Factors contributing to student-athlete retention

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The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of scholarship support, gender and sport-type (individual or team) on student-athlete retention. Student-athlete retention was defined by utilizing the Academic Progress Rate (APR) instituted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association in February, 2005. A single mid-major Division I Conference provided data (eight institutions) on student-athletes participating from 2001-2005, resulting in 12,980 total observations. Data were analyzed utilizing analysis of variance (ANOVA), discriminant function analysis, and binary logistic regression to determine the extent to which scholarship support, gender and sport type influenced retention. Results indicated scholarship support alone was not significantly related to retention; however, gender and sport type were significant predictors of retention with female and individual sport athletes retained at a higher rate than their male and team sport counterparts. Additionally, the combination of scholarship support, gender and sport type emerged as a significant predictor of retention. These findings indicated certain populations of student-athletes leave institutions at a higher rate than others, and may suggest a need to target retention efforts at particular sub-sets of student-athletes.

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