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Determining The College Sports Information Director's Management Role And Potential To Be Promoted To The Position Of Director Of Intercollegiate Athletics

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Determining The College Sports Information Director's
Management Role And Potential To Be Promoted To The Position Of
Director Of Intercollegiate Athletics

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
School of Mass Communications
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the frequency with which college sports information directors (SIDs) are promoted to athletics director (AD) positions. Results reveal some reasons why SIDs, the primary communications officer in the athletics department, may or may not be considered as qualified candidates for AD jobs. This study illustrates that current ADs predominately come from the ranks of former coaches, compliance officers, business managers and fund raisers, while few were formerly SIDs. In addition, this study sought to determine whether the SID develops skills and experience most closely related with ADs.

The variables examined in this study include the SIDs' perception of themselves and their desire to move into the director's role, and their perception of skills and characteristics required to be an AD. Variables to be considered include the number of ADs who have been SIDs, the number of SIDs who have interviewed for AD positions and who express interest in developing skills associated with AD positions.

A survey instrument was constructed to determine if SIDs perceive themselves as qualified to be ADs and to measure their interest in the position. In addition to providing self evaluations of their ability and interest in serving as ADs, SIDs were asked questions regarding the background experience of their supervisors and the hiring history of their institutions, which should provide a sufficient picture of hiring practices for AD positions.

Data collected for this study reinforces the findings in the literature review that the majority of communications professionals are content with technician roles, even in advanced stages of their careers. Results indicate that SIDs perceive that they are toiling in an underrated profession and that, for the majority, their personality and training can be tailored for the AD job. However, the significant lack of interest by SIDs in pursuing AD positions was a surprising result of the investigation. Few SIDs are being interviewed for AD jobs because few apply for the positions.

Chapter One

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency with which college sports information directors (SIDs) are promoted to athletics director (AD) positions. Results reveal some of the reasons why SIDs, the primary communications officer in the athletics department, may or may not be considered as qualified candidates for AD jobs. As a comparison, available literature examines the chief communicator's role in corporate management, but there is little existing literature that specifically addresses the issue of advancement opportunities for SIDs within the intercollegiate athletics field. Before 2000, only one article addressing sports information issues had been published among widely read sport management or sport marketing academic journals in recent years (Barr, Gladden & Wolfe, 2000).

In order to successfully manage a group of individuals with such diverse responsibilities as employees in intercollegiate athletics, it is assumed that the successful athletics director should have knowledge of each person's job and skill requirements. This study illustrates that current ADs predominately come from the ranks of former coaches, compliance officers, business managers and fund raisers, and that few ADs were formerly SIDs. In addition, this study sought to determine whether the SID develops skills and experience most closely related with athletics directors. It is believed the holders of other positions are focused on responsibilities that cover definite roles within

the athletic department, while the SID is the second member of an athletics staff, after the AD, who combines knowledge, experience, and interaction from all other members in order to regularly communicate information from those interactions to all constituencies. Other than the AD, only the SID must demonstrate competence and an understanding of all combined issues relating to rules compliance, coaching, facilities management, scheduling, fund raising, marketing, promotions, communications, and several other pertinent performance functions regarding student/athletes and department personnel in order to credibly represent the entire department. The SID must speak knowledgeably on these issues to the media, university community, outside community, alumni, parents, opposing team personnel and other interested parties. The specific functions of sports information work are numerous; however, the SID's overall goal is to enhance the athletic program's image among key constituents such as the mass media, the fans, the alumni, and other university personnel (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). Sports information directors are working public relations specialists who handle numerous responsibilities simultaneously (DiCamillo, 2002).

Personal interaction with so many different populations is also a unique by-product of sports information. In addition to providing primary communications services, most SIDs find themselves accepting appointments to a variety of administrative roles because of their access to and variety of experiences with all athletic department functions. While SIDs accept multiple responsibilities in other areas of athletics, few others in athletics seem to cross over into sports information because of the specialty training and the time required over the course of a school year in fulfilling obligations for a variety of sports teams and events. DiCamillo (2002) stated that the dedication by SIDs cannot be

questioned, because as a standard practice, SIDs work more than 40 hours per week. However, SIDs show an inability to make constituents aware of the hours spent on the job. DiCamillo surveyed 70 SIDs and found that more than 50% of the SIDs questioned worked over 60 hours per week, while an additional 36% routinely put in between 50-60 hours (DiCamillo, 2002).

There are mixed messages regarding the management role of SIDs in intercollegiate athletics. In DiCamillo's report, of the 70 SIDs surveyed, only 18 considered themselves to be managers. Only 29% felt that the institutional hierarchy respected the SID position - the lowest rating among all of the groups from which to choose (DiCamillo). Fifty-one percent of sports information directors felt coaches treated the SID as a "gopher" (DiCamillo). "No respect was the answer given most often by the SID practitioners to describe their current employment situation (in a 1995 study). The SID business today is not practicing what public relations want all its practitioners to do - advise and counsel management" (McCleneghan, 1996). However, Stoldt, Miller, and Comfort, (2001) surveyed 133 athletics directors and found that 77.9% stated that they included their SIDs in senior staff meetings 100% of the time while only 13.9% stated the SID was never included. The vast majority (90.5%) of ADs who indicated that they did include their SIDs in senior staff meetings also said that their SID made substantial contributions to those meetings (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001), which would appear to place SIDs in line for higher management roles.

The next chapter provides a background of roles by describing the vertical and horizontal differentiation of employee positions within an athletic department.

Chapter Two

Background

A review of the Blue Book of College Athletics (2002) shows that the personnel of a college or university intercollegiate athletic department includes administrators, coaches, and athletic trainers - both male and female - and varies in size according to the overall commitment and impact of the intercollegiate athletic program at the institution. It is not uncommon for the full time staff in a department of intercollegiate sports at a major university to exceed 100 people. This number swells considerably when event staff is added to the mix on game day. Managing an intercollegiate athletic program includes quality facilities and equipment. Very simply, the intercollegiate sport competition and training facilities at most large American universities rival that of even the best equipped national sport programs or sport clubs in other nations (Rosandich, 2002). As one would expect, these types of facilities and personnel represent a very large expense and the operating budgets of some large intercollegiate sport programs may top \$75 million per year (Rosandich, 2002). The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, usually a senior level administrator who reports to the president of the university, a senior vice-president or a dean, supervises the athletic program.

Every school engaged in intercollegiate sport has membership with one of the collegiate sport sanctioning organizations, whether this be the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

(NAIA), or the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Sanctioning bodies such as the NCAA are further divided into subsets called divisions that group schools into groups based on a number of criteria such as size or the number and type of sports they play. The largest of these are Division IA and the smallest are Division III (Rosandich, 2002). Division rank is based on athletic scholarship equivalencies awarded.

Within National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member athletic departments, vertical differentiation is generally limited to four levels-executive (i.e., athletics director, university president), top administration (i.e., associate and assistant athletics directors), coaches, and players. There are also several persons in peripheral positions, such as administrative assistants, academic support, athletic trainers, and so forth that serve to supplement the duties of the other employees. Depending on the size of the department, the size of each level might vary. The basic vertical differentiation, however, is consistent throughout athletics. While the extent to which athletic departments are vertically differentiated is relatively constant, the degree of horizontal differentiation is not. Highly specialized sport organizations will assign all persons to specific tasks based on their skills and capabilities (Slack & Hinings, 1992). For instance, administrators will have the sole duty of overseeing such areas as finance, marketing, or promotions. However, in less specialized departments, members adopt more of a generalist approach. An example might be the assistant athletics director who oversees compliance issues in addition to overseeing women's athletics. As can be seen from these examples, horizontal differentiation is likely to differ among departments (Cunningham & Rivera, 2001).

This study posits that some of the titled positions who report to the athletics director include head and assistant coaches; associate and assistant athletics directors, sports information director, compliance officer, facilities director, development director, community relations director, promotions and marketing director, athletic trainer, student/athlete services director and more. The backgrounds of most current athletics directors include positions in most, if not all, of these areas as ADs are usually, although not always, hired from within the industry. When positions for athletics directors become open, the institution's president will usually form a search committee to screen applicants and interview finalists. After recommendations for finalists are forwarded to the president, he or she usually makes the final decision on whom to hire.

The following chapter is the literature review and explores the role of the communications officer in a corporate structure and makes comparisons to the SID's role in an athletic department.

Chapter Three

Review of Literature

The literature reviewed provides a basis for qualities considered to be important for management roles and where communications officers fit in organizational schemes. Before investigating the hypothesis of this particular study, it is necessary to acknowledge the results of previous works in the area of public relations role theory. In the last decade, the organizational role of communicators has been one of the most extensively studied concepts in public relations research (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Earlier studies have identified specific communicator roles. Roles are abstractions about the patterned behaviors of individuals in organizations, a way of classifying and summarizing the myriad activities that an individual might perform as a member of an organization (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002). Organizational role is defined as “recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome” (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Roles, then, are measured by what individuals do repetitively in their day-to-day work (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Broom sought to abstract distinct roles (Broom & Smith, 1978, 1979) from activities of public relations professionals and after testing, defined four roles. The *expert prescriber* was identified in the literature as the organization’s acknowledged expert on

all matters relating to public relations (Broom & Smith, 1978, 1979; Cutlip & Center, 1971; Newsom & Scott, 1976). Much like the traditional doctor-patient relationship, the expert prescriber makes the recommendations and the dominant coalition complies. Broom drew from the consulting literature (Kurpious & Brubaker, 1976; Walton, 1969) to conceptualize the *communication facilitator* role. Acting as a “go-between,” the communication facilitator is deeply involved in process, attending to the quality and quantity of information flowing between the dominant coalition and key publics. Broom conceptualized the *problem-solving process facilitator* as a practitioner assisting a dominant coalition to think systematically and solve public relations problems for the organization. The elements of this role were drawn from organization theory and development (Baker & Schaffer, 1969; Schein, 1969). The fourth role that Broom conceptualized was that of *communication technician*. In this role, the practitioner acts as a technical services provider, generating the collateral materials needed to implement a communication or public relations program planned through another communication role. That is, the communication technician was conceptualized as implementing communication programs planned by others in the organization. Broom regarded practitioners enacting this role predominantly as “journalists-in-residence,” hired away from news organizations for their media relations and productions skills (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

A significant reason why SIDs may not be perceived as qualified candidates for AD positions is that the role of sports information is to serve a variety of publics. The SID is a service provider, and spends much time meeting requests for information and other services to co-workers, media, alumni, boosters, parents, campus personnel, and students

as well as superiors. So, those outside of the sports information field likely recognize the SID as a technician more than as a manager.

