The county has a large manufacturing base although many manufacturing jobs have been lost in recent years. Though mostly rural, the county is only 16 miles away from the larger Greensboro, North Carolina market. The county population is approximately 92,000. RCC is located in the county seat of Wentworth (Rockingham County Partnership, 2007).

Rockingham Community College received its charter from the state board of education in 1963; however, the first students did not begin classes until 1966 after

buildings were constructed for classes. President Robert Keys is the third president in the history of the institution (Rockingham Community College, 2007a).

Curriculum enrollment at RCC for fall semester 2006 was 2,086 students, of which 1,006, slightly under 50%, were enrolled as full-time students. In fall semester 2006, 4,208 students registered for continuing education courses (Rockingham Community College, 2007c).

RCC offers college transfer programs through the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Pre-Major Programs. The terminal Associate in Applied Science Degree offers technical training in a number of fields including business, healthcare and information systems. Additionally, shorter term curriculum diploma and certificate programs are also offered (Rockingham Community College, 2007b).

Cleveland Community College (CCC) is located in Cleveland County. Similar to Rockingham, Cleveland County has a large manufacturing base. Formerly a textile-based community; the market is approximately 40 miles from the larger Charlotte metro region. The county population is approximately 98,000 and CCC is located in the county seat of Shelby (Charlotte Regional Partnership, 2007).

CCC was founded in July of 1965 as the Cleveland County Industrial and Adult Education Center with the first students beginning classes in the fall of the same year. In only a matter of months, the college was renamed the Cleveland County Industrial Center and was eventually named Cleveland County Technical Institute. In 1980 the college was renamed Cleveland Technical College and in 1987 received its final name change as

Cleveland Community College. Steve Thornburg is the second president in the college's history and still serves in that capacity (Cleveland Community College, 2007a).

Curriculum enrollment at CCC for fall semester 2006 set a record of 3,436 students. Fall enrollment for continuing education students was 3,152.

CCC offers the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science Pre-Major Programs of study. Technical skills are offered through the Associate in Applied Science Degree with programs offered in a variety of areas including Accounting, Biotechnology, Industrial Management, and Healthcare. Shorter term technical diploma and certificate programs are also a part of the curriculum offerings (Cleveland Community College, 2007b).

Procedure

The researcher requested permission from RCC to conduct the study at RCC's campus. The researcher visited RCC for a preliminary visit to discuss the study. President Keys, along with the Vice Presidents of the institution were in attendance. Keys granted permission to the researcher to conduct the study. At CCC, the researcher requested and received permission from President Thornburg to conduct the study. Also, approval to work with human subjects was granted by the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, because the researcher is a doctoral student at that institution.

The researcher requested appointments with each of the administrators who were interviewed. Each administrator received a copy of the interview questions prior to the arrival of the researcher. This allowed the administrators to be prepared and focused on the questions ahead of time. The researcher, in addition to his note taking, used a tape

recorder to record responses for each administrator. However, only the researcher's notes were taken for any administrators who did not want to be recorded. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher either read back or played responses to each administrator to check for accuracy. This also provided an opportunity for the administrator to add anything to the responses.

For each question (see Appendix A) asked of the administrators at RCC, a corresponding question (see Appendix B) was asked of the administrators at CCC. For each comparative question, responses were summarized and emergent themes were noted. The researcher used quotes from the responses that summarized any emerging themes for each question.

The researcher used pattern matching as a means to find themes that reoccurred during data collection. According to Stake (1995), meaning can be found through a search for patterns and consistency. "Sometimes, we find significant meaning in a single instance, but usually the important meanings will come from reappearance over and over" (p. 78).

Participating Institutions

Rockingham Community College and Cleveland Community College were the two institutions chosen for the comparative study. RCC offers competitive athletics while CCC does not. Administrators at each school selected for interviews were chosen because of their decision-making roles within the institutions.

At RCC, the President, Athletic Director, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Business Affairs, the Development Director, and the Director of College

Relations were chosen. These key positions were chosen because of their relationships to the issues of sports, admissions, financing and marketing. In comparison, the same administrators, excluding Athletic Director, were chosen at CCC for interviews.

These key administrators at RCC were chosen because of their decision-making roles in terms of athletics at RCC. The current President at RCC was in place when the institution decided to revive competitive sports. Each of the selected administrators are well-versed on the issues of funding and finance, admissions, and marketing as it relates to sports. In contrast, those holding the same administrative roles were chosen at CCC for comparison within the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from multiple sources at RCC. These included interviews with the key administrators, and archival records containing enrollment data for the year prior to athletics being implemented and the years since, data for athletic funding including budgets, salaries and equipment expenses, and a collection of marketing materials related to sports (sports specific brochures, fliers, media clippings, or magazine articles). Finally, researcher observations were noted.

At CCC, data were collected only from interviews and observations. As CCC does not offer sports, there are no data available related to the key issues. Interview questions for administrators at both schools were open-ended, allowing for conversational exchange and more in depth inquiry. The interview protocol for RCC (see Appendix A) included questions formulated around the research questions related to funding and finance, admissions, donations, and marketing. A similar protocol was

developed for CCC (see Appendix B) around the same topics as they relate to an institution that does not have sports.

May (2001) notes that methods of engaging in conversations with people on a specific topic, and the interpretations of those conversations by the researcher, form the basics of interviewing. “Interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (p. 120).

Yin (2003) contends that the interview is one of the most important aspects of a case study and a major source of case study information. “The interviews will appear to be guided conversations rather than structured inquiry” (p. 89).

Stake (1995) notes that each person interviewed should have unique stories and experiences with which to relate to the question at hand. The interviewer should have a short list of questions to formulate the basis of the interview, and to give a copy of the questions to the interviewee. “The purpose for the most part is not to get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation” (p. 65).

Merriam (1998) states that the amount of structure is a key component in the determination of what type of interview is to be used in a study. “At one end of the continuum fall highly structured, questionnaire-driven interviews; at the other end are unstructured, open-ended, conversational formats” (p. 74). Merriam (1998) notes that the least structured interviews are informal in format and best used when the researcher does not know enough about a subject to ask pertinent questions. However, the semi-structured, open ended approach utilizes flexibly worded questions.

According to Yin (2003) an inquiring mind is required for the case study researcher during data collection. “The ability to pose and ask good questions is therefore a prerequisite for case study investigators” (p. 59).

Interviews were analyzed to reveal themes that developed as they related to the perceptions of the administrators. Results from interviews at RCC were compared with enrollment data to determine any tangible differences. Summaries of the open-ended interviews at both institutions were described in a narrative form in relationship to each of the research questions. A description of archival data related to the research questions was also recorded.

Researcher observations were conducted through a field visit to each case site for interviews and document gathering. At RCC, observations included a visit to the athletic fields and practices as well as general observations on campus. As the researcher was housed at CCC, observations included descriptions of athletic fields and any areas or facilities that could be used for competitive athletics.

According to Yin (2003), a field visit creates an opportunity for observation, whether formal or casual in nature. “Less formally, direct observations might be made throughout a field visit, including those occasions which other evidence, such as that from interviews, is being collected” (p. 92).

