

studentPOLL

PUBLISHED BY ART & SCIENCE GROUP ■ SPONSORED BY EMBARK

MARKET INTELLIGENCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Intercollegiate athletics have little influence on college choice— intramural and recreational opportunities matter more.

The excesses and scandals swirling around Division I intercollegiate sports have become an editorial mainstay of the popular media—and a cause for deep concern among faculty and senior administrators at many colleges and universities. Pressures for vigorous reform are mounting. The National Alliance for Collegiate Reform has called for the elimination of athletic scholarships and public disclosure about the classroom performance of athletes. Faculty organizations such as the Drake Group have sprung up to press for change.

Yet the prospects for reform, as always, seem remote. Despite the many sensible changes recommended by the Knight Commission in its definitive 1991 report on the state of college athletics, a decade later college athletics are still plagued by abuses and problems, including falling graduation rates among minority athletes, under-the-table payments to athletes by agents and boosters, gambling scandals, and even criminal activity. In fact, these problems seem more pandemic to big-time intercollegiate sports today than they were a decade ago when the Knight Commission issued its report.

It is no secret, despite their somewhat disingenuous protestations, that the leaders of many colleges and uni-

versities are prepared to field nationally competitive intercollegiate sports programs at almost any cost. For decades, through all the scandals and calls for reform, this win-at-any cost obsession was often justified by the presumed beneficial impact of winning teams on student recruitment and alumni giving. Until now, there was no reliable evidence, other than the unsubstantiated claims of advocates for this point of view and a number of biased research studies, to support these arguments.

Now, some of these rationales are collapsing in the face of empirical scrutiny. *The Game of Life*, the outspoken new book on college athletics by William G. Bowen and James L. Shulman, the president and chief financial officer, respectively, of the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation, flatly contradicts one of the strongest myths about college athletics. Its findings, based on analysis of a massive database of alumni from 30 of the nation's most selective institutions—demonstrate conclusively that winning teams, and especially winning football teams, have no impact on rates of philanthropic giving to alma mater.

The findings reported in this issue of *studentPOLL*™ burst another of the win-at-all costs bubbles, namely that intercollegiate athletics and winning

teams have a major impact on the enrollment decisions made by prospective students.

The first comprehensive national study on this topic, our telephone survey of 500 college-bound, high school seniors, provides compelling evidence that intercollegiate teams and national sports champions matter little in college consideration. Our findings indicate that the enrollment decisions of only a handful of college-bound students—roughly 10 to 15 percent—are affected by intercollegiate athletics. In fact, the evidence of students' disinterest in or disengagement from big-time college sports is quite compelling. In our study, we found that:

- Neither quality nor the NCAA division classification of a school's intercollegiate sports programs were important to most students.
- Awareness of intercollegiate sports was extremely superficial. Only a small fraction of students could even remember which teams won the national football and basketball championships in 2000 (the year we surveyed them).
- Intramural and recreational sports, in fact, have a much greater influence on college choice than intercollegiate athletics.
- Many students believe star athletes are given preferential treatment by colleges, and while they may not be happy with this state of affairs, they are nonetheless already resigned to these practices.
- Students rate jobs, internships, student clubs and organizations, and community service higher than athletics as activities that are important to them in college.
- The relatively small group whose college choices are most likely to be

influenced by intercollegiate athletics tends to be male and reports lower SAT/ACT scores and household incomes than those whose enrollment decisions are not influenced by intercollegiate sports.

Perhaps the most surprising finding is that opportunities to participate in intramural and recreational sports are of significantly greater importance to prospective college students than are

top-ranked national teams or big-time athletic programs in major sports. Yet the assumption persists among many college and university leaders that intercollegiate sports are a powerful driver of college choice. Clearly, the wealth of evidence reported in this issue of *studentPOLL™* and the patterns that emerge, suggest that this assumption is little more than a myth—another fiction in a long string of rationaliza-

tions used to justify an emphasis on intercollegiate athletics that is increasingly out of control.



Richard A. Hesel
Publisher, studentPOLL™
Principal, Art & Science Group

1 Jobs, internships, and community service rated more important than athletic pursuits.

We began the survey by gauging the importance to students of athletics compared to other activities they might pursue in college. Specifically, we asked respondents to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the least important and 10 the most important), how important to them personally were college activities and programs such as: a job or internship, community service, student clubs and organizations, and intramural or intercollegiate sports.

A sizable proportion of students gave a high importance rating (in the 8 to 10 range) to a job or internship (58 percent), student clubs or organizations (44

percent), community service (38 percent) and watching or participating in intramural sports (35 percent). Again, a larger segment of students said watching or participating in intramural sports (35 percent) was more important to them than watching or participating in intercollegiate sports (28 percent). Moreover, 50 percent of respondents gave watching or participating in intercollegiate sports a rating of between 4 and 7, while 21 percent gave it a very low net rating of 1 to 3. (Table 1)

Among the various activities we tested, students gave the highest mean ratings to the following: a job or intern-

