

### THE OFFICIAL VISIT EXPERIENCE OF NCAA DIVISION I RECRUITED STUDENT-ATHLETES

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#### INTRODUCTION

While examining the culture of intercollegiate athletics, one could confuse the criticisms of the past with those today. Since the 1800s, individuals calling for the reform of intercollegiate athletics have described improper recruiting of student-athletes, disorderly conduct promoted by sport, and the expense of intercollegiate athletics (U.S. House of Representatives, 2004; Welch, 1996). The desire to eliminate concerns about intercollegiate athletics and create fair competition has led to volumes of rules and regulations organized by various governing bodies. The most powerful of these governing bodies is the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). NCAA rules govern behaviors ranging from when a college coach can first contact a high school athlete to how many meals a student-athlete is permitted to receive on the day of a competition (NCAA, n.d.). There are so many rules specific to recruiting that an entire section of the NCAA Manual is dedicated to it (NCAA). The media has often portrayed recruiting as a rogue affair with institutions of higher education having little regard for NCAA rules and local, state, and federal laws (Anderson & Dohrmann, 2004; Goral, 2004; Jacobson & Suggs, 2004; Wieberg, 2005). The purpose of this research was to explore the behaviors of NCAA Division I-recruited student-athletes during their official recruiting visits.

The NCAA has established specific guidelines governing the recruitment of student-athletes. In most cases, an individual who has an interest in playing college sports is considered a recruit, prospective student-athlete, or prospect when he/she begins ninth grade (NCAA, 2008). An “official visit” is defined by the NCAA as “any visit to a college campus by you [the prospect] and your [his/her] parents paid for by the college” (p. 18). The second type of campus visit available to prospects is the unofficial visit, which is “any visit by you [the prospect] and your [his/her] parents to a college campus paid for by you [the prospect] or your [his/her] parents” (p. 18). Prospective student-athletes are allowed up to five official visits beginning the first day of their senior year of high school (NCAA, n.d.). The intent of both the official and unofficial visit is to assist prospects in making informed decisions regarding college choice.

A recruit on an official visit is allowed a maximum of 48 hours to visit and evaluate the campus (NCAA, n.d., Bylaws 13.6.4 & 13.6.4.1). During the 48-hour period, coaches, athletic administrators, and current student-athletes allow the prospect to evaluate the academic, athletic, and social aspects of the university and the surrounding community. Recruits are assigned a “host” who is responsible for assisting the recruit in attending scheduled appointments, sharing what it is like to be a student (or student-athlete) at the institution, and providing activities throughout the visit (Bylaw 13.6.7.5). Common academic activities on recruiting trips include meeting with athletic academic advisors, meeting with professors, and attending classes. Athletically, recruits can attend practices, spend time with the coaching staff and team, and meet other support personnel in the athletic department. During time that is not scheduled by athletic coaches and staff, activities are at the discretion of the recruit and host. Generally, activities include those which allow the prospect to experience campus life such as attending campus and social events and relaxing with other students.

This study specifically examined the experience of prospective student-athletes while on official recruiting visits to NCAA Division I institutions during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2004-05. Three specific research questions were addressed:

- (1) Which activities are most prevalent on a Division I official visit?
- (2) Do the behaviors of recruits on official visits vary with demographic variables?
- (3) Did the behavior of recruits on official visits significantly change after the implementation of new recruiting rules in 2004?

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Universities have a great deal at stake when recruiting student-athletes. Escalating financial gain for schools that win in football and basketball and are featured on television have made securing top recruits a key aspect of coaches' jobs. In 2003, Langelett examined the relationship between recruiting and team performance in NCAA Division IA (now called the Football Bowl Subdivision) football and found evidence that recruiting does affect team performance over the following five years. The same study demonstrated that football teams finishing in the top 25 nationally seemed to be able to attract higher-ranked recruits in the future, which creates a cycle. With competitive success (leading to institutional financial gain) an expectation for most coaches, recruiting is an important part of coaches' jobs.