Merriam (1998) notes that informal observation begins by focusing on the research question. However, even if certain events, behaviors or persons are planned to be observed, the researcher can’t simply stop observing. “The focus must be allowed to emerge and in fact may change over the course of the study” (p. 97).

Trustworthiness of the Study

Triangulation, through the use of multiple sources, for interviews and archival data supports the trustworthiness of the study. According to Yin (2003) the use of multiple sources allows the researcher to address a broader range of available information and the development of converging lines of inquiry. Yin (2003) states “any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information” (p. 98).

Merriam (1998) promotes triangulation as a confirmation of trust within a study. “Especially in terms of using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity” (p. 207).

In this study, trustworthiness was achieved through the use of multiple participants for interviews from two different institutions, as well as archival data. Additionally member checks were utilized with interviewees to confirm information.

According to Stake (1995) the participants in a case study play an important part in the triangulation process through member checks. In this process, the interviewees, or actors, review collected data for accuracy. Merriam (1998) refers to member checks as the process of reviewing collected data with participants to confirm that information was interpreted correctly.

Summary

The purpose of this comparative case study was to investigate a college within the NCCCS that offers competitive athletics with another member institution that does not offer sports. RCC offers sports and the research explored the perceived benefits related to

fundraising, admissions, and marketing. Conversely CCC does not offer sports and the research sought the reasons why sports are not offered. The study provides insights as to why a member of the NCCCS would offer sports whereas another would not. As a result, it may provide information to other institutions considering sports in the future.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to provide a comparative case study of two North Carolina Community Colleges, one that fields athletic teams and one that does not offer sports. Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, North Carolina offers teams that compete in a variety of sports while Cleveland Community College in Shelby, North Carolina does not. The study investigated the reasons why RCC competes. In comparison, CCC was researched to find the reasons sports are not offered. The findings of this study can be utilized by other community colleges that may now, or in the future, consider offering competitive athletics.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from an analysis of the data gathered from administrators and students at each institution. At RCC, the President, Athletic Director, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Business Affairs, the Development Director, and the Director of College Relations were chosen for interviews (see Appendix A) because of their relationships to the issues of sports, admissions, financing and marketing. In comparison, similar administrators, excluding Athletic Director, were chosen for interviews (Appendix B) at Cleveland Community College. A student government representative at each institution was interviewed to

provide a student perspective. Additional data related to enrollment, sports and funding were provided by RCC. Interviews were conducted by the researcher during site visits.

Enrollment and Admissions

Administrators at RCC were in unanimous agreement that the addition of sports had a positive influence on enrollment at the college. However, any increase was considered to be a result of the number of athletes competing on six sports teams, with all but a few of the participants on the men's basketball and baseball teams coming from outside of Rockingham County. One administrator at RCC felt that enrollment would be down without athletics because of the number of student athletes enrolled at RCC.

We would definitely be down if it wasn't for athletics. But we haven't seen the huge increase because of that (athletics). If it wasn't for athletics, our enrollment would be down for however many athletes we have.

During interviews, the administrators varied in their perception of how many athletes were enrolled at any given time. Most agreed that at least 50 were enrolled. According to a 2004 Estimated Economic Impact Study of the college's athletic program, an estimated 63 full-time student athletes were enrolled (Rockingham Community College, 2004). This study revealed that if 63 students enroll for a minimum of 14 semester hours, the athletes will generate over \$200,000 in annual income for the college. As a result, the impact of those enrolled athletes is to be considered significant to the college.

Although the number of athletes competing at any given time can be pinpointed, the number of students who would have attended the institution without athletics cannot

be directly identified. Additionally, the number of potential student athletes who enroll because they hope to play is another number that cannot be directly identified. According to one of the administrators at RCC, some students enroll who hope to try out for sports at the institution.

We have a lot of guys and gals who just show up at the last minute to try out. On the teams we probably have around 80 to 85 (athletes). But with baseball during the fall we'll have 50 kids, and we're only going to carry 24. So there will be 20 to 26 kids who either are cut or will sit out this year.

RCC's student representative did not know the exact number of athletes competing, but did note that a good number of the participants weren't from the area and stated that at least one student athlete was from Ohio.

When asked whether sports had assisted in the recruitment of general students, it was agreed that athletics had little impact. Any increase was considered to be only as a result of the number of athletes who had enrolled. The consensus was that the sports program served to provide a full, well-rounded college environment, which includes college athletics. One administrator at RCC felt that around 100 students who are enrolled full-time could be attributed to athletics with around three-quarters of that number being the athletes themselves.

The other percentage of students who come because of athletics, we have a very active pep club, they come for that. We also have friends, relatives, girlfriends of the athletes themselves that come. And then it's hard to get a handle on the numbers, but a number of students come here that wouldn't have come here because of athletics because they feel that athletics is part of a collegiate experience and they come even though they don't participate. They come because for some reason in their mind, that makes it more of a college.

Another RCC administrator felt that athletics had brought in student athletes who otherwise would not have enrolled at RCC, perhaps 30 or 40 from outside the county and that athletics creates a collegiate environment.

It creates an air of being a quote, real college. Sometimes people don't think community colleges are real colleges. It gives prospective students the idea of a rounded, well-balanced institution.

One administrator from RCC noted that the make-up of the community college student is different from that of students at four-year institutions and that athletics aren't necessarily a draw to recruit students.

I think because the student body at a community college is different from a typical residential campus at a four year institution public or private that may have a big athletics program, the nature of the students at a community college are more commuter. They're going to be balancing family, work, they're going to be balancing employment, a number of issues as opposed to going and living on a campus for which athletics becomes a real big attraction. I'm not convinced yet that athletics is necessarily a strong magnet to attract non athletic students. It could be, but I certainly don't think we're there.

Enrollment data in 1997 reveals that 1,721 students were enrolled in curriculum programs in the year prior to athletics starting at RCC. Enrollment data for the year 2006 show that 2,063 students were enrolled and 2007 estimates, though not available yet, indicate an approximate enrollment of 2,133 (Rockingham Community College, 2007d).

Athlete numbers during that time have fluctuated depending on the number of sports offered. In 1998, a total of 44 student athletes were enrolled and a high point was reached in 2001 with a total of 66 student athletes. In 2006, 50 student athletes were

enrolled at Rockingham. In 2007, a total of 53 student athletes were enrolled (Rockingham Community College, 2007e).

At CCC, it was agreed that the addition of athletics would likely cause some increase in enrollment, most likely due to the number of athletes enrolled. However, it was agreed that any increase due to athletes enrolling would not be significant. An administrator from CCC described the potential impact.

Based on what I have observed at other colleges, it possibly could help increase our enrollment. I don't know if you could call it a statistically significant increase. . . . I could see some students attending because you had a basketball team and they wanted to play basketball. And I guess it would just depend on the different sports. I could see it increasing some of your men's and women's enrollments because of the sport balance you would put in to place. I don't know that it would increase it significantly, but I could see it having a positive increase because you're getting some people who would not have attended from outside your community.

It was also agreed that the addition of athletics could assist general student recruitment efforts to some degree. The consensus was that athletics could provide the feel of a traditional college on a community college level and possibly attract students who do not currently attend. An administrator from CCC noted the attraction that athletics could possibly provide to potential students.