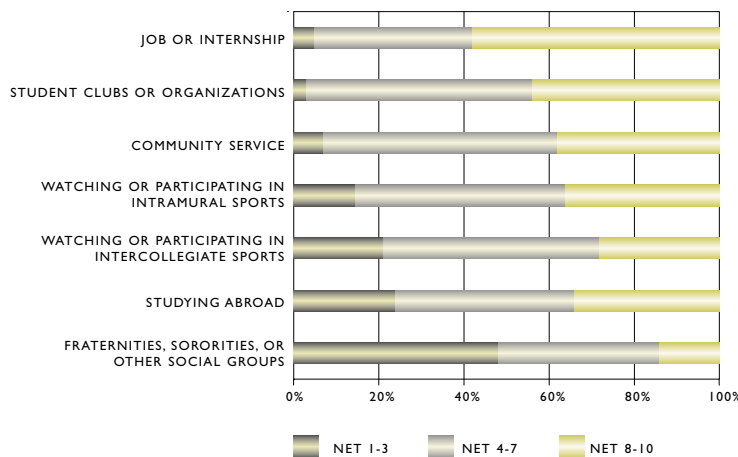
ship (7.54), student clubs or organizations (7.09), community service (6.65), watching or participating in intramural sports (6.12), and watching or participating in intercollegiate sports (5.95). Moreover, even among male respondents, mean ratings were higher for a job or internship and watching and participating in intramural sports versus watching or participating in intercollegiate sports.

ADVISORY

In admissions communications, pay attention to the athletic and recreational interests of prospective students, and demonstrate how your institution provides opportunities for students to participate in these activities.

TABLE 1

Importance ratings of activities students might pursue in college



2 For a majority, athletics of any kind not a factor in college choice. Males and students with lower SAT scores more likely to cite intercollegiate athletics as an influence.

To better understand the effect athletics has on college consideration, we asked our sample of college-bound, high school seniors if they had considered any aspect of athletics or sports in their decisions about where to apply or attend college. We were expansive in our definition, giving students a great deal of latitude on what constituted “any aspect of athletics or sports.” For more than half of these students (57 percent), athletics had absolutely no bearing on their college decisions.

By gender, however, there is a significant difference: 52 percent of male

respondents said that they did consider some aspect of athletics or sports in deciding where to apply or attend college while only 38 percent of female students indicated the same. But even among male respondents intramural sports were a more important factor in college choice than intercollegiate sports. We should also note that students who said intercollegiate athletics were an important factor in college choice reported significantly lower SAT/ACT scores and household incomes than those who did not.

A D V I S O R Y

In your recruitment communications, don't emphasize intercollegiate sports at the expense of intramural and recreational opportunities. If you do you'll be ignoring the interests of a large proportion of your prospective student population.

A D V I S O R Y

As you think about future investments in athletics, put your resources into programs that support and encourage participation in intramural sports and recreational activities, assuming, of course, that service to all of your students—not just top athletes—is an important part of your institutional mission.

3 Intercollegiate division ranking and quality factor little in college consideration.

To understand the effect the quality or ranking of an intercollegiate sports program had on students' decisions about college, we asked respondents a number of questions, including whether a college's NCAA Division ranking was important in their consideration of schools.

For readers who may not know, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) "is a voluntary association of 1,200 institutions, conferences, organizations, and individuals devoted to the sound administration of intercollegiate athletics." Member institutions are divided into three classifications: Division I, II or III. The differences between the three divisions are substantial. For example, Division III schools are not permitted to offer athletic scholarships, but such scholarships are a staple of Division I institutions. In general Division I sports receive the most national and regional media attention, and spend much more on athletic scholarships in major and minor sports.

What we discovered is that the NCAA division classification mattered little to most students. Only 7 percent reported that the NCAA division was very important in college consideration and another 20 percent said it was somewhat important. In sharp contrast, 73 percent indicated it was either not too important or not at all important in their decision about which schools to consider. (Table 2) By gender, 10 percent of male respondents reported that a school's NCAA division classification was very important to them in considering colleges versus 5 percent of female respondents.

Of the roughly one-fourth who said a school's intercollegiate division was somewhat or very important, 42 percent reported that the sports teams of the school that was their first choice competed in Division I athletics. Interestingly, 37 percent of these students revealed that they did not know the NCAA division of their first-choice school.

We also asked this subgroup of students—those who felt that the intercollegiate division of a college was important—if they preferred that the college they attend play in Division I, II or III, or some other division. Forty-four percent had no preference while 38 percent indicated they preferred attending a school that played Division I athletics. Sixty-two percent of students' first-

choice schools were in the Division they said they preferred. (Table 3)

We then asked the entire sample how important the quality of a school's intercollegiate athletic teams was in their college decisions. More than three-quarters of those surveyed (76 percent) reported that the quality of a school's intercollegiate sports teams was not important. Specifically, 52 percent indicated it was not at all important, while 24 percent said it was not too important. By contrast, only 24 percent said the quality of a school intercollegiate team was either somewhat or very important (17 percent and 7 percent, respectively). (Table 4)