Dozier (1983) gave scores for communicators in manager and technician roles. For certain analytic purposes, Dozier compared scores and classified communicators as either predominately managers or predominantly technicians. Creedon (1991), in particular, considered the idea of separate roles to be a false dichotomy. She said that emphasis on two discrete roles has led to a “hierarchy of two seemingly dissimilar roles—the manager who decides policy and the technician who implements ‘his’ policies. She offered a counter perspective: “Some technicians process information, some produce creative products, and some manage the process as well as produce the product” Creedon (1991).

College SIDs may perform more management duties than their corporate counterparts. Neupauer (1999) said sports information directors at colleges and universities have a much wider scope of duties than other public relations professionals – SIDs are responsible for publications, publicity, game management and game supervision. The biggest problem facing SIDs today, Neupauer says, is obscurity. Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) makes no mention of sports information in its educational reports, and college curriculums offer very little coursework related to sports publicity. In Neupauer’s opinion, PRSA wants all of its accredited members to be in management roles where they consult CEOs and direct staffs. Neupauer determined that many SIDs are not in management roles (Neupauer, 1999).

Neupauer’s statement makes a point regarding the perception of the SID’s status. It is this researcher’s contention that age and experience play a significant role in the status of an SID within each athletic department, and therefore the SID’s potential for a

management position is varied. While data is scarce, the common knowledge in the profession is that SIDs who are into their 30s or older and have about 10 or more years experience tend to have extended management roles and are considered senior level administrators within the department. Results from this study are expected to reinforce this claim. A review of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) directory lists many as associate or assistant athletics directors who supervise a staff of two or more full time assistants, plus graduate assistants, interns and undergraduate student assistants.

The conventional wisdom holds that an entry-level communicator enters the practice with the expectation that he or she will enact the technician role predominantly. With more professional experience, practitioners move from the technical role to management responsibilities. However, a panel study by Broom and Dozier (1986) showed that the process of increased enactment of the manager role and decreased enactment of the technician role did not follow this progression for all practitioners. Professional experience is, indeed, positively related to enacting the manager role although the variance is small (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

To bring this study into mass communications theory, it is acknowledged that as the primary communications officer in athletics, the SID is the public relations officer of the department. Key findings by Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, (2001) included the frequent perception among athletics directors that the SIDs serving their programs are their departments' top public relations officers and that SIDs make important contributions to athletics programs (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). The SID's job most closely follows J. Grunig's public information model, embracing the norms of the typical journalist.

Grunig said the information they generate is relatively objective, although they are hesitant to publicize anything about their organization that might put it in a “bad light.” They see their role as “journalists in residence” for the organization (J. Grunig, 1984; L. Grunig, 1996). Ivy Lee, an early expert in public relations, is credited with developing this approach to providing factual information through a simple source-to-receiver model (J. Grunig, 1984; L. Grunig, 1996). J. Grunig’s 1985 International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation study identified 12 general principles of *Excellence* in communication. Among those relating to this study are: The excellent public relations department: (1) enjoys a direct reporting relationship to senior management. It is integral to the management of the total organization. The head of public relations may not be a formal member of the dominant coalition or top policy-makers, but at least that person has the ear of the power elite; (2) is headed by a practitioner in the managerial rather than technical role. Excellence in the technical tasks of public relations, such as writing and editing, is not enough to ensure effectiveness. The department must be directed by someone capable of serving at the highest levels of the organization; and (3) requires expert practitioners, those who know how to manage the department strategically and symmetrically. Such expertise allows the head of public relations to function as a true professional, one who is empowered to act independently while still cooperating with his or her peers who head the other departments of the organization (J. Grunig, 1984; L. Grunig, 1996). These characteristics of excellence in public relations provide some general acceptance that the successful public relations professional is a diversely well-rounded expert manager potentially worthy of being considered as a member of senior management.

Arguably, public relations is a management function that is effective only when top communicators have access to management and strategic decision making, either as formal members of dominant coalitions or as informal advisors privy to such decision making on a regular basis (J. Grunig, 1992). Enactment of the communication technician role, on the other hand, is not associated with participation in management decision-making (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 1982).

Corporate public relations practitioners have long struggled to achieve professional status and power within organizations and to justify the very existence of the public relations function to the management of organizations (Porter, Sallot, Cameron & Shamp, 2001). In search of this status and power, practitioners have often turned to environmental monitoring and issues management to provide management with useful information about their organizations' external environments. As effective issues managers, public relations practitioners have won influence among members of management and consequently more power in the decision-making process. Practitioners tend to seek roles "higher" in the hierarchy (Sullivan, Dozier, & Hellweg, 1985), although the technician role may seem to dominate in actual practice (Cottone, Wakefield, Cottone & North, 1985).

Over time in their careers, professionals tend to move from a technical role into a management role. (Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1995). Managers earn more in salaries and partake in decision making more often than technicians. However, many find greater satisfaction in the technician role, perceived more stable by some. Some technicians self-select their role for creative reasons and emotional attachments (Dozier & Gottesman, 1982). Practitioners who perceive themselves in the manager role are more likely to

conduct formal research (Judd, 1987) or evaluation than are technicians." Also, public relations managers are more powerful than technicians in dampening encroachment, the practice of assigning professionals with expertise in areas other than public relations to manage the PR function (Lauzen, 1992). Practitioners' aspirations to achieve the management level, competencies in management, and the belief by established management that public relations is a powerful tool all function to decrease encroachment (Lauzen & Dozier, 1992). Issues management, or boundary spanning, has both technical and managerial components, but practitioners who interpret an organization's external environments for the dominant coalition are more likely to enact the managerial role, (Guant & Ollenburger, 1995) earning the managerial role by their interpretations (Arrington & Sawaya, 1985), and thereby reducing the substitutability of PR within an organization. Practitioners in the technician role may be excluded from issues management activities. (Porter, Sallot, Cameron & Shamp, 2001). Despite the predominance of a communication technician role, support for a managerial role, particularly with an emphasis on acting as communication facilitator, is also in evidence. However, this support is juxtaposed by employers' belief that public relations is one-dimensional and undeserving of a top-level management position. Importantly, resultant implications for practitioners include less authority, lower status, and above all, the likelihood that they are not part of the dominant coalition in a council (Hogg & Doolan, 1999).

As the literature review includes studies of the role of the corporate communications officer within an organization, results show many similarities between the corporate communications officer within a business environment and the sports information

director within the intercollegiate athletic department. Dolphin and Fan (2000) found that like the SID, the communications manager or public relations director is a highly ranked professional executive, one who has access to information regarding the operation of all departments within the company, who provides leadership within his or her own department while being counted upon to make strategic and creative decisions regarding the company, and has the ear of or an ability to influence the CEO, but is usually not a member of the top level tier of policy or decision makers (Dolphin & Fan, 2000). Additional research outside of this study may show that there are few if any CEOs of major companies, not counting those that specialize in public relations or advertising, who came from public relations.

Dolphin and Fan (2000) learned that the role of the communication director is still embryonic as an established function, citing White and Mazur, 1995. It is misunderstood in many organizations. There has been little investigation into what the practitioner does, and the background from which the communication director emerges. Indeed, the role itself is unclear, as are the origins. In addition to his origin, does the communication director require specific personal characteristics? Is he one of the type? White and Mazur (1995, p. 36) think that his position requires a mix of functional, managerial, organizational and negotiating abilities. Winner (1993) considers that some people have a natural flair for the work displaying empathetic qualities, an interest in people, positive attitudes and, perhaps, butterfly minds. White and Mazur (1995) suggest that analytical and well-developed communications skills added to business management and political/diplomatic skills are all important.

This raises a question of what background best prepares what Wright (1995) styles a communication executive. It was the conclusive finding of Ryan and Martinson (1985) that typically practitioners are not satisfied with acting as representatives of their management and putting into place decisions made by others. In fact, it is surprising how little power the director had. Guth (1995) observes that public relations can be a catalyst for change; this can only be enabled when the communication director has input into the organization's most important policy-making machine. On the other hand, enhanced status might only be significant if the director was perceived as lacking clout and none of those interviewed would be so perceived. Arnold (1988) argues that the practitioner needs to think like a CEO and be able to converse in management language. An excellent communicator, the executive is seen to be a sensible, honest and trusting person; one having integrity. He or she demonstrates good judgment and has a confident air. A creative, courageous person, the practitioner is much aware of internal politics. A good listener who empathizes with their fellows, the executive shows resilience and is able to take knocks (Arnold, 1988). Having risen fast through the ranks the practitioner is now near the summit of the organization; probably one level below the Executive Committee (which in turn is one layer below board level). The executive will go no further. Having enormous influence, but little real power, the communication director is a satisfied, contented and humorous person enjoying a very diverting position giving considerable autonomy. The practitioner reports directly to the CEO with ready access to his chairman and is more than familiar with the differing audiences addressed by the corporation; he or she supervises communications with them. (Dolphin & Fan, 2000).

