

After meeting at the national conference this summer in Pittsburgh, the Research Committee came up with the plan to work on information sharing within the N4A membership. One proposal was to do article summaries on pieces that directly relate to issues surrounding our jobs. The intent is to give a short synopsis of the article and also list the key points in hopes of giving us all ideas on ways to improve our programs. The Research Committee anticipates working with other committees such as LCEC and Ethnic Concerns to identify articles that will be beneficial to the membership.

Sedlacek, W. E., & Adams-Gaston, J. (1992). Predicting the academic success of student-athletes using SAT and non-cognitive variables. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 70*, 724-727.

Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston looked at whether non-cognitive variables were better predictors of first semester grades for student-athletes than SAT scores. Their findings from data gathered at one school, if generalized, indicate that student-athletes may fall into the category of non-traditional students in the parallels able to be drawn between the two groups. Student-athletes can be thought to have unique cultural and life experiences that differ from the general undergraduate population, but are potentially analogous to those of students who do not follow the customary route to college.

Athletic Advisors understand the complexity in the lives of student-athletes, but by looking at some of the non-cognitive factors that might play a role in the academic success or failure of these student-athletes we may be able to better tailor programs to serve this distinctive population. Specifically, Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston looked at self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, understanding racism, long-range goals, support persons, leadership, community and non-traditional knowledge as non-cognitive factors that impact student-athletes' lives. Their results indicate that strong support persons, positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal and community involvement all had significant correlations with first semester grades.

After reading this article, there seem to be several potential implications for Athletic Advisors in their interactions with student-athletes. Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston suggest that we try to appreciate athletics as a culture much like any other culture and work within that context when counseling the student-athletes. While this may seem to be common sense, the repercussions of not recognizing the special situations that student-athletes face can have disastrous results.

Sedlacek and Adams-Gaston also suggest that advisors use their measurement tool to determine strengths and weaknesses in assisting student-athletes in their academic pursuits. By being able to assess the non-cognitive factors that could affect the academic performance of the student-athlete early on in their career, Athletic Advisors have a much better chance of having a positive impact upon behaviors and outcomes.

By utilizing factors other than those typically used to predict academic success, athletic advisors may be able to determine alternate ways to serve the student-athlete population in their academic endeavors.

Key points of the article are that student-athletes are more like non-traditional students than average students. A strong support person in a student-athlete's life can help with first semester academic success. In addition, counselors need to understand the complexity of the student-athlete situation to be able to assist them.

Related to the findings in this article, here are a few questions you might want to discuss with your staff.

1. Do we assess non-cognitive factors? If so, how?
2. Can we do a better job of acquiring this information in a proactive rather than reactive fashion?
3. Of the non-cognitive factors identified in this article (e.g., self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, understanding racism, long-range goals, support persons, leadership, community and non-traditional knowledge), what do we need to do a better job of working with in our student-athlete population?
4. What are the unique elements of the student-athlete culture on our campus?