The official visit is the only opportunity an institution to financially support a campus visit and show a recruit what the institution has to offer. Research has demonstrated that the official visit is an important aspect of the recruiting and college selection process for student-athletes. Mathes and Gurney (1985) examined student-athlete choice of colleges and determined that the coach and the campus environment were the most important factors in the college selection process. Additionally, Frost (2003) found that the campus visit was the most important part of the selling portion of the recruiting process for men's college basketball programs. Also in 2003, Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, and Palmer focused on factors related to college choice decision making for student-athletes at one large Division I institution. Their results showed that the official on-campus visit was among the most important factors in determining college choice.

Occasionally, individuals involved in recruiting have violated NCAA, local, state, and federal law during the official visit. Reported NCAA recruiting violations extend beyond the official visit, but between 2000 and 2004 there were 31 schools penalized by the NCAA for major recruiting violations (Goral, 2004). When these violations occur, the media has been quick to pick up the story, casting a negative light on the institution. Allegations of official visit misconduct have included (a) football players and coaches using strippers, alcohol, and drugs to entertain football recruits during official visits (Anderson & Dohrmann, 2004; Jacobson & Suggs, 2004; Wieberg, 2005); (b) a recruit arrested and charged with burglary and attempted sexual battery while drinking in a bar with another recruit and players (Anderson & Dohrmann); and (c) a recruit arrested and charged with a felony count of setting off a hotel fire extinguisher and misdemeanor battery for hugging a woman without her permission (Anderson & Dohrmann). Also in 2004, the owner of Hardbodies Entertainment reported providing strippers to recruiting parties to at least six institutions over a 20 year period (Anderson & Dohrmann). These behaviors are embarrassing for the university and expensive, even if no wrongdoing is ultimately found. One institution expected to pay over \$800,000 for the investigation, legal fees, and university personnel associated with the allegations of misconduct of football recruits (Goral).

The NCAA's response to the media attention was the creation of a Task Force on Recruiting, charged with proposing legislation which ultimately served to further clarify, standardize, and restrict what can occur on an official visit (NCAA, 2004a). Based on the work of the Task Force,

the NCAA adopted additional legislation specifically prohibiting certain types of luxury transportation, lodging, and meals for prospective student-athletes in August 2004. Other rule changes included eliminating personalized scoreboard presentations, game-day simulations, and the use of recruiting aids such as personalized jerseys during official visits (NCAA, 2004b). It should be noted that none of the legislative rule changes adopted in 2004 were explicitly related to behavioral expectations of the recruit.

The second component of the rule changes required individual NCAA institutions to develop their own policies for official visits. Specifically, NCAA bylaw 13.6.1 states,

An institution must have written departmental policies related to official visits that apply to prospects, student hosts, coaches and other athletics administrators that are approved by the institution's chief executive officer and kept on file at the institution and conference office. The institution is responsible for the development and enforcement of appropriate policies and penalties regarding specified areas, as identified by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors. The institution shall have an outside entity (e.g., conference office) evaluate its policies related to official visits once every four years. The institution may be held accountable through the NCAA enforcement program for activities that clearly demonstrate a disregard for its stated policies (NCAA, n.d.).

The NCAA Division I Board of Directors had previously endorsed recruiting rules that prohibited use of alcohol, drugs, sex, and gambling in recruiting (NCAA, 2004a), but ultimately passed a policy that stated, "Campuses must develop written policies that specifically prohibit inappropriate or illegal behavior in recruiting" (NCAA, 2004b, ¶ 9). The requirement for institutions to develop their own recruiting policies within certain parameters led many institutions to analyze their policies and practices or to create new policies.

Any rule the institution implemented as part of its own recruiting policy also became subject to NCAA enforcement as part of this new legislation (NCAA, n.d.). For example, an institution that prohibited the consumption of alcohol by a prospective student-athlete on an official visit would be found in violation of NCAA rules if any prospective student-athlete were found to have consumed alcohol on an official visit. The combination of the potential for NCAA rule violations and that the institutional policy had to be approved by the chief executive officer brought attention to official visit conduct that previously was absent at some institutions. There are over 300 NCAA bylaws that mention the official visit and 98 related to recruiting and the official visit (NCAA, n.d.). Regardless of the number of rules, the ultimate decision-making responsibility about behaviors during official visits is the responsibility of the recruit and his or her host.