TABLE 2

Importance of NCAA Division Classification

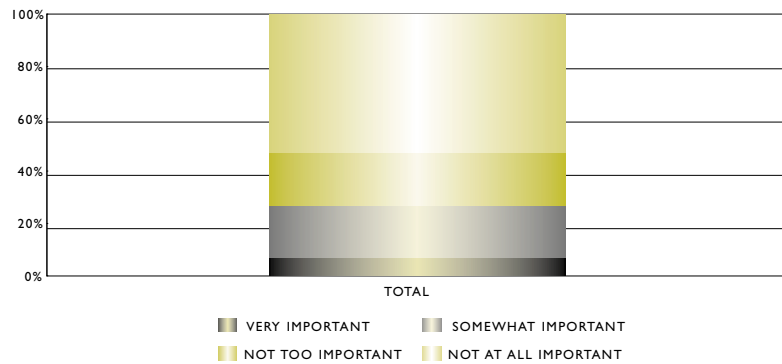


TABLE 3

Preference for NCAA Division of first-choice school (sample: those who said division was important)

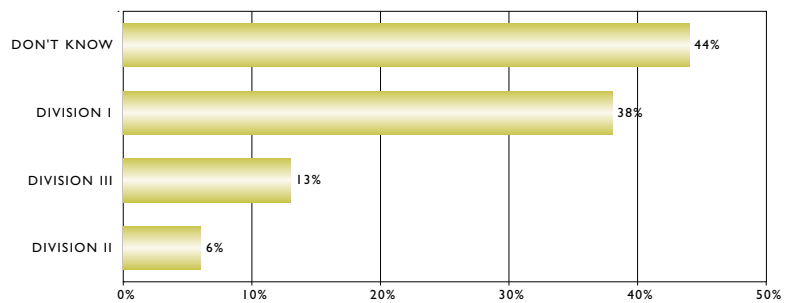
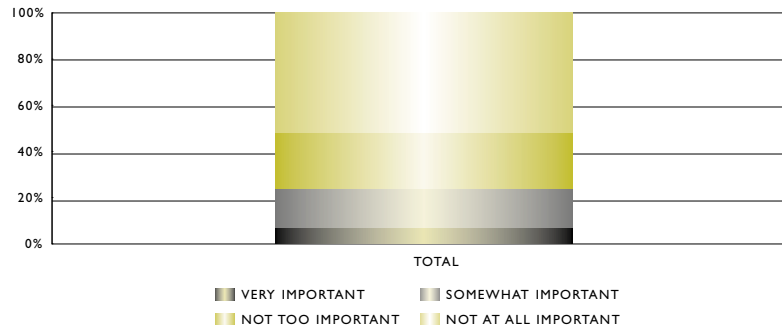


TABLE 4

Importance of quality of intercollegiate teams in college consideration



4 Intramural sports and recreational opportunities rated more important in college consideration than intercollegiate athletics.

Given the tremendous amount of attention and resources many institutions devote to intercollegiate sports, we wanted to learn how important they are to students' college choices compared to intramural and recreational sports. The findings were both surprising and enlightening. Overall, the intramural sports programs and recreational sports activities offered by colleges and universities are much more influential in college choice than an institution's inter-

collegiate sports programs.

To make a clear distinction between intramural and intercollegiate sports, we first asked prospective students whether they intended to play intercollegiate sports in college. Fifty-six percent either don't intend to play or don't know if they want to participate. On the other hand, 44 percent of respondents reported that they do intend to play intercollegiate sports in college. Of those who plan to participate in inter-

collegiate sports programs, 24 percent intend to play soccer, 16 percent baseball or softball, 11 percent track and field, and 9 percent, respectively, basketball, football, or volleyball. (Table 5)

When we probed how important playing or watching intramural sports was in students' college decisions, we were surprised to discover that 54 percent of students said this was somewhat or very important. By comparison, about half as many, 27 percent, attached the same level of importance to intercollegiate sports. (Table 6)

We then asked those students who attached some level of importance to intramural sports if they actually intended to play an intramural sport in college and, if so, what sport they planned to play. An overwhelming 69 percent of this group reported that they intend to play an intramural sport in college while 31 percent indicated either that they did not want to play or didn't know. Among those intending to play, 29 percent said they would play soccer, 26 percent basketball, 20 percent baseball/softball, 18 percent volleyball, 12 percent football, 7 percent tennis, and 6 percent track and field/cross country. (Table 7)

Next, we asked students the importance of the quality of a school's recreational sports activities—those not considered intramural or intercollegiate sports—in college choice. Half those surveyed reported that it was somewhat or very important. Among the respondents who thought these activities were important, forty-three percent indicated they didn't know what type of recreational sports activities they planned to pursue in college while 8 percent said they intend to play baseball/softball or basketball. Smaller segments were interested in soccer, bicycling, weight lifting, volleyball, tennis, hiking, and running. (Table 8)

In addition, a higher proportion of male respondents (56 percent) versus female respondents (45 percent) reported that the presence of recreational sports in college was an important factor in their college decision. A direct comparison of the responses