Some of the asset might be that you're perceived as more like a real college as they define a real college. Most people when you say college, their stereotype is a four-year institution and athletics goes hand in hand with that.

Another CCC administrator agreed that athletics would provide more of a four-year college environment.

It would give students an avenue to make it feel more possibly like a four year school where they have football and baseball and basketball and soccer. It would give them more of a college feel and give them an avenue to participate more with things going on on campus if they could go to a baseball game or if they could go to a basketball game.

Cleveland's student representative felt that athletics could bring in students who want to attend collegiate sporting events or want to associate with athletes.

Student Assessments

When asked if any student assessments, related to sports, had been conducted, administrators at each institution agreed that none had been done. At RCC, the Economic Impact Study conducted by the Office of Student Development was mentioned; however, this study was not a student assessment.

At CCC, one administrator made mention of a previous SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis conducted by the Cleveland Community College Office of Planning and Development. The analysis revealed a small amount of interest among a few members of the College's Planning Council; however no student assessments had been conducted.

According to the student representative at CCC, Student Government Association officers have attended meetings to learn more about intramurals and club sports. Intramurals would include student teams at CCC playing against each other. Club sports would include college teams playing each other on a recreational level, but not on the National Junior College level.

Participating Sports

At RCC, the following sports are currently offered: men's basketball and baseball, women's volleyball and fastpitch softball and a co-ed golf team. The make-up is considered six teams. While the men's golf team competes on a team basis, there are not enough women on the co-ed golf team to compete as a complete women's team. Therefore, the women golfers only compete for individual honors. There was consensus among those interviewed about the teams that are offered though a few administrators were not positive about softball which only started this year and will begin competition in Spring 2008.

When RCC began sports in 1998, the sports originally offered were men's and women's basketball and men's and women's soccer. Women's basketball was dropped in favor of volleyball and both soccer teams were also disbanded. Baseball replaced men's soccer and softball will serve as a replacement for women's soccer. The co-ed golf team was also added as the previously mentioned sports were dropped. The reason given for dropping teams was because the college had trouble fielding enough players. One administrator at RCC noted that some of the sports had changed at RCC in recent years.

We had women's basketball and men's and women's soccer and had trouble fielding the teams. Maybe at the time we started soccer wasn't that popular. I've heard that women athletes after high school aren't as interested in sports. We're now trying volleyball and softball.

According to another administrator at RCC, soccer was initially chosen because the institution had soccer fields and there was growing interest in the sport at that time. Also, it was believed that RCC could easily field teams and a skilled soccer coach was on

staff at the college. Men's and women's basketball rounded out the four original sports.

An RCC administrator described the struggle to field some team sports that are no longer offered at RCC.

Of those four original sports, only one is continuing and that is men's basketball. It was impossible to field a woman's team. After the first years, we just didn't have enough interest to field a full team. Men's soccer didn't do all that well. It struggled, I guess, for three seasons. And after three seasons, the numbers just weren't there.

Currently there are no plans to increase or decrease the amount of sports offered. RCC's student representative was aware that there was once a women's basketball team, but that was before the student was enrolled at RCC.

At Cleveland, it was surmised that a variety of sports could be possible if the college were to offer sports. Basketball was routinely chosen because it does not take a large number of players, and is fairly low cost if a college already has a facility. Although CCC has a gymnasium, the floor is covered in carpet as a multi-use facility, the dimensions of the basketball court are not regulation, and there are no bleachers. One administrator at CCC said that current facilities would be a starting point if sports were to be considered.

Naturally, you would have to look at what facilities you have. So, you would possibly look at sports like tennis because we have a facility; golf, because you could use somebody else's facility; possibly baseball, because of our field although I'm not sure it's regulation size. We do have the gym, but, I do know that it's not regulation size and it's not really built to have organized sports in. There's no consideration for spectators.

Other possible sports that were mentioned included baseball, softball, soccer, volleyball, and golf. CCC athletic facilities include a softball field that is too small for collegiate baseball, a gymnasium that is below regulation size for basketball, and two tennis courts.

Fundraising and Funding

Fundraising for athletics at RCC is conducted through a variety of ways. The Eagle Varsity Club was implemented as a fundraising club for sports and offers memberships and donor levels to support operating costs. However, it was agreed that this effort has garnered only a small level of support. The Talon Club was started as a sports arm of the College Foundation. Other fundraising activities are conducted through the teams themselves, such as home run derbies put on by the baseball team. Administrators also mentioned that fundraising was a requirement as state funds cannot be used for sports. According to an administrator at RCC, the teams generate a portion of their budget dollars through the team fundraisers.

The teams themselves raise on average fifteen to eighteen thousand a year through various things whether its home run derbies or car washes. Then we try to pinpoint maybe specific donors who may not give to the college but may be interested in giving to athletics.

One administrator described the function of the Talon Club at RCC.

The Development Office has a program called the Talon Club. Our mascot is the Eagle and the Talon Club is a comprehensive sponsorship where a portion of the annual fee supports all different areas and five hundred dollars of the fifteen hundred dollar annual fee goes toward athletics.

A few donors have had a great impact on the baseball program at RCC.

Previously, baseball teams at RCC played at a local high school field. The baseball team could only use the facility when it was not in use by the high school. One donor left seed money in the amount of \$40,000 to begin building the campus baseball field. Another donor, who's son was a former baseball player, has given over \$200,000 toward the field.

Most administrators at RCC felt that sports have had little impact on general giving to the college. While some new donors may give to sports, it has not transitioned to general giving. The biggest impact has been the large gifts to support the baseball field, though these gifts were for a sports facility.

Funding for sports teams come from a variety of different areas, including Student Activity Funds which comprise approximately 25% of the total sports budget. According to RCC's student representative, around \$19,000 was allocated from Student Activity Fees which was voted on by the Student Government Association. The total sports budget has been between \$70,000 and \$80,000 annually depending on the number of teams that have been offered over the years. Other means utilized to fund sports include institutional funds such as bookstore or vending monies.

The College Foundation has provided an annual grant each year to support athletics. According to the College and Foundation Annual Report, \$18,000 was allocated to the Intercollegiate Athletics Program (Rockingham Community College, 2006-2007). Additionally, another \$25,000 was provided by the Foundation to complete the baseball field (Rockingham Community College, 2006-2007).

Other sources include some private donations and the team fundraising activities. A small amount of funds come from gate receipts and program advertisements.

At CCC, it was agreed that fundraising would be an important part of starting and maintaining an athletic program since it is known that state funds cannot be used. While it was agreed that some amount of private donations would be needed, it would probably not offset the cost of running an athletics program and other means would be required. These could include student activity funds and institutional funds such as those generated through vending, bookstore or food service. One administrator at CCC noted that fundraising for sports would start with the college's foundation.

I think any fundraising would be geared through our foundation. I would assume that we would take somewhat the same manner as four-year institutions do, although to a much lesser scale.

In terms of general giving, those interviewed at CCC were not sure that sports would have any impact on general giving to the college. Some felt that fundraising for sports could not be undertaken for several years as the college is in the middle of a capital campaign. One administrator at CCC stated that the college has a greater need for buildings and that adding athletics could hamper the current fundraising efforts.