Sallot (2002) asked in her paper, what does the public think about public relations? Anecdotal narratives would have us believe the public thinks poorly of the profession. Although public relations widely pervade most Western cultures, its practitioners are often likened to flacks, shysters, and worse. Yet, there has been comparatively little formal research conducted about the public's view of public relations. Public opinion polls measuring prestige of various occupational groups, however, include public relations. Sallot's analysis of prestige ratings of 740 occupational titles, with the low score for dishwashers and the high score for physicians, had public relations specialists rated above average and ahead of advertising salespersons, fortune tellers, and used car sellers, but behind print journalists, television and radio announcers, and funeral directors. According to Sallot, public relations often attempt to serve two masters: the interests of the client or sponsor that the practitioner is representing and the public interest (Sallot, 2002).

Management is viewed as a rational profession in which managers perform a set of activities designed to enable them to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and to control (Moss & Green, 2001). For Henri Fayol (1841-1925) and other classical thinkers, management is seen as a rational activity in the sense that it is possible to provide clear grounds for its existence, tasks and necessity, and to suggest definite principles connecting management behavior to outcomes. Although management has assumed a prominent place in modern society and accounts for many millions of jobs, the question of 'what is management' continues to provoke debate and controversy. Here Watson has argued that 'all humans are managers in some way, but some of them take on the formal occupational work of being managers taking on the role of shaping aspects of

human social structure and culture in work organizations.’ Watson goes on to argue that managing an organization is essentially a simple process, but one that tends to be seen as complicated because managing involves dealing with many different groups of people. Thus, he argues that the complexity lies in the web of relationships that managers in organizations have to cope with, not in the basic processes that managerial work entails (Watson, 1994, Moss & Green, 2001).

In terms of how managers allocate their time, studies have revealed a common picture of managerial work as largely technical, tactical, reactive and frenetic. Even senior managers appear to spend relatively little time on planning and abstract formulation and are subject to constant interruption, flit from topic to topic and respond to initiatives from others far more than they initiate themselves (Moss & Green, 2001). Research into managerial interaction has revealed that managers spend a great deal of their time imparting and receiving information, largely through face-to-face interactions, as well as interacting with other managers at the same level in organizations. While a good deal of managerial communication appears to be lateral, at more senior levels, communication also includes variable amounts of vertical communication. Significantly, much of this managerial interaction appears, at least on the surface, to be wide ranging in subject matter, informal in character, and only tenuously connected to business matters. Linked to this latter point, some studies have suggested that managers engage in a good deal of informal activity which is often concerned with power struggles between various organizational factions to secure or defend resources, as well as dealing with the informal interpretation, negotiation and implementation of corporate policy at a local level. (Moss & Green, 2001).

As managers of a high profile department, athletics directors have leadership responsibilities. They are expected to provide direction, guidance, and short and long term plans for the success and management of the athletic program. There are many leadership studies that prove leaders can come from all levels of organizations. There are many types of leadership models. Rothschild (2002) observed the real problem is that we have been taught to believe that there is one type of leader for all situations. Yet, studying leaders in many settings shows that there are a variety of leadership types, and that it is critical to have the right leader for the right situation (Rothschild, 2002). Gardner stated that a leader is an individual who significantly affects the thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors of a significant number of individuals. Most acknowledged leaders are “direct”; they address their public face-to-face. An unrecognized phenomenon, indirect leadership, occurs when individuals exert impact through the works that they create. (Gardner, 1996).

In public relations, the managerial role is equally important when the perspective of the dominant coalition is taken into account (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 1982). Although CEOs view public relations roles in a more splintered and confusing way than do top communicators, the CEOs of organizations with excellent public relations departments expect their top communicators to be managers. The greater importance assigned to communication with outside groups by the dominant coalition, in addition the stronger its expectation will be that the top communicator should be a manager rather than a technician. CEOs often hire top communicators because of their technical expertise, but then learn that the technical expertise is insufficient when a crisis occurs (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 1982).

Stoldt (2000) surveyed 131 NCAA Division I SID professionals and results indicated that 92.3% play roles that are primarily technical, maintaining media contacts and creating news releases and other publications. Respondents who hold senior positions, such as sports information directors or assistant athletics directors (91.4% and 80.8% respectively) are working primarily as technicians. However, respondents expressed a desire to play a larger role in communication management, assuming responsibility for managing public relations issues, advising athletics directors, and facilitating two-way communication between athletics programs and their key constituents. Given these findings, it is hardly surprising that at least some SIDs feel frustrated in their current situations (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001).

This study is expected to show that sports information should be more often included on the list of background experiences that athletics directors are chosen from. The following section includes the hypotheses and research questions.

Chapter Four

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency with which college sports information directors are promoted to athletics director positions. The variables to be examined in this study of the SID's prospects for being promoted to the AD's role include the SIDs' perception of themselves and their desire to move into the director's role, and their perception of skills and characteristics required to be an AD.

Using public relations roles theory as a basis for this study, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1: Many SIDs are qualified to become athletics directors, but few athletics directors have ever been SIDs.

H2: Few athletics directors have backgrounds in sports information despite the well-rounded qualifications for the position that sports information uniquely provides.

The subsequent research questions to be explored in this study are:

R1: Do sports information directors perceive themselves as qualified for promotion to the position of athletics director?

R2: Do SIDs attempt to acquire management level qualifications in preparation to seek an athletics director's position?

R3: Do SIDs believe members of their profession receive reasonable consideration for AD position openings?

The inspiration for this study comes from the researcher's observation that a very small percentage of ADs come from the sports information ranks. This study seeks to determine how much the SID, as the primary communications officer in an intercollegiate athletic department, possesses the necessary management skills and has the opportunity to be promoted to the position of Director of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Fitzgerald, Sagaria, and Nelson (1994) reported that the most frequent career experiences prior to becoming an athletics director are collegiate athlete and college coach. If the respondents were not collegiate athletes or coaches, they might view their opportunities for promotion pessimistically. Additionally, the roles of first-line managers are very specialized, and they may neither aspire to nor expect promotion to a higher position (Parks, Russell, Wood, Robertson, & Shewokis, 1995). Some evidence (Broom & Dozier, 1986, 1995) suggests that if communicators could participate in management decision-making, they would otherwise prefer to enact the technician role. McGoon (1993) reported the results of an informal fax poll conducted by *Communication World* that found most of the 170 communicators responding indicated that they preferred writing, editing, producing publications, and other activities of technical role enactment. Only 18 of the 170 said they liked managing the activities in the public relations and communications department. Four of the 170 said they liked working with top management as their preferred work activity. When asked what they would like to be doing in 10 years, responses included writing and teaching (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 1982).

The field of Sports Information Directing is a relatively unknown and anonymous field (Neupauer, 1999). For this reason, some SIDs attempt to elevate their personal profile within the industry. This is accomplished by extraordinary achievement within the field, which is recognized through a number of annual awards and honors bestowed by (CoSIDA), or by efforts to climb the intercollegiate administrative organizational chart, as evidenced by the increasing number of SIDs who seek and receive a higher graded title such as assistant athletics director. The working environment of intercollegiate athletics is constantly stressful. Co-workers, coaches and administrators alike, who are by nature, competitive, surround the SID. SIDs develop “communicative dispositions” because of the stressful situations SID public relations professionals must endure when dealing with diverse “external publics” (McCleneghan, 1996). Elevated stress levels have also been related to high trait anxiety, work overload, low social support, low perceived control, leadership style, and athletic program issues (Ryska, 2002).

While high levels of stress come from different origins for both SIDs and athletics directors, the SID generally has less control of his or her overall situation than the AD does. For example, the SID must manage events as they are scheduled, and has virtually no input on that schedule which dictates the SID’s work load. While the AD must balance scheduling among factors such as potential attendance and revenue, budgeting, and missed class time for student/athletes, the AD still has the final approval power to schedule events while having very little hands on duties with managing those events. It is therefore common, particularly among schools in lower divisions, to host as many as three events at one time, such as a soccer game, a volleyball game and a golf tournament, regardless of administrative staff limitations. This situation is stressful for SIDs in

particular, who have specific event management duties and staffing responsibilities at every event, while the athletics director may or may not choose to attend any of the events, primarily as a figurehead supervisor or even a spectator. As many athletics directors have backgrounds in coaching, each coach needs only to be concerned about his or her own event and therefore, multi-task management of several events simultaneously has not been among a coach's experiences.

This example is not to say that stress for SIDs is more than for athletics directors, but it is different. Stress for the athletics director comes from a bigger picture. The AD's concerns include completing the university's mission toward the care and support of student/athletes as they advance in their degree programs, the department's fiscal survival, garnering support among the department's many publics and meeting expectations of student/athlete graduation rates and success in intercollegiate contests. Two areas-athletic achievements and the education of student athletes-are consistently among the top priorities for various constituencies used to measure athletic department effectiveness (Cunningham & Rivera, 2001).