TABLE 5

Intercollegiate sports students intend to play

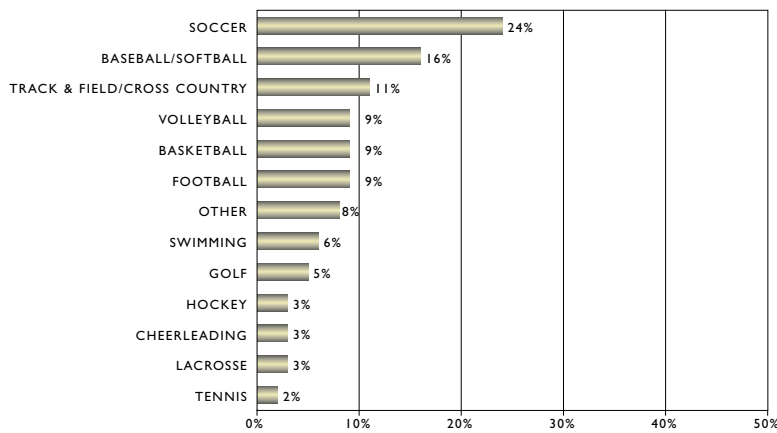
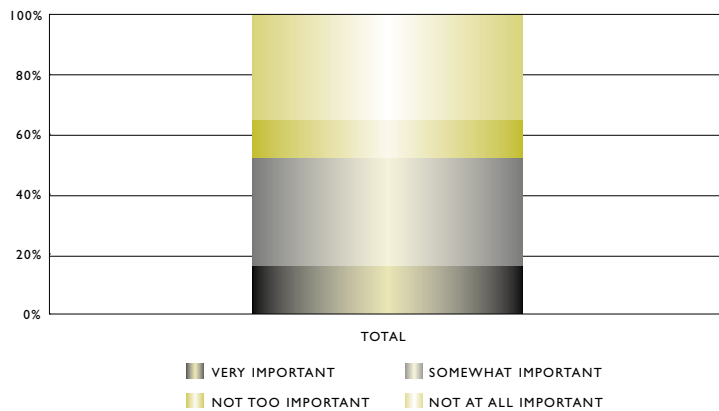


TABLE 6

Importance of intramural sports in college decision



students gave concerning the importance of a college's intercollegiate division, the quality of its intercollegiate sports, and the quality of its intramural sports and recreational activities in college choice shows some dramatic differences. For example, less than one-third of students said a college's NCAA division classification or the quality of a school's intercollegiate sports programs influenced their college decisions. By comparison, 36 percent said the quality of a college's intramural sports programs was important in college consideration. Even more dramatic, half those interviewed thought the recreational sports activities offered at a college were important in college choice. (Table 9)

TABLE 7

Intramural sports students intend to play

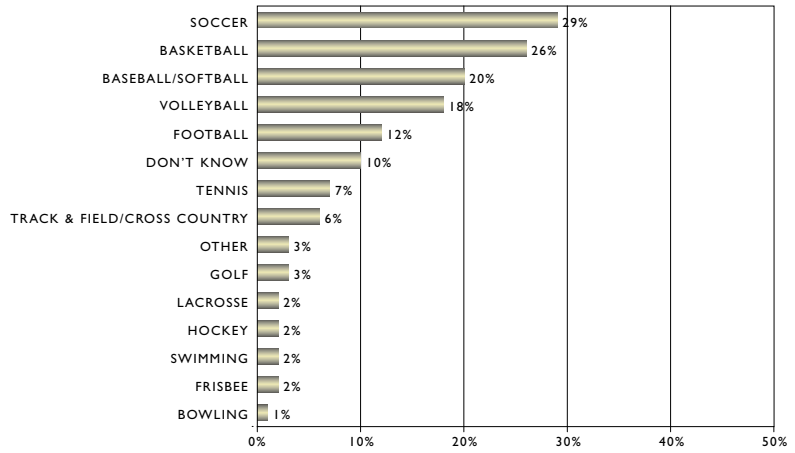


TABLE 8

Recreational activities students plan to pursue

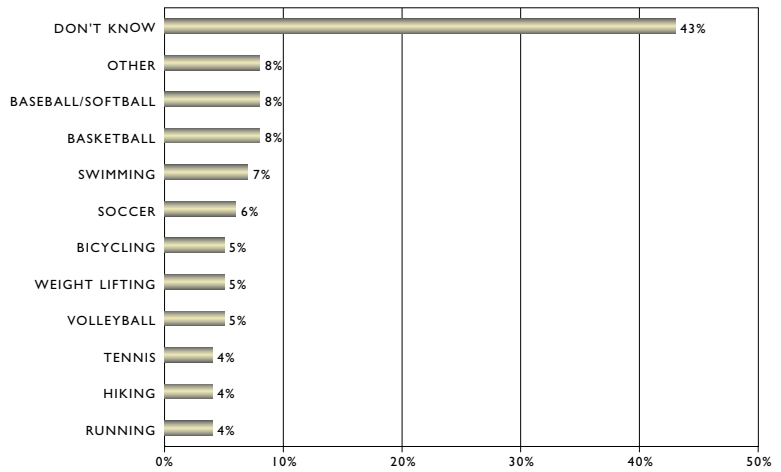
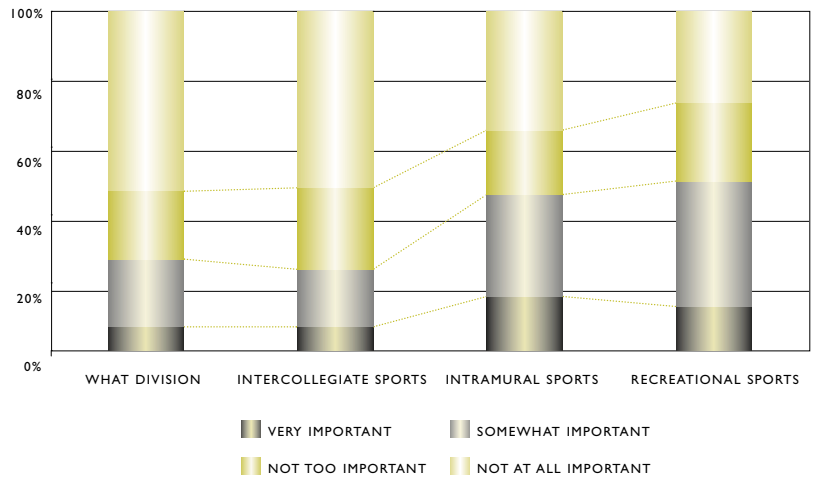