It would negatively impact what we're doing right now, because we would have individuals who would divert their gift and would prefer to give to athletics and not to bricks and mortar. And, with the projects we are working on now, we need millions.

Administrators at Cleveland noted that Student Activity Fee funds could be a source of dollars to fund athletics if approved by the Student Government Association.

Private funds through giving to the College Foundation were also considered to be a source of funding. Other funds mentioned included gate receipt from games and institutional funds including dollars from the bookstore and vending. Local funds from the county budget could be utilized, though, it was noted that the college needs those dollars for facility maintenance.

Cleveland's student representative posed that grants could be a possible revenue source and that local sporting goods companies and businesses could be called upon to help sponsor sports.

When asked how athletics bring in funds to the institution and surrounding community, a variety of responses were provided by the RCC administrators. Responses included gate revenue and concession profits. Several mentioned that teams from out of town bring in revenue to the community in the form of lodging, fuel for vehicles, and monies spent in local restaurants. Another respondent pointed back to the large gift given to build the baseball stadium. One RCC administrator noted estimated dollars brought in to the institution and community through sports based on the number of athletes enrolled as students.

It brings in FTE (Full-Time Equivalent). We haven't done it this year yet, but last year it was approximately \$215,000 in FTE of which none of it can go to athletics legally. None of it can go to athletics so that's strictly going to the academic side to help them out. Then student activity fees and parking fees, so that ranged \$220,000 (when combined with FTE dollars). Then we figure out the living expenses because we don't have dorms. So any athlete that's coming from outside Rockingham County or within a certain radius will have an apartment. So utilities, food and we figure that up to be an additional \$210,000 for the athletes living in apartments. Then we figure visiting teams are having to come in. We don't have any tournaments this year but last year we had some tournaments. Teams come in and they're going to have to stay two or three nights. So we figure in the hotel

rooms, the lodging, the food that they all have to buy their players, the gas for the bus. Then parents coming in to see their kids play, they've got to have somewhere to stay along with food, gas. We've figured that out to about another \$260,000 for the county.

Gate and concession revenues do not provide a great deal of funds to the institution. One administrator noted that in the first two home basketball games for the 2007-2008 season, gate revenue had totaled around \$500 for admission and around \$200 in concessions. The Student Government Association runs the concession stand and keeps the profits for their budget. Basketball is estimated to bring in \$3,000 in gate funds for one season. There is no admission charge for Volleyball and Baseball will start charging admission this season for the first time.

Athletic Scholarships are not offered at RCC and there are no plans to do so in the foreseeable future. As such, the institution does not incur the expense of having to fund tuition for the athletes. When soccer was first started in 1998, there was a men's and a women's soccer scholarship. Currently, the Foundation awards an annual scholarship for one athlete; however it is not an athletic scholarship. The scholarship can be either need-based or based on academic excellence, but not skill-based and it is renewable for additional years of study.

Publicity and Marketing

All respondents at RCC noted that publicity for athletics was lacking in their local newspapers and had been a difficult area to find a foothold. Although the coaches regularly send schedules and game scores to the three local newspapers, the college has not been able to garner attention from the local sports editors. Several administrators

noted that RCC had been able to get some publicity, in the form of reported scores, from the larger Greensboro *News and Record* in neighboring Guilford County. This was attributed to the paper having a larger staff and because Guilford Technical Community College also has athletics. At one time, RCC had a student dedicated to sending in articles to the local Rockingham papers. However, the articles were rarely published. As one administrator noted, it has been difficult to gain publicity for athletics at RCC.

We've had a terrible time publicizing athletics which is unbelievable to me. The *News and Record* (Greensboro *News and Record*) has started publishing our scores because GTCC (Guilford Technical Community College) has teams. Our local papers aren't good about carrying it. They say that none of our athletes are from the county. We had a student several years ago write stories and submit to our local papers and still, we got nothing.

Another RCC administrator noted that the lack of publicity from the local papers is frustrating, but the college does use other means to publicize athletics.

We actually struggle to get write-ups of the various athletic contests to run in the papers. They'll run the score of every high school game within a fifty mile radius, but getting the papers to post our events has been a bit more difficult. I think the headway has been made but it's been a very frustrating thing. They (the Athletic Department) do things like posters and calendars and put up in area businesses. That's been done in the past, and of course printing up of the schedules and putting it on the website. I don't think we've had the television stations showing up to film the games and report on them the way they do some areas and I think that was a hope that would happen at some point.

One RCC administrator noted that the college has to constantly work to make sure the community knows that Rockingham has an athletics program.

Our Athletic Director and his coaches regularly phone in the results of sports events to the local newspapers. They certainly provide the papers with schedules and the local media are quite varied in terms of how frequently they will print

your results or even print your schedules. It's almost like, if we've got space, and there's nothing going on, we'll be glad to do it. But you might take second fiddle to other schools at some point. We have to work hard to let folks know that, number 1, we have an athletics program. And then, number 2, keeping the operation of that program, with regard to game schedules and game results, keeping that in front of the public through your news media is a real challenge. And often, it's something that is beyond the control of the school, though I think you have to keep working and working and working to keep those relationships going and hope that they're going to cut you a little slack at some point.

Administrators at RCC agreed that the athletics program has not changed the way the college has been marketed. The most obvious point of recognition would be a sports action photo on a marketing piece. The current academic catalog includes six photos, although none depict RCC sports. A brief mention of sports is noted in one paragraph of the catalog and notes the sports that are offered with a phone number to call for more information. The co-ed golf program is not mentioned in the paragraph. Of the few photos on the inside of the catalog, none depicts sports. The current registration tabloid newspaper includes seven photos on the front and back covers. One of those photos depicts a baseball action shot.

When college personnel speak to local groups, athletics is a topic that is generally discussed when talking about the overall college program at RCC. Athletic scores and schedules are also printed in the college newsletter. Downstairs in the College's Student Center, a bulletin board lists the current sports schedules. Athletic trophies are displayed upstairs in the Student Center.

Previously, sport specific brochures were printed and used by coaches. However, none have been printed in a number of years. One RCC administrator echoed the comments of others that athletics has not changed the way the school is marketed.

I haven't sensed that the presence of athletics has necessarily had a major effect on how the school is marketed. The whole issue of how the school is marketed is one that intrigues me and I think that we will want to begin to explore some new direction. Whenever the school is marketed, the presence of athletics is noted, but I don't think the presence of athletics has necessarily slanted the degree to which we do marketing.

RCC's student representative noted that athletics is promoted to new students through posters and flyers on registration day. The student representative also noted that the athletic trophies are displayed in the Student Center along with posters and schedules around campus.

At Cleveland, it was believed that athletics would bring additional publicity to the college as a result of the teams being publicized in the local papers on the sports pages. Additional publicity could be gained outside of the county when scores were reported in the local papers of opposing teams. The college could also be marketed outside of the county when hometown press releases were sent to the hometown papers of a student athlete who had made a noteworthy accomplishment. One administrator noted that winning teams would increase positive publicity, but that if a team loses, people will still read about it in the paper. Another CCC administrator noted that the amount of publicity would increase with sports.

Inches in the newspaper would be a significant increase anytime there was a game or match. The sports page is something we don't have an opportunity for right now.