In addition to shifting types of stress, another reason why a sports information director might wish to become an athletics director is to increase his or her earning potential. Surveys of public relations practitioners in the 1970s, '80s and '90s showed that those in predominately technical roles earned about 66 to 77 percent of those in management roles. In 1991, PRSA member managers earned on the average \$67,803 compared to technicians, who earned an average of \$44,932 annually, about 66 percent (Broom & Dozier, 1982, 1986, 1995). In a 1995 survey of SIDs, the medium salary was \$38,500 (Neupauer, 1999). In a 2001 study by DiCamillo, the salary range for most

sports information directors (34%) falls in the \$30,000-\$40,000 range, but 24% of SIDs polled made between \$40K range, while 29% fell in the \$20K area (Di Camillo, 2002). Only six sports information directors listed themselves as making over \$50,000 per year (Di Camillo, 2002). Although surveys of athletic director salaries exist, one could not be obtained for this study, but the gap between SID and AD salaries is known to be significant.

In contrast, Zoch et al. (1997) surveyed communicators for all 91 school districts in South Carolina and found that creativity, which generally is associated with the technician role, was one of five factors rated higher than salary in contributing to communicator job satisfaction (L. Grunig, J. Grunig & Dozier, 2002; Broom, 1982).

Budget cuts, newly created SID positions and reorganization within departments have all placed added duties on the sports information director. Stoldt, Miller, and Comfort, (2001) concluded that it is possible SIDs are more capable than ADs believe them to be and that they are simply waiting for the opportunity to display previously hidden management skills. They suggest that SIDs should assess their readiness to assume managerial responsibilities if and when the opportunity presents itself (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). DiCamillo suggests several areas where SIDs can enhance their image as multi-tasking professionals. Sports information directors who want to improve their importance within an athletic department may seek to add the duties of selling lucrative athletic sponsorship packages to potential corporate clientele. A sports information director who has duties and is successful at raising money for scholarship becomes increasingly more valuable in an athletic department (DiCamillo). One of the most tangible ways for sports information directors to improve their perception and earn

respect from their constituents in an athletic department is to help student-athletes win honors – especially academic honors. Handling major responsibilities – including managing their own budget - is an indisputable way to successfully enhance the image of a position. More SIDs are taking on game management roles for a variety of reasons. An important factor in enhancing the image of a sports information director is showing the ability to learn and adapt. Professional development programs like the CoSIDA Annual Workshop or ones produced by institutions offer great opportunities for growth. Sports information directors have become increasingly involved in organizing social functions attached to athletic events. While the numbers appear to be low, it is an area where SIDs can continue to improve their identity among the institutional hierarchy, alumni, faculty and staff. Another major responsibility bestowed upon sports information directors is compiling statistics for all teams and reporting them to the conference office or the NCAA directly. Nearly 96% of sports information directors handle that duty as an integral part of their position (DiCamillo). But a disturbing trend is that 67% of SIDs report scores to their coaches' NCAA regional representatives (DiCamillo). This is a coaches' responsibility that is far too often forced upon the SID because the coach fails to fulfill the duty and the sports information director is viewed as more responsible. (DiCamillo).

Stoldt says ADs should consider increasing their commitment to public relations activities. ADs providing both cost and benefit estimates indicated that their average return on investment was 732%. Such a figure suggests that investment in public relations activities (e.g., sports information, community relations) is sound policy (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). It also provides insight into the value of the performance SIDs

contribute and their understanding of and experience with senior management roles. SIDs and other public relations practitioners should advocate more strongly their own contributions to the success of their athletics programs. The value of public relations programs may be demonstrated in a variety of ways (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995). However, as those within the profession have noted, SIDs may be skilled in showcasing teams, coaches and student-athletes, but they have not been effective in advocating their own sports information departments (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001; Brewer, 2000).

The following chapter describes the methodology used to test the hypotheses and to respond to the research questions.

Chapter Five

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency with which college sports information directors are promoted to athletics director positions.

The hypotheses tested were:

H1: Many SIDs are qualified to become athletics directors, but few athletics directors have ever been SIDs.

H2: Few athletics directors have backgrounds in sports information despite the well-rounded qualifications for the position that sports information uniquely provides.

The subsequent research questions were:

R1: Do sports information directors perceive themselves as qualified for promotion to the position of athletics director?

R2: Do SIDs attempt to acquire management level qualifications in preparation to seek an athletics director's position?

R3: Do SIDs believe members of their profession receive reasonable consideration for AD position openings?

The variables considered include the number of ADs who have been SIDs, the number of SIDs who have interviewed for AD positions and the number of SIDs who

express interest in raising their profile by actively developing skills associated with AD positions.

A survey instrument was constructed to determine if SIDs perceive themselves as qualified to be ADs and to measure their interest in the position. In addition to providing self evaluations of their ability and interest in serving as ADs, SIDs were asked to answer questions regarding the background experience of their supervisors and the screening or hiring policy of their institutions, which should provide this study a sufficient picture of hiring practices for AD positions.

Items posed in the survey instrument are original, and come from the researcher's 27 years of experience in the intercollegiate athletics industry as an SID, assistant AD and associate AD. Based upon an expert review, the items were deemed to have face validity. In addition, the expert reviewers agreed that the SIDs' annual workshop provided an opportunity for an effective convenience sample, where a direct distribution of the survey and face-to-face access to a wide variety of active SIDs, representing a cross section of demographics, titled positions and institutional division levels, would provide valid data collection despite its numerical limitations.

The survey instrument was personally distributed at the annual College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) workshop, held in Cleveland, Ohio, June 29-July 2, 2003. In the November 2003 issue of CoSIDA Digest, total attendance at this workshop was listed at 780 registered attendees, which includes sports information professionals, student assistants, panelists, family members and exhibitors. During the workshop, this researcher personally distributed 150 survey instruments to identified sports information professionals and student assistants in attendance over three days that

garnered a convenience sample of 144 (96%) respondents. The respondents are the unit of analysis for this study.

The survey instrument was constructed using a Likert-type scale from 1 corresponding to (strongly disagree or not experienced) to 5 (strongly agree or very experienced). In addition, there was a small section requiring yes or no responses and two open-ended statements requesting SIDs to identify why they might or might not become ADs. Statements were categorized in three parts: (1) to determine perception and desire by the SID to advance to an AD position (2) to determine technical and management skills acquired by the SID that relate to the AD position, and (3) to determine a frequency of consideration SIDs have pursued and received for AD jobs.

Part I of the survey instrument, to determine perception and desire by the SID to advance to an AD position, consisted of 18 statements set to describe the SID's perception of his or her role within the athletic department. Statements included: I currently hold a senior management role in my athletic department; I intend to pursue an AD position later in my career and I provide input to issues and management decisions; were used to establish where the individual SID ranks within his or her department and what their career goals are.

Part II of the survey instrument includes five statements evaluating the SIDs ability to compete for an AD position including: Successful SID veterans are qualified to become ADs and I possess or I am acquiring the skills necessary to become an AD. Also in this section was a list of 20 skills that SIDs were asked to rank their importance in relation to being a successful AD. Then, SIDs were requested to rank their experiences associated with those same skills, such as motivation of staff; projecting leadership; oral, written and

interpersonal communications; NCAA compliance, personnel appointments and various other athletic department related functions, to determine if SIDs thought their experiences matched up well with expected AD skills.

Part III was set to determine a frequency of consideration SIDs have pursued and received for AD jobs. Statements included: my institution interviewed an SID for its previous AD vacancy; I have interviewed for an AD position; I believe my AD's previous primary position was in coaching, fund raising, sports information, etc., and an open ended statement that "I will or I will not become an AD because..."

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and mean scores, were utilized to tabulate results of closed-ended, multiple-choice questions. Means were calculated for numeric responses to selected questions while ANOVA and T-Tests were used to validate results and determine significant differences. Results are presented in narrative form with tables illustrating categorical comparisons in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Results and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency with which college sports information directors are promoted to athletics director positions.

The hypotheses tested were:

H1: Many SIDs are qualified to become athletics directors, but few athletics directors have ever been SIDs.

H2: Few athletics directors have backgrounds in sports information despite the well-rounded qualifications for the position that sports information uniquely provides.

The subsequent research questions were:

R1: Do sports information directors perceive themselves as qualified for promotion to the position of athletics director?

R2: Do SIDs attempt to acquire management level qualifications in preparation to seek an athletics director's position?

R3: Do SIDs believe members of their profession receive reasonable consideration for AD position openings?

Demographics among N=144 respondents were 112 (78%) white males, 19 (13%) white females, four (2%) black males, two (1%) black females, three (2%) male Hispanics and one (.6%) female Hispanic; two (1%) Asian males and one (.6%) Native

American female. The gender frequency was 121 males (84%) and 23 females (16%). The 144 respondents' titles in order of frequency were: 54.9% sports information director (n=79), 19.4% associate or assistant sports information director (n=28), 13.9% associate or assistant athletics director with sports information duties (n=20), 9% intern or graduate assistant in sports information (n=13) and 4.2% student assistant or other (narratives identified themselves as university relations employees with some sports information duties) (n=6). Respondents were asked to identify their institutional level (Table 1).

Table 1 - Respondents' Institutional Level

| Institutional Level | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| NCAA I | 41 | 28.5 | 28.5 | 28.5 |
| NCAA II | 76 | 52.8 | 52.8 | 81.3 |
| NCAA III | 25 | 17.4 | 17.4 | 98.6 |
| NAIA | 1 | .7 | .7 | 99.3 |
| other | 1 | .7 | .7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 144 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

In order of frequency: 52.8% of respondents came from NCAA Division II (n=76), followed by 28.5% from NCAA Division I (n=41), 17.4% from NCAA Division III (n=25), .7% from NAIA (n=1) and .7% from NJCAA (n=1). Note that these representations are not stratified with actual percentages of institutions by division. A list of NCAA members from the organization's Web site (NCAA, 2000) shows that of the 973 institutions listed as active NCAA members, 32.6% compete in Division I, while 26.9% compete in Division II and 40.4% compete in Division III (Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). Therefore, responses for this study are over-represented by Division II member SIDs, as the highest return came from the smallest membership level. This may suggest that Div. II members attend CoSIDA for professional development at a higher

rate than those from other divisions. In addition, there is no assurance that the 144 respondents each represent 144 different institutions, although the likelihood of much duplication is extremely minimal due to the method of personal distribution by the researcher.