TABLE 9

Importance ratings of NCAA division, intercollegiate, intramural, and recreational sports in college choice



5 Knowledge of and judgments about the quality of intercollegiate sports programs is extremely superficial.

To explore students' familiarity and knowledge of intercollegiate sports, we asked those who thought the quality of intercollegiate teams was important on what basis they judged the quality of a college's intercollegiate sports programs. The question was asked on an open-ended basis so all answers were accepted. Thirty-five percent indicated they did not know how to judge the quality of an institution's sports programs, another 35 percent based it on the overall win-loss record of a college's team, and 8 percent respectively, judged quality on national rankings or coaches' reputations. (Table 10)

Some college presidents and football coaches may be under the impression that a national championship in football or basketball is a springboard to greater public awareness and name equity for their institutions. While this may be the case for the general public, it is not the

case for prospective students.

When asked what football team won the NCAA Division I-A national championship last year (as previously noted, we interviewed students in the spring of 2000), 76 percent of respondents reported they did not know. In fact, only 16 percent of our student sample could name the Seminoles of Florida State University as national football champions in 1999-2000. This seems to suggest a superficial knowledge of national intercollegiate sports among college-bound students.

To further explore students' recall of national championships, we also asked them which men's basketball team won the NCAA Division I-A championship in 2000. Even though this highly promoted national TV event was held within several weeks of the time we interviewed respondents, only 16 percent correctly named the Spartans of Michigan

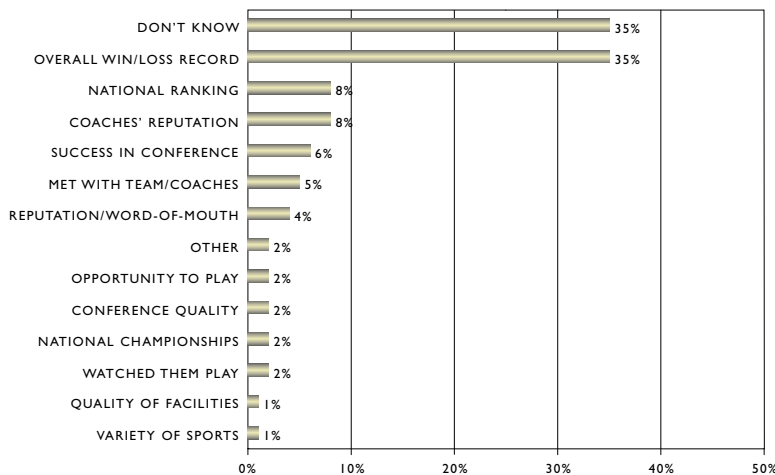
State University, and an overwhelming 78 percent said they had no idea who won the national championship.

Not surprisingly, student awareness of the colleges or universities capturing national titles in sports was even lower for women's intercollegiate sports programs. When students were asked which team won the Division I-A national championship in women's basketball in the spring of 2000, 82 percent admitted they did not know. Only 10 percent correctly named the University of Connecticut Huskies.

Again, if we look at statistical differences by gender, the findings reveal that a significantly higher proportion of male students were able to correctly name the Division I championship team in football and basketball (34 percent males versus 5 percent females among respondents who attempted to name the football champion and 26 percent versus 10 percent for the basketball champion). It is interesting to note that male respondents were more likely to correctly name the women's basketball champion in 2000 (12 percent of male respondents knew the answer versus 9 percent of female respondents).

TABLE 10

Basis for judging quality of college's intercollegiate sports



6 Awareness and knowledge of major national athletic conferences surprisingly low.

While a lot of arm-chair sports fans may have a good knowledge of the different Division I-A athletic conferences nationwide, the same cannot be said of the high school seniors we spoke to.

To explore what, if anything, students knew about Division I-A athletic conferences we asked them a series of questions, including what major Division I college athletic conferences they were aware of. While a small proportion of students were aware of a number of Division I conferences (24 percent indicated they were aware of the Big 10, 16 percent of the Pacific 10, 11 percent, respectively, of the Atlantic and Big 12 conferences, and 10 percent of the Southeast conference), an over-

whelming 65 percent indicated that they did not know anything about these athletic conferences. The net proportion of students who could name any conference was just 34 percent.

However, there was a significant gender difference: 58 percent of male respondents were able to name a Division I athletic conference compared to only 20 percent of female respondents.