One administrator at CCC felt that sports would generate publicity on its own but that the success and management of the athletic program could affect the type of publicity gained.

Naturally, I think most people read the sports page. So, if you have a good athletic program, that's doing well and properly handled, then naturally, it just generates publicity on its own. If you have a good sound program, then the newspaper, and media and t.v. are just naturally attracted to athletic programs.

The same administrator at CCC also noted the problems that could occur if a college had a bad athletic program.

You could have the same result. You could get the same publicity, it just wouldn't be as positive. It would be a negative impact if you had a bad program, or if it wasn't properly managed. Hopefully, if you're going to have one, you would invest enough into it to where you're going to have a good one. And by a good one, I'm not saying you've got to win every game. I'm not talking about winning at all cost, but just a good, active program.

Cleveland's student representative agreed with administrators that publicity could be gained from the local papers. However, the student took a more technical approach in describing additional publicity. Channel 19, the college's educational access cable channel was described as a place to promote athletics in addition to the college's website with links to the athletes. Other avenues included self-promotion by the athletes on the myspace and facebook websites.

In terms of marketing, those at Cleveland agreed that the addition of sports would not change the philosophy of how the college is marketed. One administrator noted that it

probably would not change that much. Athletics would be implemented into what is presently done. Another CCC administrator stated that the impact would be small.

I don't think it would have a big impact on marketing because that's not our main thrust and I don't think it ever will be our main target. Yes, we would have to do some recruiting to get players to be competitive in some type of sports. But as far as changing the way we market, I don't think it would, because Cleveland Community College, and any community college in the state, one of the main things is to train the workforce or re-train the workforce. Or, help industry get set up and train their new employees, or, offer two years of transfer to a high school student. So, normally the people the community college is interested in has other goals than playing sports.

Another administrator agreed that sports would not change the way that Cleveland Community College markets itself.

I don't know that it would change the image that we are attempting to market as a student friendly, student success oriented learning environment. But we would certainly include photographs or success stories in that marketing effort because that is part of a more rounded collegiate experience.

It was also noted by one administrator that athletics would be included in general publications. Cleveland's student representative described athletics as another asset for the college to use in marketing the college.

Community, Alumni, and Students

As far as any impact that athletics delivers to the local community, alumni and current students, responses were minimal and varied among those interviewed at RCC. Three administrators noted the economic impact made on the community by athletes moving to Rockingham County and living in apartments and supporting local businesses.

One person noted that some members of the community attend games, but that attendance at games from the local community is low. Another administrator mentioned that athletes had made an impact in the community by being involved with community service projects and that the basketball team visited different churches in the area.

Rockingham's student representative noted the community impact made at basketball games.

You do have an impact on the community. For instance, we had a group of boy scouts that came to one of the games, one of the basketball games. And you may have a group of young people such as the boy scouts, maybe girl scouts, sometimes a dance team will come and watch. I do think it does impact the community to some degree.

In relationship to alumni, it was agreed that athletics had no impact. The college does not have an alumni office and the college has not done anything to market athletics to alumni. Even though a homecoming event has been held at basketball games, the event is mainly for current students. It was mentioned that some successful alums who have previously played sports at RCC, have come back to speak at sports banquets. One administrator at RCC described the impact of athletics to alumni and current students.

I would say on alumni, it's probably negligible because there's not a very active alumni organization at any community college. So the impact on alumni is negligible. I think current students in general are proud we have a program. The participation of the non-athlete student in athletics is pretty minimal. Keep in mind that the attendance at games basically consists of some students, probably half students, and the rest are parents of the athletes or people in the community that are just interested in athletics. You've got to keep in mind that in community college your student body average age is about 29 years old. They'll have families and other obligations, jobs. So athletics is something they can take or leave. Most of them, because of their personal circumstances choose not to become involved as far as spectators.

According to one administrator, the average attendance at a men's basketball game is around 185 to 190 in a gymnasium that seats 900. Volleyball brings in around 60 and baseball averages nearly 200 per game. At golf matches, the only spectators are parents who come to follow around their children who are participating. When Rockingham plays Guilford Tech in basketball, attendance can be as high as 400 fans. Rockingham's student representative observed that it is mainly current students as opposed to alumni who attend the sporting events. One administrator at RCC described the attendance by students at games as low.

With regard to current students, I don't see a lot of current students for whom athletics is a huge point of attraction. I don't see the students pushing it aside, but I don't see that we have lots of students wanting to actively get involved in either going to games or developing pep clubs or things of that sort. They know it's there, but then again, given the nature of students, our typical student is 28 years old. Typical profile of a student would be a single woman who's got one or more children and working at least a half-time job. Those kinds of students are probably going to be the type who aren't going to have an awful lot of interest in athletics.

The possible impact of sports on the community, alumni and current students also delivered a small and varied response among those interviewed at CCC. With the local community, the economic impact of out of town teams was mentioned in regard to travel and lodging. One person mentioned that athletics could provide something for individuals in the community to relate to at the college if they were not already attached in some way. Cleveland's student representative noted that athletics could provide an avenue for athletes in the community to continue their education and sports career.

In terms of current students, one respondent noted that athletics could provide more of a collegiate feel and that athletics could provide a way for alums to be tied to the

college and have a possible fundraising effort. Another noted that athletics could provide a connection and help instill institutional pride. One administrator at CCC noted that interest could be generated by winning teams.

If you've got winning programs, I think it can stimulate alumni interest. Those who transfer on to a four-year college, I think their allegiance goes on to the four-year college. Sometimes they forget they got their start here. I think with athletics, that is a way to keep in touch with them. You can recruit them for booster clubs. You could have a homecoming event centered around an athletic event, which does two things. One is that it increases your gate revenue for that event, but it also gives alumni something to do to come to a homecoming type of event. Without having athletics to have a homecoming, we don't have anything to focus that on.

The same administrator at CCC also noted that current students are also drawn to winning teams.

With current students, here again, if it's a winning team, I think it helps add a sense of pride.

Overall Impact of Athletics

When asked to describe the main reason that sports were offered at RCC, almost all respondents noted that President Keys had previously worked at institutions that offered athletics and that he believed sports to be an integral part of a well-rounded institution. One administrator described the overall philosophy of sports at RCC.

Dr. Keys has always worked at community or junior colleges that have had athletics. And I think, well I know, it makes the student activity program more visible. Of course it brings in more students; it gets our name out in the community more. It gives some sort of school spirit too, something to rally around and keep up with.

Another administrator noted that sports at RCC provides opportunities for students to compete while working on their education.

Our president had a real interest in athletics and in his previous job felt that it gives another opportunity for students to participate beyond high school when they may not have gone to college to begin with.

All but one of the respondents at RCC agreed that sports have had the overall largest impact on enrollment as opposed to fundraising or publicity. Publicity was agreed to be a distant third because of the lack of response from the local papers. Fundraising received some mention because of the two large gifts provided toward the baseball field. Enrollment was considered to have the largest impact because of the number of students over the years and the amount of revenue those full-time students deliver to the college annually. One administrator at RCC stated why fundraising was second choice as opposed to enrollment and why publicity was third.