The education level of respondents was reported as: 62.5% holding a bachelor's degree (n=90), 27.8% hold a master's degree (n=40), 2.8% hold a doctorate (n=4) and 6.9% are undergraduate students (n=10).

Regarding age and experience, a cross tabulation illustrated in Table 2 indicates that there were 10 respondents who reported to be over 49 years old with over 21 years of experience while the largest group of 32 respondents reported to be between 21-29 years old with 1-3 years of experience. At first glance, with the largest response coming from a younger, less experienced demographic, data regarding senior management roles and career ambitions toward AD positions could lean to the younger demographic group likely just getting settled into technical communications roles. However, when the totals are considered, there are 55 respondents under 30 years of age and 89 over 30 years of age (55 of those over 40 years of age). There are 86 members with less than 10 years of experience and 58 with 10 or more. This indicates that older, more experienced SIDs either attend professional development workshops at a lesser rate or more likely, have moved on to other positions.

Table 2 - Respondents' Age and Years of SID Experience

| Years as full time SID: | 0 | 1-3 | 4-9 | 10-20 | 21+ | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| My Age: under 21 yrs. | 2 | 1 | | | | 3 |
| My Age: 21-29 yrs. | 5 | 32 | 15 | | | 52 |
| My Age: 30-39 yrs. | | 5 | 19 | 20 | | 44 |
| My Age: 40-49 yrs. | 1 | 2 | 4 | 17 | 8 | 32 |
| My Age: 49+ yrs. | | | | 3 | 10 | 13 |
| Total | 8 | 40 | 38 | 40 | 18 | 144 |

Quantitative data is used to answer the research questions. **R1: Do sports information directors perceive themselves as qualified for promotion to the position of athletics director?** It stands to reason that the more experienced SIDs, those who are considered senior managers, are the most interested in qualifying for promotion. Of the 144 respondents 55 (38.2%) indicated they hold a senior management position in the athletic department. The respondents were requested to indicate their own belief in others' perception of their role as senior managers within the athletic department. The SIDs' perception of their role as senior managers equals or exceeds the percentage of those who indicated they actually are considered senior managers.

Table 3 - Respondents' Perception as Senior Managers

| | <u>agreed or strongly agreed</u> |
|---|---|
| I hold a senior management position in the athletic department: | 55 (38.2%) |
| I believe my AD perceives me as a senior manager: | 55 (38.2%) |
| I believe my department peers perceive me as a senior manager: | 61 (42%) |
| I believe outside publics perceive me as a senior manager | 64 (44%) |
| I perceive myself as a senior manager: | 88 (61%) |

Items considered in measuring SIDs' qualifications as senior managers are included in Table 4.

Table 4 - Respondents' Qualifications as Senior Managers

| | <u>agreed or strongly agreed</u> |
|---|---|
| I contribute to the strategic plan: | 89 (61%) |
| I am senior counsel to the AD: | 45 (31%) |
| I provide input to issues and mgt. decisions: | 94 (65%) |
| I manage responses to issues: | 62 (43%) |
| I conduct evaluation research: | 40 (27%) |
| I manage people: | 114 (79%) |

Again, the percentages are higher than the 38.2% who actually hold a senior management position. The pattern developing is that SIDs do not hold the respect of their supervisors and co-workers that they feel their position warrants. More than twice the number of recognized senior managers perform senior management duties including contributing to the strategic plan, providing input to issues and management decisions and managing people while the lower performance numbers are in categories of conducting evaluation research and acting as senior counsel to the AD. This may lead to

the SIDs inability to receive proper consideration for promotion and athletics director positions.

R2: Do SIDs attempt to acquire management level qualifications in preparation to seek an athletics director’s position? Asked directly whether successful, veteran

SIDs have the skills to become an AD, the responses were overwhelmingly positive.

However, asked if SIDs considered themselves as having skills to become an AD, the rate is a much lower 49%, although 65% indicated they were attempting to acquire skills necessary to become ADs.

Table 5 - Perception of SID Skills Toward Promotion

| | <u>agreed or strongly agreed</u> |
|---|---|
| I believe successful, veteran SIDs are qualified to become ADs: | 122 (84%) |
| I possess the skills necessary to become an AD: | 71 (49%) |
| I am acquiring the skills necessary to become an AD: | 94 (65%) |

In an attempt to match the skills acquired by SIDs in their profession with those attributed to ADs, the respondents were asked first to identify the importance of skills and duties associated with a successful athletics director, and then were asked to rate their own experience with those skills. In Table 6, a list of 20 skills and or duties associated with athletics directors was provided. SIDs were asked to indicate each function’s importance to a successful athletics director on a Likert-type scale of 1 “not important” to 5 “very important”. The SIDs were then asked using an identical list to rate their own experience with each function on a scale of 1 “not experienced” to 5 “very experienced”. A mean score was calculated for each set of responses. Scores ranging from 4-5 are considered to be important to athletics directors and to show that SIDs have experience in those areas while scores from 1-2 indicate functions not important to ADs and that SIDs

are not experienced in those functions. A score of 3 indicates “don’t know” on both scales. T-Tests of each function were used to determine whether there is significant difference between the perceived importance of individual skills related to the AD and the experience acquired by SIDs in relation to those skills.

Table 6 - Comparing SID Experience to AD Skills

| <u>Function</u> | <u>AD Importance</u> | <u>SID Experience</u> |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | <u>Mean Score</u> | <u>Mean Score</u> |
| Motivation of Staff | 4.70 | 3.63 |
| Organization of Department | 4.77 | 3.52 |
| Projecting Leadership | 4.67 | 3.69 |
| Oral Communication | 4.62 | 4.10 |
| Written Communication | 4.15 | 4.43 |
| Interpersonal Communication | 4.60 | 4.21 |
| Budget/Fiscal Management | 4.58 | 3.13 |
| Knowledge of Compliance/Regulations | 4.51 | 2.99 |
| Personnel Appointments/Hiring & Firing | 4.53 | 2.71 |
| Development & Fund Raising | 4.40 | 2.44 |
| Marketing & Promotions | 3.69 | 3.22 |
| Sports Information/Media Relations | 3.42 | 4.74 |
| Facilities Management | 3.51 | 2.58 |
| Coaching Experience | 2.74 | 1.76 |
| Student Recruiting | 2.98 | 2.29 |
| Academic Development | 3.66 | 2.22 |
| Computer Operations | 3.03 | 4.22 |
| Event Scheduling | 3.56 | 2.61 |
| Conference & NCAA Liaison | 4.04 | 3.14 |
| Previous Athletic Administrative Experience | 4.20 | 2.76 |

There are many deductions that can be made from this comparison. First, 17 of the 20 listed functions are considered by SIDs to be at least somewhat important to successful ADs. The least important attribute deemed important for ADs recognized by SIDs is coaching experience, with a mean score of 2.74. The most important attribute, with a mean score of 4.77, is organization of department. SIDs rate themselves as being experienced in this area with a mean score of 3.52. Areas where SIDs considered

themselves to be the most experienced are expectedly in sports information (4.74), computer operations (4.22), written (4.43), interpersonal (4.21) and oral communications (4.10). While the communications skills were deemed very important for successful ADs, sports information and computer operations were among the lower mean scores of deemed importance for ADs. Therefore, SID skills match up well with ADs in the communications categories, and to a lesser degree in organization and staff motivation, but not as well in other management areas.

A series of paired-samples t tests were conducted to evaluate the difference in mean scores for practitioners' ratings of AD Importance and SID Experience across the 20 variables of interest. Of the 20 variables, 17 showed a significantly greater mean score for importance to a successful AD than for the rating of experience SIDs actually have. The 17 variables are: "motivation of staff," the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($M=4.70$, $SD=.474$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.023$), $t(143)=12.955$, $p=.000$. For the variable "organization of department," the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($M=4.77$, $SD=.438$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($M=3.52$, $SD=1.097$), $t(143)=13.048$, $p=.000$. For the variable "projecting leadership," the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($M=4.67$, $SD=.553$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($M=3.69$, $SD=.998$), $t(143)=10.504$, $p=.000$. For the variable "oral communication," the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($M=4.62$, $SD=.626$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($M=4.10$, $SD=.944$), $t(143)=5.943$, $p=.000$. For the variable "interpersonal communication," the results indicated that the mean score for AD