We then read students who were able to name a Division I-A conference (roughly one-third of the entire sample) a series of statements, asking them to name the athletic conference with: the best overall competitive success on a national level, the highest academic standards for athletes, the best combination of high academic standards for

all students and athletic success, and other related factors.

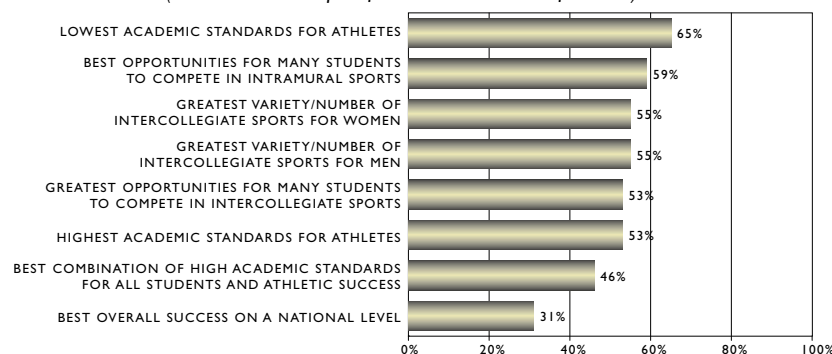
Even though a small number of students thought the Big 10 Conference best fit some of these descriptions, most students had no idea which conferences best fit the statements we read. The “don’t know” answers on each of the statements read ranged from 31 to 65 percent. Again, the sample was fairly small, including only those who could name at least one Division I-A conference on an unaided basis. (Table 11)

While a much higher proportion of male students could name a Division I conference, one-third to one-half of these respondents answered “don’t know” when asked which conference best fit one of the descriptions read such as having the highest academic standards for athletes.

Specifically, 29 percent of those who named a Division I-A conference thought the Big 10 Conference had the best overall success on a national level. Similarly 14 percent thought this conference had the highest academic standards for its athletes; 17 percent the best combination of high academic standards for all students and athletic success; 15 percent the greatest variety and number of intercollegiate sports for men; 19 percent the greatest variety and number of sports for women; 16 percent the greatest opportunities for many students to compete in intercollegiate sports; and 16 percent thought the Big 10 Conference had the best opportunities for many students to compete in intramural sports.

TABLE 11

Don't know responses
(best describe specific Division IA conference)



7 Awareness of institutions that combine top sports programs and strong academics is extremely low.

In this age of sports scandals and the perceived dumbing-down of academics for student-athletes, we thought it was important to explore with students what institutions they thought did the best job of combining high-level, intercollegiate athletics and strong academics. While the list of institutions we gathered from students included Duke and others we might have guessed would be on the list, we were surprised at the small segment of

students who even attempted to answer this question.

In fact, 49 percent of students said they could not name a school that fit this category, and no school was mentioned with any notable frequency. Duke, at 8 percent only, garnered the highest recognition, followed by Stanford University at 4 percent, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Notre Dame at 3 percent.

We were curious to know if the national ranking or quality of a college’s sports teams had any influence in students’ interest in a specific school—either positive or negative. Again, the overwhelming majority of students gave us a resounding no for an answer. Eighty-eight percent said that these factors had absolutely no influence on their interest in a specific school. Of the very small segment of students who were influenced by the quality or national ranking of a school’s sports programs (less than one quarter), most indicated that the influence was positive, and only 4 percent said it was negative.

8 An overwhelming majority think women athletes have the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

The opportunities and benefits now available to women in college athletics seem to be appreciated by prospective students. In particular, the vast majority of students (79 percent) believe that women have as many opportunities to participate in athletics/

sports in college as men do. Twenty percent said women either do not have the same opportunities as men or ventured no opinion. There was not a significant difference between the responses given by male and female respondents on this issue.

9 College sports scandals not on the radar of most students.

Given the high-profile scandals that have been reported and the preponderance of bad press given these and other controversies in college athletics over the last several years, we thought it would be interesting to find out if students were aware of these scandals. While we presumed many students would have at least some awareness, only one-quarter indicated that they were aware of any recent scandals in college athletics.

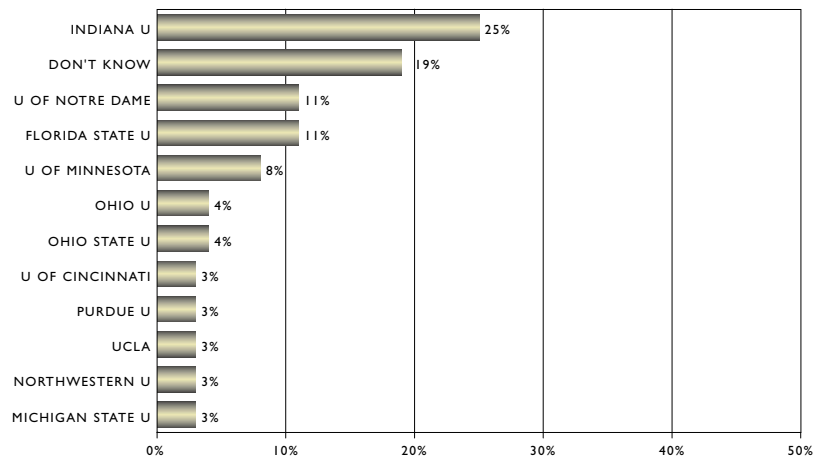
It is interesting to note that more students were aware of scandals in college sports than were able to name the teams that won the national football or basketball championships. Among those who knew of a scandal, Indiana University was associated with scandal by 25 percent, Florida State by 11 percent, and the University of Notre Dame

by 11 percent (Table 12)

Male students, again, were more likely to be aware of college sports scandals than female students (some 40 percent of males reported that they were aware of college sports scandals compared to 15 percent of females). Our sense is that this finding is further evidence of the low level of awareness or interest among prospective students in intercollegiate sports.