With the exception of the two major gifts that we've received, there really hasn't been any impact on fundraising. The struggle with the papers to carry the publicity, even though we've put it out there and the potential is so great, general publicity for the program has been limited. So, I guess I would have to say enrollment would be the area that has benefited the most and that was one of the intended purposes.

In terms of the element of education within the context of athletics, respondents at RCC agreed that education came first. Student athletes were described as good citizens and good students and the term student athlete described the order of most importance, student first and athlete second. One administrator at RCC expressed that athletes are good students who stay in school.

We have found from a retention standpoint, the last time we looked at retention it was 95 to 96% from semester to semester and even year to year. We found that generally that they (athletes) have a higher GPA (grade point average), they take more classes. Of course they've got to be full-time to play. They have to pass 12 hours per semester with at least a 2.0 GPA. They've got to do well academically in order to play. They know they've got to go to class in order to practice and play.

One RCC administrator noted the attributes of student athletes in terms of behavior and in the classroom.

When speaking of and addressing the athletes, they are termed student athletes and we do try to put forth the idea that they are students first and athletes second. We've tried to be pretty aware of not bending rules and cutting corners for athletes and those participating in athletic competitions, not trying to put us on the same level as NCAA Division I kind of grade scams or anything. I think that we've tried to make it clear that they have the classroom responsibilities first and their conduct in the classroom is to be becoming an athlete which we hope to hold up a little bit better than the average student.

Rockingham's student representative agreed that student athletes had to perform in the classroom.

I think the notion is that education comes first. Sports and education are hand and hand. They have to keep their grades up.

One administrator at RCC described how the student athlete and athletics fit within the mission of community colleges.

While a community college has its own distinctive mission and most community college missions are going to be similar to other community colleges. I think here the notion of education with respect to athletics suggests that for students, education is more than just racking up credit hours. It's more than just satisfying requirements to earn a degree or just earning a degree or certificate or whatever. Education has to do with learning about oneself, about one's world, learning

about the communities within which we live, work, play, operate. And athletics gives the opportunity for students to expand that learning. So that you are not only enhancing hopefully your physical attributes but you are learning how to function within a team. You are learning responsibility. You are learning leadership.

At Cleveland, it was agreed that the main reason that sports have not been offered is that the main objective has been academics and training or re-training the workforce. Additionally, the college is in a crunch for space due to a growing enrollment and a major focus has been to raise money toward constructing new classroom buildings. One CCC administrator noted that other areas have a higher priority with limited resources.

Probably the main reason is that I think historically we have struggled with where our resources should be put and there's always been a higher priority. I think that's one of the arguments you get from colleges like us that do not have athletics, that we put our resources into our academics, our teaching, instead of trying to find funds for infrastructure for athletics; we're trying to find funds for science labs, computer labs, or other infrastructure like that.

In terms of which area could have the highest impact as a result of sports, all but one of the administrators picked publicity with one selecting fundraising. Cleveland's student representative picked enrollment and publicity equally. The one administrator who chose fundraising believed that it would have to be a high priority to make sports work. The others chose publicity because of the perception that the local papers would cover the sporting events and teams.

Summary

An analysis of the data revealed themes and patterns developing around the major focus areas researched. These included enrollment and admissions, fundraising and funding, and publicity and marketing.

It was clear that athletics had a higher impact on enrollment among those interviewed at RCC due to the number of athletes who are enrolled. However, the carryover to general recruitment was not evident. Publicity was found to have the least impact. While at CCC, publicity was considered an area that would have the most impact if sports were offered.

Fundraising and funding of sports go hand in hand at RCC as fundraising efforts help budget the athletics program. At CCC, it was perceived that targeted fundraising for sports would be a requirement in order to sustain an athletics program. At RCC, a portion of student activity funds are used to assist the sports budget and those at CCC agreed that student activity fees could be a possible revenue source to assist funding for an athletic program.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to provide a comparative case study of two North Carolina Community Colleges, one that fields athletic teams and one that does not offer sports. Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, North Carolina offers teams that compete in a variety of sports while Cleveland Community College in Shelby, North Carolina does not. The study investigated the reasons why RCC competes. In comparison, CCC was researched to find the reasons sports are not offered. The findings of this study can be utilized by other community colleges that may now, or in the future, consider offering competitive athletics.

This purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings from the research and provide recommendations for future research. At RCC, the President, Athletic Director, Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Business Affairs, the Development Director, and the Director of College Relations were chosen for interviews (see Appendix A) because of their relationships to the issues of sports, admissions, financing and marketing. In comparison, similar administrators, excluding Athletic Director, were chosen for interviews (see Appendix B) at Cleveland Community College. A student government representative at each institution was interviewed to provide a student perspective. Additional data related to enrollment, sports and funding were provided by RCC. Interviews were conducted by the researcher during site visits.

The major themes that developed in the research and findings were enrollment and admissions, funding and fundraising, and publicity and marketing. A comparison of responses from those interviewed revealed some similarities and differences in perceptions of athletics between the two institutions. The topics flowed from the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions

1. Have general donations to RCC increased as a result of offering competitive athletic teams and is there a reasonable expectation that CCC could increase its donations if sports were offered?

2. Do athletics enhance the visibility of RCC among its primary constituents who include students, alumni and community and could CCC increase its visibility through sports?

3. Have athletics increased admissions at RCC and could CCC increase its admissions through offering athletics?

4. How has RCC financed athletics and how would CC finance athletics?

Hypotheses:

1. Sports teams at RCC have led to an increase in its monetary donations.
2. Athletics at RCC have led to an increase in its exposure and publicity.
3. Competitive sports at RCC have led to an increase in its admissions.

Summary

Effects of athletics on enrollment provided an interesting insight into the perceptions of those interviewed. At RCC, it was agreed that the greatest boost to

enrollment from athletics, was from the athletes themselves. At RCC, an average of 50 athletes per year has enrolled at the college. According to those interviewed, this is a substantial number due to the students being enrolled full-time and the amount of dollars (over 200,000 annually) gained from the enrollment of those students.

Additionally, there are a number of other students, possibly another 35 to 50 students, who are believed to have enrolled as a result of the athletics program at RCC. Some of these students enroll and try out for teams, but do not make the teams. Others are friends or family of the athletes who come to the school. However, there are no hard figures to back up the additional students. It is a matter of perception or opinion of some of the administrators at RCC. This point of reference supports the writings of Sandy and Sloane (2004) in that it is believed sports bring in more students because some are friends of athletes and want to attend the same school (Sandy & Sloane, 2004).

At Cleveland, it was also agreed that any enrollment gain from athletics would be from the athletes themselves. However, the perception of those at Cleveland strongly differed from their counterparts at RCC. At Cleveland, any enrollment gain from the athletes' enrollment was considered to be small or insignificant. While at RCC, the view was that the 50 or more athletes created significant enrollment dollars. The perception of enrollment gains through athletes is supported by Ashburn (2007) in that athletics were used at Iowa Central Community College to attract local students, but also bring in athletes from outside the college's service area.

At RCC, it was agreed that sports had little impact on the enrollment of general students and that any increase in enrollment was from the athletes themselves. The belief

was that sports provided a well-rounded collegiate environment for all students. Additionally, it was believed that athletics provide an avenue for athletes to continue their athletic careers as well as to obtain an education.