Importance ($\underline{M}=4.60$, $\underline{SD}=.617$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=4.21$, $\underline{SD}=.892$), $t(143)=5.310$, $p=.000$. For the variable “budget & fiscal management,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.58$, $\underline{SD}=.664$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=3.13$, $\underline{SD}=1.194$), $t(143)=13.086$, $p=.000$. For the variable “knowledge of regulations & compliance,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.51$, $\underline{SD}=.748$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.99$, $\underline{SD}=1.122$), $t(143)=13.536$, $p=.000$. For the variable “personnel appointments,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.53$, $\underline{SD}=.679$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.71$, $\underline{SD}=1.240$), $t(143)=16.214$, $p=.000$. For the variable “development & fund raising,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.40$, $\underline{SD}=.804$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.44$, $\underline{SD}=1.294$), $t(143)=16.149$, $p=.000$. For the variable “marketing & promotions,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.69$, $\underline{SD}=1.073$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=3.22$, $\underline{SD}=1.269$), $t(143)=4.081$, $p=.000$. For the variable “facilities management,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.51$, $\underline{SD}=1.116$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.58$, $\underline{SD}=1.238$), $t(143)=7.667$, $p=.000$. For the variable “coaching experience,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=2.74$, $\underline{SD}=1.294$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=1.76$, $\underline{SD}=1.148$), $t(143)=7.543$, $p=.000$. For the variable “student recruiting,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=2.98$, $\underline{SD}=1.249$) was significantly greater than the mean score for

SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.29$, $\underline{SD}=1.327$), $t(143)=4.915$, $p=.000$. For the variable “academic development,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.66$, $\underline{SD}=1.098$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.22$, $\underline{SD}=1.207$), $t(143)=12.5787$, $p=.000$. For the variable “event scheduling,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.56$, $\underline{SD}=1.102$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.61$, $\underline{SD}=1.385$), $t(143)=7.167$, $p=.000$. For the variable “conference & NCAA liaison,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.04$, $\underline{SD}=1.003$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=3.14$, $\underline{SD}=1.352$), $t(143)=7.303$, $p=.000$. For the variable “previous athletic administrative experience,” the results indicated that the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.20$, $\underline{SD}=.972$) was significantly greater than the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=2.76$, $\underline{SD}=1.477$), $t(143)=11.035$, $p=.000$.

Test results from three variables showed a significantly greater mean score for SID Experience over AD Importance. For the variable “written communication,” the results indicated that the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=4.43$, $\underline{SD}=.816$), $t(143)=-3.182$, $p=.002$. was significantly greater than the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=4.15$, $\underline{SD}=.847$). . For the variable “sports information,” the results indicated that the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=4.74$, $\underline{SD}=.656$), $t(143)=-11.858$, $p=.000$ was significantly greater than the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.42$, $\underline{SD}=1.191$). For the variable “computer operations,” the results indicated that the mean score for SID Experience ($\underline{M}=4.22$, $\underline{SD}=.947$), $t(143)=-9.364$, $p=.000$ was significantly greater than the mean score for AD Importance ($\underline{M}=3.03$, $\underline{SD}=1.173$). The results indicate that while the SID experience does overlap into most of the skills associated with the AD position, that same

experience probably does not enable an SID to meet all the requirements to step into the AD job. However, a similar test to compare the SID experience with other athletic department personnel, including coaches, could demonstrate which particular profession most closely resembles the preferred AD attributes and which type of experience provides the most desired training or preparation to secure an AD position. It may also show that individually, none of the other professional fields in college athletics provide complete training for an AD position, while it would be equally interesting to learn if most positions inside athletics provide a better background for the AD job than a profession outside of intercollegiate athletics.

In addition to possessing or acquiring skills thought necessary to become an AD, SIDs must possess or pursue an advanced degree to compete for AD jobs. In the industry of higher education, it stands to reason that institutions require their senior managers to hold advanced degrees. Of the 144 SID respondents, 84% (n=121) indicated their current AD holds a master's degree or Ph. D. while 27.8% (n=40) SIDs have earned a master's degree and 2.8% (n=4) SIDs have earned a Ph. D. Of the 100 SIDs who do not have an advanced degree, 71% (n=71) indicated their intention to pursue one some time in their career.

R3: Do SIDs believe members of their profession receive reasonable consideration for AD position openings?

While 84% said they thought successful veteran SIDs were qualified to become ADs, only 32% of the 144 respondents believed their AD would recommend themselves for such a promotion. (The percentage increases slightly to 35%, when sub setting the 89 respondents who are 30 years of age and older). Asked if their institution had

interviewed an SID among its finalist candidates for a previous AD position, a whopping 71.6% indicated negatively while only 12.5 percent said they somewhat or strongly agreed. Only seven (4.9%) have interviewed for an AD job.

Table 7 - SIDs Interviewing for AD Positions

| | |
|--|---|
| | <u>agreed or strongly agreed</u> |
| My AD would recommend me for an AD position: | 47 (32%) |
| (subset of 89 over 30 years of age) AD would recommend me...: | 32 (35%) |
| I have interviewed for an AD position: | 7 (4.9%) |
| My institution interviewed an SID for its previous AD vacancy: | 18 (12.5%) |
| | <u>disagree or strongly disagree</u> |
| My institution interviewed an SID for its previous AD vacancy: | 136 (71.6%) |

SIDs are department biographers and therefore have access to background information on fellow staff members including athletics directors. In an effort to determine if ADs have backgrounds in sports information and to identify the most frequent athletics background from which ADs are promoted, SIDs were requested to identify the employment backgrounds of their current athletics directors. They were allowed to assign multiple backgrounds to their AD, so each response was measured on 144 possible yes or no answers.

Table 8 - Athletic Director Backgrounds

| <u>Athletic Position</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> (Percent of 144 possible) |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Coaching | 92 (63.9%) | 52 (36.1%) |
| General Administration | 57 (39.6%) | 87 (60.4%) |
| Fund Raising | 43 (29.9%) | 101 (70.1%) |
| Budgeting/Accounting | 33 (22.9%) | 111 (77.1%) |
| Marketing/Promotions | 28 (19.4%) | 116 (80.6%) |
| Rules Compliance | 25 (17.4%) | 119 (82.6%) |
| Sports Information | 17 (11.8%) | 127 (88.2%) |
| Facilities Management | 15 (10.4%) | 129 (89.6%) |
| Profession outside of college athletics | 11 (7.6%) | 133 (92.4%) |

As expected, the largest background pool for athletics directors is coaching (63.9%). The second most frequent total, general administration (39.6%) in athletic departments usually refers to administrative assistants to coaches, such as the football travel manager, or a student lifestyle/services coordinator, who works most closely with coaches and compliance officers. Therefore, the overwhelming choice for recruiting athletics directors is in the coaching, rather than the administrative ranks, such as fund raisers (29.9%), business (22.9%) and facility (10.4%) managers, marketing (19.4%) and sports information directors (11.8%). Even the top choices among administrators are those with experience in revenue, whether it is those who generate revenue such as fundraisers and marketers, or those who protect revenue such as the business manager (budgeting/accounting) as opposed to sports information directors.

The most dramatic revelation of this study is the apparent overall lack of desire on the part of SIDs to seek athletics director positions. While there seems to be a universal opinion among SIDs that they lack respect for their contribution, there exists an equal

lack of interest in pursuing AD jobs, regardless of the demographic breakdown. SIDs of all ages disagreed or strongly disagreed that they would pursue an athletics director's position within a year or even later in their careers. Only seven (4.9%) SIDs, none of the females, reported that they had interviewed for an AD position. Only the undergraduate student assistants agreed sports information might be a means to a higher position in intercollegiate athletics. Scoring 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree", on the question of intending to pursue an AD position sometime in their career, mean scores of respondents answers were: (by age) under 21 (4.0); 21-29 years, (2.96); 30-39 years, (2.97); 40-49 years, (2.50); and over 49, (1.23), indicating a general lack of interest across the board except for current students. The mean scores among the age groups varied from 3.0 to 3.8 for remaining an SID throughout their career. The total mean scores for all demographics are 3.29 for remaining an SID; 2.72 for pursuing an AD position sometime in their career, and 2.47 for pursuing a career outside of athletics, indicating a desire for SIDs to remain in their profession.

A series of one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to determine whether subjects intend to pursue an AD position depending on their age, title, institutional level or gender. Specifically, the measure for each of the statements of intent was entered as the dependent variable and each categorical demographic variable was entered as the independent variable. Of the variables, title and age produced a significant effect on statements of intent to pursue an AD position. Results of the ANOVA indicated that title has a significant effect on the intent to pursue an AD position within a year, $F(6,143)=3.889$, $p=.001$, or pursue a career outside of athletics, $F(6,143)=2.700$, $p=.016$. Age also has an impact on the intent to pursue an AD position within a year,

F(4,143)=2.733, p=.031; to pursue an AD position later in the subjects' career, F(4,143)=5.843, p=.000 and to pursue a career outside of athletics, F(4,143)=3.087, p=.018. Demographic breakdowns are illustrated in Tables 9 (age), 10 (title), 11 (institutional level) and 12 (gender).