TABLE 12

Knowledge of specific schools involved in sports scandals
(sample: those aware of scandals)



10 A majority believe athletes are given preferential treatment, but are largely resigned to this double standard.

One of the most worrisome findings in our study—one that should be a major cause for concern among college and university presidents, admissions professionals, and others—is that a clear majority of students believe college athletes are given unfair preferential treatment in admissions, the classroom, and other realms. For example, when students were asked if they thought the admissions standards were the same for top football and basketball players com-

pared to other non-athletes, sixty-two percent believed that admissions standards were lower for these athletes. (Table 13)

To further explore this issue, we then read a series of statements describing the kinds of favorable treatment top athletes might get with regard to academic performance, discipline, attendance, and academic help not offered other students. We asked respondents to tell us whether they strongly agreed, somewhat

agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each statement. The findings revealed a consistent pattern regarding favorable treatment of athletes. More than three-quarters either strongly or somewhat agreed that star athletes get favorable treatment when it comes to discipline and class attendance. Moreover, sixty-eight percent strongly or somewhat agreed that these athletes received favorable treatment with respect to academic performance, and 65 percent think the same is true in terms of athletes receiving academic assistance not given other students. (Tables 14) There were no gender differences in students' responses.

Even more troubling, our respondents seem already resigned to the favorable treatment given college athletes. For example, forty-one percent indicated that while they thought it was unfair that these athletes were held to a lower admissions standard, they accepted it as "the way things work." Another 26 percent said it was fair "because schools give other students with other talents or skills the same breaks on admission standards." At the same time, 24 percent said it was unfair because non-athletes "don't get an equal chance." Only eight percent thought it was fair "because their athletic skills benefit the school." It appears that there is a fair amount of acceptance or resignation about the way colleges treat student-athletes versus non-athletes among college-bound high school students.

TABLE 13

Admissions standards for athletes versus other students

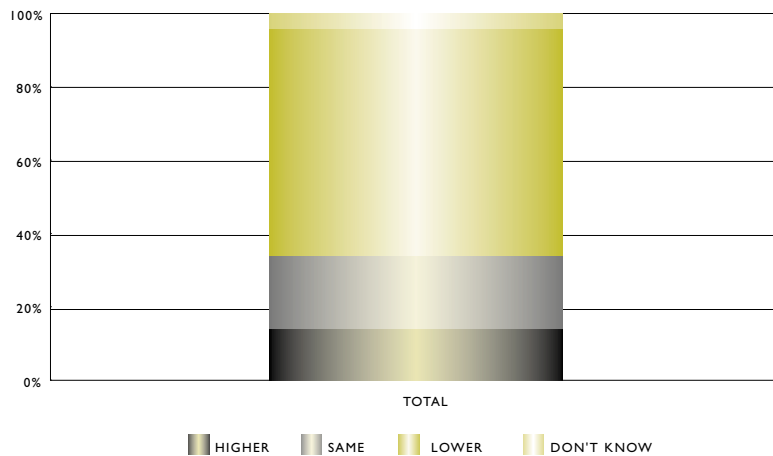
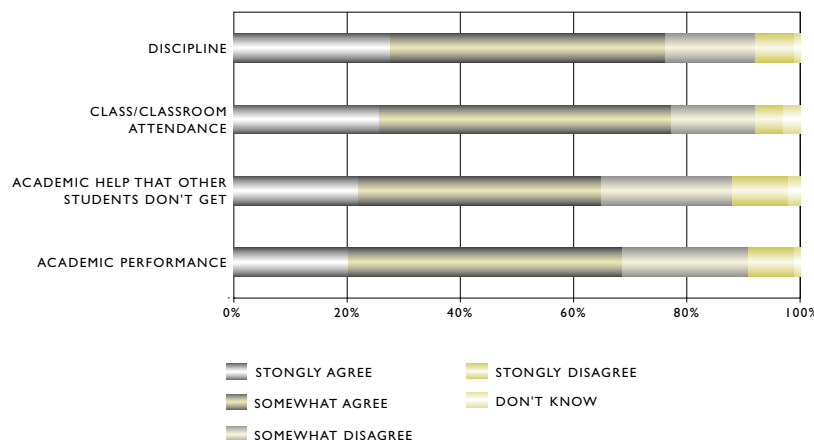


TABLE 14

Agreement/disagreement about preferential treatment star athletes receive



ADVISORY

Be aware that students already are sensitized to the double standards in the treatment of athletics versus regular students at institutions that give strong emphasis to fielding competitive, national sports teams. Do all you can to minimize or eliminate favorable treatment of athletes.