At Cleveland, it was also felt that athletics would have little impact on the recruitment of general or non-athlete students. Like those interviewed at RCC, it was believed that athletics could provide more of a traditional college feel, or provide more avenues within which students could participate.

No student assessments related to sports have been conducted at either institution. An assessment could be conducted by means of a student survey to gain insight to students' perceptions of collegiate athletics or an informal email survey to determine how many students would like to participate in sports or attend events.

At Rockingham, the following sports are offered: men's baseball and basketball, women's volleyball and fastpitch softball, and a co-ed golf team. Previously, the college had offered men's and women's basketball and men's and women's soccer. However, women's basketball and both soccer teams were disbanded because it was difficult to field teams. The current sports offerings replaced the teams that were dropped. The college has a gymnasium, soccer fields, tennis courts, and now an on-campus baseball field.

At Cleveland, those interviewed noted similar possibilities of sports that could be offered if athletics were introduced at CCC. Baseball, basketball, tennis, and soccer were all mentioned as possibilities. In some cases, those interviewed considered facilities and fields in making possible their recommendations. Although CCC houses a gymnasium, a

softball field, and tennis courts, none of the facilities would work for intercollegiate athletics. The basketball court in the gymnasium is too small for regulation play and there are no bleachers for spectators. There are only two tennis courts, and the softball field is not large enough for college baseball. As a result, CCC would either have to build facilities or play on other local fields and courts.

Fundraising at RCC for sports is accomplished through a joint effort of the College Foundation and the Athletic Department. The Talon Club, offered through the Foundation, awards \$500 of each \$1,500 membership toward athletics. In 2006-2007, there were eight members of the Talon Club (Rockingham Community College, 2006-2007). The Eagle Varsity Club is a booster-type club organized through the Athletic Department at RCC. The Eagle Varsity Club seeks members of the community to provide monetary gifts toward athletics. The hope is that some donors will eventually give to both sports and general fundraising efforts. So far that has not been seen at RCC. This reality is supported by Gerdy (1997) who noted that most athletic fundraising efforts are designed to raise money solely for the athletic department. Other fundraising efforts include home run derbies or car washes done by the individual teams to raise funds for their budgets. A couple of major gifts were given to RCC for construction of the on-campus baseball field. The amounts of the two gifts exceeded \$200,000 and are the most significant gifts toward sports received at the institution. Even though sport fundraising has not accomplished one of its original goals, to bring sports donors into general giving, fundraising for sports has received significant dollars. However, this is mainly the result of the gifts for the baseball field.

Funding for sports at RCC comes from a variety of means. The Student Government Association annually votes to provide dollars to support athletics through Student Activity Fee funds. The amount of money the SGA provided has averaged between \$15,000 and \$18,000 per year toward the annual athletic budget which can range from \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year depending on the number of teams and athletes. An annual grant from the Foundation has gone to support the athletic budget along with funds from the Talon Club memberships. Last year, the amount was \$18,000 (Rockingham Community College, 2006-2007). Other funds that go toward the athletic budget include institutional funds, such as bookstore or vending revenues. Finally, gate receipts, program advertising, and dollars from the team fundraisers are used to complete the budget. According to Duderstadt (2003), it is a myth that athletic departments make a lot of money on athletics. This is supported at RCC where gate revenues are only a small portion of the athletic budget. The Student Activity Fee funds and Foundation support are required to meet the operating budget along with team fundraisers.

At CCC, those interviewed felt that fundraising efforts would have to be geared toward athletics in order to sustain a program. However, it was agreed that private donations would not be enough to budget an athletic program and that other funds would be required. Other funds that were mentioned were the same type of funds utilized at RCC: Student Government Association Fee funds, gate and concession monies, and institutional funds from vending or bookstore.

At CCC, participants were not sure that general giving to the college could be increased through sports. Some felt that giving to athletics could actually hamper the

efforts of the current capital campaign. The idea was that some givers would divert there gifts from construction to sports. As a result, it was strongly believed that the college has a greater need for buildings and that fundraising efforts should continue to move in that direction as opposed to sports.

Publicity was a term of discouragement and frustration at RCC. Expectations were that the local papers in Rockingham County would print schedules, scores and articles on the RCC teams. However, very little has been accomplished in this area. While coaches submit schedules and scores, it is hit and miss as to whether the information will appear in the papers. At one time, a student at RCC was dedicated to submitting scores, schedules and articles about RCC athletics to the papers, but little of what was submitted was ever printed. On the encouraging side, the larger Greensboro News and Record in nearby Guilford County has published RCC scores. RCC must promote itself through the RCC website and placing schedule posters in local businesses and on campus.

At Cleveland, the opposite perception was held. At CCC, those interviewed believed that sports would provide an instant boost in publicity because of articles, scores, and photos in the local sports page. This is currently an untapped market for CCC because sports are not offered. It was believed that publicity of sports teams was a given. The only concern was if CCC offered sports and had losing teams. The effect would not be as positive if the teams lost. However, articles and scores would be in the paper and get the college's name out. At Cleveland, the perception was that it was a given that

publicity would increase because of newspaper coverage, just the opposite of what has occurred at RCC.

The impact of athletics on marketing is another area where both institutions agreed in their perceptions. At RCC, those interviewed felt that their marketing strategy had not changed as a result of offering sports. While a photo may appear in a brochure or marketing piece, it is only a part of what the college offers. When an administrator or student recruiter speaks to a group, sports are one facet of the college that is mentioned.

At CCC, it was felt that the college's marketing strategy would not change if athletics were started. The college would use photographs in marketing materials, promote athlete success stories, provide hometown releases for athletes from other areas, and promote athletics as part of the entire collegiate experience. However, the main focus would continue to be academics and workforce training.

Another area of agreement between the institutions was the impact of athletics on the community, alumni and students. The greatest impact on the community at RCC was from the economic impact of the athletes who move to Rockingham County in order to attend school and compete. These athletes, who would not attend RCC without athletics, rent apartments and support local businesses. Additionally, teams from out of town, and the parents of those participants, spend money in Rockingham County on food, gas, and lodging when in the area to watch games or matches. The total estimated impact of the athletes' living expenses and visiting teams and parents' expenses was estimated at \$256,448 annually (Rockingham Community College, 2004)

Among those at RCC, there was considered to be no impact to alumni as a result of athletics. RCC does not have an alumni office and community college alumni are generally not organized. The impact on current students was also low as there are only a small number that regularly attend games. The feeling was that athletics provided a more well-rounded collegiate experience and provided an opportunity to participate.

At CCC, any community impact was related in a similar fashion as described at RCC. Visiting teams would support local businesses when traveling to CCC for games. Those interviewed at Cleveland believed that athletics could instill some student body pride among students, especially if the college has winning teams. A homecoming centered around an athletic event was described as a way to bring alumni back to campus.

Those at RCC felt that one of the main reasons sports was started back in 1998 was because of their current President, Robert Keys. According to those who were interviewed, Keys came to RCC from an institution that offered sports and that he had a philosophy that sports added to the overall collegiate experience. The general concept is that sports can bring in more students, instill student body pride, and give students an opportunity to compete beyond high school.