Table 9 - SID Interest in Career Pursuits by Age

| My age | | Pursue AD position within a year | Pursue AD position later | Remain an SID | Pursue career outside athletics | Interviewed for AD position |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| under 21 yrs. | Mean | 1.3333 | 4.0000 | 3.0000 | 3.3333 | 1.0000 |
| | N | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | Std. Deviation | .57735 | 1.00000 | 2.00000 | .57735 | .00000 |
| 21-29 yrs. | Mean | 1.2500 | 2.9615 | 3.0962 | 2.8462 | 1.2115 |
| | N | 52 | 52 | 52 | 52 | 52 |
| | Std. Deviation | .76376 | 1.32785 | 1.15910 | 1.25846 | .72319 |
| 30-39 yrs. | Mean | 1.7727 | 2.9773 | 3.1818 | 2.4318 | 1.2727 |
| | N | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.15866 | 1.33797 | 1.24401 | 1.22755 | .89867 |
| 40-49 yrs. | Mean | 1.3438 | 2.5000 | 3.5938 | 2.0938 | 1.3125 |
| | N | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| | Std. Deviation | .65300 | 1.54502 | 1.13192 | 1.35264 | .99798 |
| 49+ yrs. | Mean | 1.1538 | 1.2308 | 3.8462 | 1.8462 | 1.2308 |
| | N | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Std. Deviation | .37553 | .43853 | 1.40512 | 1.06819 | .83205 |
| Total | Mean | 1.4236 | 2.7292 | 3.2986 | 2.4722 | 1.2500 |
| | N | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 |
| | Std. Deviation | .88167 | 1.41529 | 1.22947 | 1.28436 | .84041 |

Table 10 - SID Interest in Career Pursuits by Title

| My Title | | Pursue AD position within a year | Pursue AD position later | Remain an SID | Pursue career outside athletics | Interviewed for AD position |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Assoc. AD | Mean | 2.7500 | 2.7500 | 3.5000 | 2.5000 | 2.0000 |
| | N | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.70783 | 1.70783 | 1.00000 | 1.29099 | 2.00000 |
| Asst. AD | Mean | 1.9375 | 3.3125 | 3.0625 | 2.0625 | 1.5625 |
| | N | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.12361 | 1.53704 | 1.18145 | 1.23659 | 1.09354 |
| SID | Mean | 1.4304 | 2.5570 | 3.4810 | 2.2278 | 1.2405 |
| | N | 79 | 79 | 79 | 79 | 79 |
| | Std. Deviation | .87242 | 1.34686 | 1.17518 | 1.20840 | .86551 |
| Assc./Asst. SID | Mean | 1.1429 | 2.5000 | 3.0000 | 2.9286 | 1.0714 |
| | N | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| | Std. Deviation | .52453 | 1.50308 | 1.21716 | 1.35888 | .37796 |
| Intern/Grad. Asst. SID | Mean | 1.0000 | 3.4545 | 3.1818 | 3.0000 | 1.1818 |
| | N | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| | Std. Deviation | .00000 | .93420 | 1.40130 | 1.26491 | .60302 |
| Student Asst. SID | Mean | 1.5000 | 4.5000 | 3.0000 | 3.5000 | 1.0000 |
| | N | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | Std. Deviation | .70711 | .70711 | 2.82843 | .70711 | .00000 |

Test results showed no significant difference in career intentions were found due to the institutional level or gender of respondents.

Table 11 - SID Interest in Career Pursuits by Institutional Level

| Institutional Level | | Pursue AD position within a year | Pursue AD position later | Remain an SID | Pursue career outside athletics | Interviewed for AD position |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| NCAA I | Mean | 1.1463 | 2.4634 | 3.1463 | 2.6829 | 1.1220 |
| | N | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 |
| | Std. Deviation | .42196 | 1.50163 | 1.23614 | 1.42195 | .55656 |
| NCAA II | Mean | 1.5658 | 2.9474 | 3.2368 | 2.4342 | 1.3421 |
| | N | 76 | 76 | 76 | 76 | 76 |
| | Std. Deviation | .99780 | 1.38463 | 1.20961 | 1.23651 | 1.01394 |
| NCAA III | Mean | 1.4800 | 2.5200 | 3.8000 | 2.2000 | 1.2000 |
| | N | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.00499 | 1.35769 | 1.15470 | 1.19024 | .64550 |
| NAIA | Mean | 1.0000 | 3.0000 | 4.0000 | 2.0000 | 1.0000 |
| | N | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Std. Deviation | . | . | . | . | . |
| other | Mean | 1.0000 | 2.0000 | 1.0000 | 4.0000 | 1.0000 |
| | N | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Std. Deviation | . | . | . | . | . |
| Total | Mean | 1.4236 | 2.7292 | 3.2986 | 2.4722 | 1.2500 |
| | N | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 |
| | Std. Deviation | .88167 | 1.41529 | 1.22947 | 1.28436 | .84041 |

Table 12 - SID Interest in Career Pursuits by Gender

| My gender | | Pursue AD position within a year | Pursue AD position later | Remain an SID | Pursue career outside athletics | Interviewed for AD position |
|------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Male | Mean | 1.4711 | 2.8017 | 3.3058 | 2.4545 | 1.2975 |
| | N | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 |
| | Std. Deviation | .91355 | 1.44695 | 1.22368 | 1.27802 | .90962 |
| Female | Mean | 1.1739 | 2.3478 | 3.2609 | 2.5652 | 1.0000 |
| | N | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| | Std. Deviation | .65033 | 1.19121 | 1.28691 | 1.34252 | .00000 |
| Total | Mean | 1.4236 | 2.7292 | 3.2986 | 2.4722 | 1.2500 |
| | N | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 | 144 |
| | Std. Deviation | .88167 | 1.41529 | 1.22947 | 1.28436 | .84041 |

The final portion of accumulated data consists of responses to open-ended statements: “I will be become an athletics director because...” and “I will not become an athletics director because...” Only 10 of the 144 subjects did not respond to either statement. There were 40 (27.7%) positive responses. Multiple like responses are noted in parenthesis.

I will become an athletics director because...

1. I have earned the respect of my president and athletics director and they think I should be.
2. as an SID, I am involved in both sides of the athletic department (coaches/adm.).
3. I am well versed and have a broad knowledge in many aspects of collegiate athletics. (3)
4. of my ability/qualifications to complete the duties inherent with the position. (3)
5. of my leadership and interpersonal skills. (2)
6. of my communications skills. (2)

7. of my organizational skills. (2)
8. of my work ethic. (2)
9. of my years of experience in athletics administration. (2)
10. of my administrative skills.
11. I am decisive.
12. I am motivated/I have a passion for the job/ it is my goal. (6)
13. I want to be a team leader/manage people. (4)
14. being in charge appeals to me. (2)
15. I see it as a natural progression/career enhancement. (5)
16. of higher pay (2) and fewer hours.
17. I have something to offer to the student athlete experience.

There were 94 (65%) negative responses regarding ability or interest in pursuing an AD position.

I will not become an athletics director because...

1. I have no interest/desire to be an athletics director. (37)
2. I enjoy sports information. (9)
3. I would lose touch with the student athletes/lack of direct involvement. (2)
4. I wish to pursue a publicity career in the NFL.
5. the president and AD don't recognize the importance or skills of the SID position.
6. SIDs are not viewed as AD material. (3)
7. I do not mingle with the university's power structure (3).
8. I am not qualified/ready. (5)
9. I am not a fund raiser/revenue producer. (7)
10. I lack an advanced degree (3).
11. I lack of coaching experience. (3)
12. I have no interest or overall experiences in the variety of issues ADs work on.
(gender equity, liability, discipline). (4)
13. the job is associated with hiring and firing people.
14. the job is more about putting out fires than being creative or proactive.

15. I don't want to be measured against peers at other institutions.
16. I do not want the headaches/unrealistic demands from alumni. (2)
17. it's too time consuming. (4)
18. it's too much responsibility
19. it's too much pressure.
20. it's too much work.
21. of lack of personal, family time.
22. I am nearing retirement. (2)
23. of discrimination.

Of the 144 subjects, only .6% (n=10) did not respond to either statement: "I will or I will not become an athletic director because..." Positive responses were given by 27.7% (n=40) of respondents while 65% (n=94) wrote negative responses regarding ability or interest in pursuing an AD position. Among the positive responses, the most common theme is that looking toward an AD position is an ultimate career goal (n=6), fills a desire to manage people (n=6) and seems to be a natural progression (n=5). There were several individual reasons pertaining to various skills acquired by SIDs such as organization, communication or the mention of broad based background and experience in athletics as reasons why SIDs might wish to seek AD positions. Two subjects cited higher pay and fewer hours as their reason to want to become an AD.

The higher total of negative responses included those who had no desire or interest in becoming an AD (n=37), which was clearly the most dominant of any opened ended response received. The next highest response provided by multiple subjects was "I enjoy sports information too much" (n=9) and the third most common answer was "I am not a fund raiser" (n=7). Showing 65% of respondents to be not interested in the idea of seeking an AD position for any reason further validates complimenting data in this study and in the literature review that SIDs in general are not becoming ADs in significant numbers because of their own lack of desire to pursue the positions.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

It was intended through this study to determine the frequency in which college SIDs are promoted to AD positions. As a comparison, the literature review described the role of the corporate communications director in management and several comparisons can be made in that SIDs, like corporate communications directors, are divided into technical and management roles, and that in both areas, communications officers have difficulty defining their contributions. Most CEOs and ADs consider the communications director to be a close advisor, yet the obscurity of their role makes it difficult for communicators to move into senior management policy-making levels.

Data collected for this study reinforces the findings in the literature review in that the majority of communications professionals are content with technician roles, even in advanced stages of their careers. Some communications officers in management positions seek to climb in the hierarchy, but the number of communications officers in the technician role dominates the field. Results of this study indicate the same is held true for SIDs. Brown and Grunig's distinct role of PR professionals as journalists in residence fits the SID profile. Brown and Dozier showed that the process of increment enactment of the manager role did not follow for all practitioners. This study had 58 respondents with 10 or more years of SID experience, including 18 with over 21 years of experience. The

most experienced groups' mean score to pursue an AD position was 1.38 to 2.85, leaning toward "disagree" while the mean score to remain an SID was 3.30 to 4.11, leaning toward "agree" on the statement options. This study posited that age and experience play a significant role in an SID's place within an organization. While demographic factors may assist in enabling an SID to become a close advisor to the Athletic Director, such as the 38.2 percent surveyed who claim their AD perceives them as a senior manager, those factors don't significantly change the number of SIDs who choose to move up outside of their own field even among those who fall into Grunig's expert practitioner model.