ABOUT ART & SCIENCE GROUP

studentPOLL™ is published by Art & Science Group, Inc., a national leader in providing market intelligence to higher education and the non-profit sector. The firm provides services in the following areas:

- Student recruitment marketing and enrollment management
- Tuition pricing, financial aid, and net tuition revenue management
- Planning and communications for capital campaigns, other large fundraising efforts, and alumni relations programs
- Overall institutional advancement and marketing

Within these broad areas, the firm provides a number of supporting services:

- Strategic marketing and communications planning
- Quantitative and qualitative market research
- Econometric analysis of financial aid awards
- Predictive mathematical modeling of student and prospect behavior
- Operations assessment and re-engineering
- Creation of print and electronic communications tools

To inquire about our services, call, write, email, or log on to our web site.



6115 Falls Road
Suite 101
Baltimore, MD 21209
(410) 377-7880
Fax (410) 377-7955

112 Swift Avenue
Durham, NC 27705
(919) 286-4821
Fax (919) 286-4932

Email:
Internet: consult@artsci.com
World Wide Web: www.artsci.com

EMBARK SPONSORSHIP

● ● ●
EMBARK Embark became the exclusive corporate sponsor of *studentPOLL™* in April 2000 to help increase the repository of knowledge surrounding the college admissions process. A leading technology company, Embark helps institutions of higher learning run more efficiently and effectively in an increasingly competitive environment. The company's web-based tools enable universities to recruit students over the Internet, process applications electronically, and automate a wide range of manual admissions processes.

As a result of Embark's sponsorship, each quarterly issue of *studentPOLL™*, formerly available only by paid subscription, will be mailed free of charge to the senior administrative officers of all four-year colleges and universities nationwide. In addition, the research design has been enhanced so that survey results are a truly representative national sample of the college-bound high school population.

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The *studentPOLL™* National Advisory Board suggests topics for research and provides critical comment on issue drafts. Members of the board serve on a volunteer basis. *studentPOLL™* research findings and discussions of their implications do not represent the judgments of Advisory Board members or the organizations they represent. Current National Advisory Board members include:

Mark Cannon

Deputy Executive Director
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

Susan Chilcott

Director, Communications
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Cheryl M. Fields

Director, Office of Public Affairs
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE
UNIVERSITIES AND LAND GRANT COLLEGES

Madeleine F. Green

Vice President
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

Roland H. King

Vice President for Public Affairs
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Christine Larger

Vice President of Public Policy
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE AND
UNIVERSITY BUSINESS OFFICERS

Daniel J. Levin

Vice President for Publications
THE ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

John Lippincott

Vice President, Communications
COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT AND
SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

Wendy Mahoney

Managing Editor, Academe
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Margaret A. Miller

Faculty Member
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
EDUCATION LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Peter Smith

Director of Public Affairs
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

ABOUT *studentPOLL*™

Since its assessment of the influence of the *US News and World Report* rankings on college choice was published in the fall of 1995, *studentPOLL*™ has become the authoritative national source for market intelligence about critical issues in student recruitment and financial aid. It provides reliable answers to questions about student and parent attitudes and behavior that many college administrators could only answer with guesses, anecdotes, and hunches.

Published four times a year, *studentPOLL*™ provides in-depth market data, rigorously conducted and analyzed to inform the strategic and tactical decisions institutional leaders and managers make about student recruitment and financial aid.

studentPOLL™ has been a widely quoted media resource and has been cited in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *US News and World Report*, and many other newspapers and magazines.

Printed copies of each *studentPOLL*™ report are mailed free to college and university administrators and faculty, the media, and to others by special request. Current issues, as well as back issues, and an executable, animated presentation file on key findings from each issue, are also available on the Art & Science Group web site, www.artsci.com, and the web site of *studentPOLL*™'s exclusive corporate sponsor, Embark, www.embark.com.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Findings reported in *studentPOLL*™ are based on in-depth telephone interviews with a random national sample of high school seniors who plan to enroll in four-year colleges the following fall. To qualify for an interview respondents must have achieved a combined SAT I score of 800 or higher and/or a composite ACT score of 17 or more. Previously, *studentPOLL*™ only surveyed high-ability high school seniors with a minimum SAT I score of 1050. The study sample is drawn and/or weighted to represent a national distribution of students with qualifying SAT I or ACT scores by geography, gender, intended major, and income. Surveys are conducted in the fall and/or spring of each year, with a sample size of 500 or more. The sampling margin-of-error is plus or minus 4 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

Findings reported in this issue are based on research fielded in April, 2000. The table below provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics of the students interviewed.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE				
Income	<\$50,000	\$50,000 TO \$99,000	\$100,000+	DK
	22%	34%	18%	26%
Test Taken	JUST SAT I	JUST ACT	BOTH	
	30%	22%	48%	
Race	MINORITY	CAUCASIAN		
	14%	85%		
HS Type	PUBLIC	PRIVATE		
	83%	16%		
HS Size	<500	500 TO 999	1000 TO 1999	2000 TO 4999
	15%	27%	34%	22%
Gender	MALE	FEMALE		
	45%	55%		