At CCC, the main reason described as to why sports were not offered was that the focus has always been on academics and training the workforce. The current focus is a capital campaign for building construction and sports could possibly take away from that focus if fundraising efforts were directed toward athletics.

A second look at three of the major areas of the study revealed a divergence of opinion among those at each institution. Those at RCC believed that the greatest impact

on the institution as a result of athletics was enrollment. The question asked was: In which area would you say that athletics has had the greatest impact on RCC: enrollment, fundraising or publicity?

At Cleveland, the following comparative question was asked: If athletics were offered at CCC, which area do you believe would have the greatest impact: enrollment, fundraising or publicity? Those at CCC were heavily in favor of publicity.

A final look at the overall impact was related in terms of how the student athlete and education fit within the context of sports at RCC. Those interviewed at RCC strongly felt that education was the first priority among the student athletes at RCC. Participants pointed to educational requirements required for players and the importance of good behavior among athletes.

Conclusions

A comparison of the two institutions, one that offers sports and one that does not, reveals that the two have more in common in the perception of athletics than differences. Two topics provided the scene for a discrepancy in the perceptions

The first is that of enrollment. Surprisingly, the majority of respondents at both institutions felt that the greatest increase in enrollment seen through sports would be as a result of the athletes themselves. However, the perception of that increase provides a considerable difference in opinion. Respondents at RCC felt that 50 or more athletes and the amount of FTE (full-time equivalent) dollars brought into the institution as a result of that enrollment were significant. At CCC, it was believed that the number of athletes enrolled would not provide a significant gain.

Secondly, those interviewed at Cleveland believed that a great deal of added publicity could be gained in the local sports page through the addition of athletics. This was considered to be a given and a free publicity boost that the college currently does not enjoy. At Rockingham, it was found that publicity in the local sports pages for RCC athletics has been few and far between. This has been a frustrating reality for administrators at RCC. However, just because RCC has not received local publicity is not an indication that the same would hold true for CCC.

These two areas, enrollment and publicity, held true in a poll of which area could or does have the greatest impact as a result of sports. At RCC, respondents selected enrollment over fundraising and publicity. Not surprisingly, CCC respondents selected publicity as the area that could have the greatest impact.

In the area of fundraising and funding for athletics, participants at both institutions held similar views regarding budget funding for athletics. At CCC, fundraising through the college foundation was considered to be a requirement to sustain sports, along with Student Government Association Fee funding, institutional funds such as vending or bookstore monies, and revenue from gate and concessions. At RCC, all of these avenues are utilized to fund sports. Participants at both schools were also in agreement that state funds could not be used to fund sports in North Carolina community colleges.

Both institutions are in agreement as to how to fund a sports program and what it takes to do so. However, the difference is in the philosophy of offering sports versus not offering athletics. At RCC, it is believed that sports are a part of a well-rounded

institution for all students and that athletics provides opportunities for athletes to compete beyond high school.

At Cleveland, it was agreed that athletics help to promote a well-rounded, traditional college feel. But at Cleveland, the focus is considered to be academics and workforce training. A current capital campaign to raise monies for classroom buildings prevents any discussion of athletics for the foreseeable future.

In terms of benefits to offering athletics, it was clear that enrollment was considered to be the greatest benefit to RCC. At Cleveland, the greatest perceived benefit was that of publicity. The impact of RCC athletics on alumni was non-existent and the impact to current students and community was low, however, athletics is believed to have increased RCC's visibility among those groups.

In response to the hypotheses, RCC can answer "yes" to all three statements to some degree. Sports have led to an increase in monetary donations, particularly, the gifts for the baseball field. Athletics have led to an increase in exposure and publicity, just not to the degree they expected or want. Finally, sports have led to an increase in admissions, but only as a result of the athletes enrolling.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings in this research pose questions for future research. The first is the impact of athletics on publicity for the 18 community colleges that have some form of athletic program. Do North Carolina Community Colleges that offer competitive athletics receive publicity for their sports programs? Those interviewed at Cleveland strongly felt that publicity would be gained from offering sports while those at Rockingham described

the struggle to gain any attention from the local papers. Whether or not Rockingham's plight is an isolated case is an area for further research. If it is discovered that other community colleges across the state have a similar problem, then another question is brought to mind. Are community college athletics considered relevant? If other community colleges receive considerable publicity for athletics, then Rockingham's situation is a local problem.

Currently, 18 of North Carolina's 58 community colleges offer competitive athletics. This is nearly one third of the institutions in the state. An area of future research is what roles does athletics play in the evolution of community colleges, particularly those in North Carolina?

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Appendix A

Interview Questions at RCC

1. In what ways, if any, has enrollment increased as a result of the addition of athletics at RCC?
2. What assets, if any, do athletics provide to general student recruitment efforts?
3. Has RCC conducted any student assessments related to athletics? If so, how were the assessments conducted and what were the results?
4. Which sports are offered at RCC? Why were those sports chosen?
5. Are there plans to implement other sports or decrease sports, and have you done so in the past? If so, how are those decisions made?
6. In what ways, if any, are fundraising efforts geared toward athletics? If so, what constitutes those specific efforts?
7. In terms of general giving to the college, has the addition of athletics had any impact on fundraising? If so, how would you describe the impact?
8. What various means does RCC utilize to fund athletics and where are the funds directed?
9. In what ways do sporting events bring in funds to the institution and surrounding community?
10. Are scholarships offered to athletes or are there plans to offer scholarships? If so, how many are offered and for which sports?
11. What impact has athletics had on publicity for RCC? What are the sources of any additional publicity?
12. Have athletics made a difference in how RCC is marketed? If so, how have marketing efforts changed?
13. Has the addition of sports had any impact on the local community? If so, how would you describe that impact?
14. What impact, if any, does the athletic program have on alumni and current students?
15. Overall, what would you describe as the main reason or reasons that sports were re-implemented at RCC?
16. In which area would you say that athletics have had the greatest impact on RCC: enrollment, fundraising, or publicity?
17. In terms of student athletes and students, how does the element of education fit within the context of collegiate sports at RCC?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add about the athletic program at RCC?

Appendix B

Interview Questions at CCC

1. In what ways, if any, do you think adding an athletics program would affect enrollment at CCC?
2. What assets, if any, could athletics provide to general student recruitment efforts?
3. Has CCC conducted any student assessments related to athletics? If so, how were the assessments conducted and what were the results?
4. If CCC offered athletics, could fundraising efforts be geared toward athletics? If so, how could it be accomplished?
5. In terms of general giving to the college, what type of impact do you believe offering athletics would have on giving?
6. If CCC offered athletics, how could it be funded?
7. If CCC offered athletics, which sports would possibly be considered and why?
8. What type of impact could an athletics program have on publicity for CCC? What could be the sources of any additional publicity?
9. Would offering competitive athletics change the way CCC is marketed? If so, how would marketing efforts change?
10. What impact could offering sports at CCC have on alumni and current students?
11. What impact could competitive sports at CCC have on the local community?
12. Overall, what would you describe as the main reason athletics are not offered at CCC?
13. If athletics were offered at CCC, which area do you believe would have the greatest impact: enrollment, fundraising, or publicity?
14. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding athletics?