While 49 percent of those responding to this study indicated that they perceived they possessed the skills necessary to become an athletic director, only 4.9 percent have actually interviewed for an AD position. In addition, 71.6 percent indicated that their institution had not even interviewed at least one SID for their previous AD position vacancy. Apparently, this discrepancy in opportunity for SIDs to become ADs is not entirely the fault of the system or any preconceived notions about the SIDs role or potential as a possible manager of intercollegiate athletics. Rather, the results of this study indicate an overwhelming lack of interest on the part of SIDs to become ADs, much like their counterparts in corporate management.

The hypothesis that SIDs are qualified to become ADs, but few ADs have backgrounds in sports information is arguably supported, however the reasons were unexpected. There is evidence that SIDs feel they are toiling in an underrated profession and that for the majority, their personality and training can be tailored for the AD job. However, the significant lack of interest by SIDs in pursuing AD positions was a surprising result of the investigation. Few SIDs are being interviewed for AD jobs

because few apply for the positions. The fact that respondents indicated 71.6% of their institutions have not interviewed SIDs for AD positions, and only 4.9% of respondents indicated they themselves have interviewed for an AD position is the most revealing result. While it appeared that SIDs were not getting a fair evaluation of their ability to contribute at that level, the fact that 65% of the respondents also reported that they had no interest in pursuing an AD job is more telling.

It was found that Fitzgerald, Sagaria, and Nelson (1994) reported that the most frequent career experiences prior to becoming an athletics director are collegiate athlete and college coach. As posited in this study, current athletic directors do come from within the broader field of intercollegiate athletics, but not many from sports information: 63.9% of respondents replied that their ADs have backgrounds in coaching while many have experience in other athletic department operations ranging from 39.6% in general administration to 10.4% in athletic facilities management. Only 7.6% of athletic directors came from positions outside of intercollegiate athletics. Sports information, at 11.8%, exceeds only facilities management as an athletic background of athletic directors.

Test results of 20 variables associated with desired AD skills indicate that while the SID experience does include to varying degrees most of the skills associated with the AD position, that same experience probably is not enough to enable an SID to meet all of the desired requirements to step into the AD job. However, a similar test to compare the SID experience with other athletic department personnel job experiences, including coaches, could shed some light on which particular job or position most closely resembles the preferred AD attributes and which type of experience provides the most desired training or preparation to secure an AD position. In matching up skills acquired by SIDs with

those associated with ADs, there were areas found where SIDs acquire marketable experiences and some where they do not. Among those skills SIDs possess that are important to a successful athletic director are communication skills and to a lesser degree organizational and motivational abilities. The widest discrepancies between SID experiences and AD position expectations are in personnel appointments, fund raising and compliance. Coaching, thought by SIDs to be of little importance toward being a successful AD, is among the major experiences held by ADs. Since so many ADs have coaching backgrounds, it would have been informative to include in this study a similar set of skills survey questions to college head coaches in an effort to match up their management strengths with those of SIDs, since coaches form the leading competition for AD positions.

Explored were areas where SIDs can heighten their profile and improve outside perception. Broom (1982) said that CEOs often hire top communicators because of their technical expertise, but then learn that the technical expertise is insufficient when a crisis occurs. SIDs are hired first because of their publication skills and sports statistics keeping which is why 45.8 percent of this study's respondents believe they are perceived as technicians and not managers. However, Stoldt, Miller and Comfort (2001) found that 77.9% of their athletic directors surveyed stated that SIDs are included in senior staff meetings and 90.5% of those said SIDs made significant contributions. The literature review included Judd's (1987) claim that practitioners who perceive themselves in the manager role are more likely to conduct formal research. Among the suggestions from other previous studies is an increased involvement in evaluation research, yet only 27%

of this study's respondents perform that function, indicating another level of lack of interest toward a higher management role by current SIDs.

Advancing one's education is a prerequisite to qualifying for senior staff positions, as indicated by the 84% of respondents' athletic directors who hold a master's degree or Ph. D., while only 30.6% of SIDs have earned advanced degrees.

SIDs would like to be more respected, receive higher pay, and perhaps work fewer hours, but results of this study indicate a majority seem to enjoy their chosen field and are content with the creative aspects of their role as technician and advisor. Just as in Arnold's (1988) statement in this study's literature review, "Having enormous influence, but little real power, the communication director is a satisfied, contented and humorous person enjoying a very diverting position..."

This overall perception may be the reason that sports information directors who choose to pursue AD jobs have a more difficult time being taken seriously. The reputation of sports information directors seems to be that they are dedicated, behind-the-scenes, hard-working professionals who make significant contributions. Their positions however, are not of a high enough profile to project them in the management leadership role where they would be considered as candidates for athletics director jobs.

It is hoped that this study adds to public relations role research in that it seeks to define where sports information as a profession fits into the public relations industry and into the management scheme of intercollegiate athletics. By attempting to determine if sports information directors are candidates for higher management positions, researchers can explore future growth possibilities of public relations professionals. This is an area which may help entry level persons decide if public relations or sports information is a

career path they should choose, depending on their desire to excel in technical aspects of public relations or utilize their communications skills to seek higher management positions.

It would be useful to include in further studies a survey of college presidents to determine what qualities and qualifications are necessary to become an athletics director, and to survey athletics directors to determine perception of sports information. Does the fact that few SIDs apply for AD positions damage the reputation of the profession to the extent that those who are interested in applying receive less consideration? Perception of sports information directors by those in position to give such promotions is a key to the summary findings.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

This survey instrument will be used for a University of South Florida mass communications master's degree thesis research study on the management role of sports information directors in the athletic department. The goal of this study is to determine the perception of SIDs as managers and candidates for promotion to athletic director positions.

Please answer the following by circling the corresponding number.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Somewhat Agree 5 Strongly Agree

I currently hold a senior management role in my athletic department. 1 2 3 4 5

I intend to pursue an athletic director's position within a year. 1 2 3 4 5

I intend to pursue an athletic director's position later in my career. 1 2 3 4 5

I intend to remain in sports information throughout my career. 1 2 3 4 5

I intend to pursue a career outside of intercollegiate athletics. 1 2 3 4 5

I have interviewed for an athletic director's position. 1 2 3 4 5

I believe my athletic director perceives me as a senior manager. 1 2 3 4 5

I believe my athletic dept. peers perceive me as a senior manager. 1 2 3 4 5

I believe my college administrators perceive me as a senior manager. 1 2 3 4 5

I believe outside publics perceive me as a senior manager. 1 2 3 4 5

I perceive myself as a senior manager. 1 2 3 4 5

I perceive myself as a senior manager more than others do. 1 2 3 4 5

I contribute to our department's strategic planning. 1 2 3 4 5

I am senior counsel to the athletic director. 1 2 3 4 5

I provide input to issues and management decisions. 1 2 3 4 5

I manage the institution's response to issues. 1 2 3 4 5

I conduct evaluation research. 1 2 3 4 5

I manage people. 1 2 3 4 5

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| I believe... | | | | | |
| successful sports information veterans are qualified to become ADs. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| I possess the skills necessary to become an athletic director. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| I am acquiring the skills necessary to become an athletic director. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| my athletic director would recommend me for an AD position. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| my institution interviewed an SID for its previous AD vacancy. | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |

Rate the following skills/duties associated with a successful athletic director as
 1. Not Important 2. Somewhat Important 3. Don't Know 4. Important 5. Very Important

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| motivation of staff | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| organization of department | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| projecting leadership | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| oral communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| written communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| interpersonal communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| budget/fiscal management | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| knowledge of regulations and compliance | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| personnel appointments (hiring and firing) | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| development/fund raising | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| marketing and promotions | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| media relations/sports information | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| facilities management | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| coaching experience | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| student recruiting | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| academic development | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| computer operations | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| event scheduling | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| conference & NCAA liaison | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| previous athletic administrative experience | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |

Rate your experiences with the following skills/duties as

1. Not Experienced 2. Somewhat Experienced 3. Don't Know 4. Experienced 5. Very Experienced

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| motivation of staff | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| organization of department | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| projecting leadership | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| oral communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| written communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| interpersonal communication | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| budget/fiscal management | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| knowledge of regulations and compliance | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| personnel appointments (hiring and firing) | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| development/fund raising | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| marketing and promotions | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| media relations/sports information | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| facilities management | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| coaching experience | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| student recruiting | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| academic development | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| computer operations | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| event scheduling | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| conference & NCAA liaison | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| previous athletic administrative experience | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |

I believe my athletic director's previous primary position was in (check all that apply)...

- coaching
- fund raising
- budgeting/accounting
- compliance
- marketing/promotions
- sports information
- general administration
- facilities
- something outside of intercollegiate athletics

My athletic director has a master's or doctorate degree. Yes No

I have or intend to pursue a master's or doctorate degree. Yes No

I will become an athletic director because...

I will not become an athletic director because...

My title

- Assc. Athletic Director (duties include sports information)
- Asst. Athletic Director (duties include sports information)
- Sports Information Director
- Assc. Or Asst. Sports Information Director
- Sports Information Intern or Graduate Assistant
- Sports Information Student Assistant
- Other _____

My institution level

- NCAA I
- NCAA II
- NCAA III
- NAIA
- other _____

My years of full time service in sports information.

- 0 years full time
- 1-3 years full time
- 4-9 years full time
- 10-20 years full time
- over 20 years full time

My age

- under 21 years old
- 21-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- over 49 years old

My gender

- Male
- Female

My ethnicity

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- other _____

My education level

- undergraduate student
- bachelors degree
- masters degree
- doctorate