## **METHODS**

### **PARTICIPANTS**

The population for this study consisted of student-athletes across all three classifications of NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics (previously Division I, IAA, and IAAA and currently Football Bowl Subdivision, Football Championship Subdivision, and Division I). All respondents reporting at least one official visit during the academic years 1999-2000 through 2004-05 were included in the final sample (n = 2,005). A representative sample of 2,005 student-athletes was obtained for this study. Men represented 53% and women 47% of this sample and 2003-04 NCAA data showed that men account for 56% and women 44% of student-athletes at Division I institutions (NCAA, 2006). With respect to race, it was found that 76% of the respondents were White, 15% were Black, and 10% were from other racial backgrounds. To establish adequate group sizes for data analysis, ethnicity was collapsed into the categories of White (76%) and Non-White (24%). For comparison, the results of a 2005-06

NCAA study revealed that 65% of student-athletes were White and 35% were Non-White (NCAA, 2007).

Thirty-two sports were represented in the data collection with the largest percentage obtained from football (10.7%), women's soccer (10%), and women's volleyball (6%). Sport participation also was categorized as revenue or nonrevenue for the purposes of data analysis. Determination of revenue (football, men's basketball, and women's basketball) and nonrevenue (all other sports) was established in a study examining factors of college selection for student-athletes (Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, & Palmer, 2003). There were 179 (9%) multi-sport student-athletes represented in the sample. The NCAA reported in 2003-04 that 54% of student-athletes in revenue sports were Non-White, but only 16% of nonrevenue sport student-athletes were Non-White (NCAA, 2007). In this sample, 53% of the revenue sport student-athletes and 17% of nonrevenue sport student-athletes were Non-White, indicating a representative sample. When asked about their scholarship status, 79% reported receiving athletically related aid; of those, 37% reported they were receiving a full athletic scholarship. Finally, the majority of the respondents (69%) indicated that they engaged in one or two official visits during the recruiting process.

### **INSTRUMENTATION**

In constructing the questionnaire, feedback on format and content was solicited via e-mail from all 297 Division I senior woman administrators with e-mail addresses listed in the 2004-05 National Directory of College Athletics. The feedback was utilized in the questionnaire design where appropriate. The final questionnaire consisted of three sections. First, demographic information was solicited from participants. The second section sought to gather information on student-athletes involvement in specific behaviors. Finally, two open-ended questions were asked. The first question was about host money expenditures during official visits and the second question asked student-athletes about recruiting rules they would like to see changed.

Anonymity of the participants, participating institutions, and institutions where student-athletes took an official visit was important. To ensure anonymity, participants were asked about their experiences on any of their official visits, not specifically about the official visit to the institution they ultimately chose to attend. This eliminated the possibility that the researchers would be able to identify individual institutions where reported behaviors occurred and increased the likelihood that institutions would allow student-athletes to participate and questions would be answered honestly.

### **PROCEDURES**

Two hundred and ninety-seven athletic administrators holding the designation of senior woman administrator were asked via e-mail to administer the questionnaire to all or a portion of their student-athletes. The e-mail list was generated from information contained in the 2004-05 National Directory of College Athletics. The senior woman administrator is commonly involved in student-athlete welfare issues and thus was chosen as the agent for administering this survey. Sixteen senior woman administrators responded favorably. The 16 administrators represented a broad geographic region and all three NCAA Division I classifications. Information collected from the senior woman administrators indicated a possible distribution of 5,080 surveys.

Senior woman administrators agreeing to participate were provided questionnaires, an equal number of blank envelopes, and instructions for administering the survey. Student-athletes were instructed to complete the survey if they chose, seal it in a blank envelope, and return the sealed envelope to the athletic official administering the questionnaire. Student-athletes choosing not to participate were instructed to leave the survey blank, seal it in the envelope,

and return it with the completed surveys. Institutions then returned all the sealed envelopes to the researchers.

Of the 5,080 questionnaires distributed, 3,826 were returned for a return rate of 75%. Only two of the 3,826 participants chose not to participate in the study and returned the questionnaire completely blank as instructed, for an extraordinarily high response rate of 99.9%. Of the surveys returned, 64 were deemed unusable and an additional 1,759 participants completed the questionnaire, but indicated no involvement in an official visit during the recruiting process and were eliminated from data analysis. A final sample size of 2,005 participants who participated in at least one official visit during the recruiting process was established.

Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests for differences of proportions were conducted using SPSS 13.0. The chi-square test of differences of proportions was used to analyze differences in participation in behaviors based on demographic variables. Non-responses on specific questions were eliminated from data analysis.

### RESULTS

The first question this study sought to answer was, “Which activities are most prevalent on a Division I official visit?” To answer this question, a descriptive analysis of the data was conducted (Table 1). Activities were divided into three categories: academic/athletic, social, and deviant. When examining academic and athletic experiences, 78% (1,477) of student-athletes reported they met with an academic advisor on at least one of their official visits, and 46% (786) met with a professor. Athletically, 23% (291) practiced their sport on campus.

Social variables related to the official visit experience were also examined. Sixty-nine percent (1,310) of recruits spent at least one night with a current student-athlete, 33% (640) spent at least one night in a hotel, and 18% (340) had a curfew at one or more institutions. The variable of attending an athletic event was categorized as a social behavior since no distinction was made as to which sports event was attended. Results showed that 63% (1,036) attended an athletic event. Alcohol was consumed by 30% (546) with 12% (228) going to a bar. On-campus parties were attended by 40% (770) and off-campus parties by 34% (660). Less than 2% (44) visited a strip club (44) or used recreational drugs (44). Related to sexual activity, 4% (82) reported engaging in consensual sexual touching, while 3% (59) reported engaging in consensual sexual intercourse during one or more of their recruiting visits.

Deviant behaviors were considered those with elements of violence, potential violence, or lawlessness involved with the behavior. The results indicated that less than 2% (28) of recruits engaged (either as the aggressor or the victim) in unwanted sexual touching and less than 1% (8) were involved in rape. Results for other deviant behaviors were also very low including: (a) robbery (13, 0.7%), (b) weapons possession (12, 0.6%), (c) vandalism (20, 1%), (d) threat of violence (16, 0.8%), and (e) fist fight (23, 1.2%).

Regarding NCAA recruiting rules, 93% (1,860) of the participants indicated they understood the rules. However, when asked if they received a souvenir from any institution, 6% (118) responded that they did receive a souvenir from one or more of the institutions they visited. Receiving a souvenir violates NCAA recruiting rules and the most frequently listed item (by those indicating receipt of a souvenir) was an article of clothing (63%).

The researchers also wanted to determine how “student hosts” spent their allocated “host money.” An open-ended question asked the participants how the recruit “host money” was spent. Participants noted multiple items on which host money was spent. Due to the open-ended nature of the question, multiple responses per participant were analyzed with the most

frequent response being “food and non-alcoholic beverages” (72%, 1310) followed by “entertainment” (13%, 244), and “alcohol” (6%, 112).

The next research question was, “Do the behaviors of recruits on official visits vary with demographic variables?” To respond to this question, a chi-square test of differences of proportions was conducted to examine significant differences in behaviors based on gender, ethnicity, and sport participation (Table 2). Gender ( $n = 1,999$ ) was the first demographic variable analyzed. Chi-square analysis indicated that males were more likely than females to attend on- and off-campus parties, clubs, and bars. Additionally, males were more likely to engage in behaviors associated with partying such as drinking alcohol, using recreational drugs, and sexual behaviors. It was also determined that males were more likely to participate in vandalism and fist fights than females.

The second demographic variable under investigation was ethnicity. Participants were divided into White and Non-White for data analysis resulting in 1,506 (76%) White and 486 (24%) Non-White participants (Table 3). White recruits were more likely to stay with a student-athlete while Non-White recruits were more likely to stay in a hotel and meet with a professor on their official visit. White prospects were more likely to drink alcohol, but Non-White recruits were more likely to have a curfew, go to an underage club, use recreational drugs, go to a strip club, and engage in consensual sex. Non-White recruits also were more likely to be involved in rape, robbery, weapons possession, the threat of violence, or a fist fight.

The final demographic variable under investigation was sport participation. Although 32 sports were represented in the data, analysis was conducted by dividing sport participation into the categories of revenue (football, men’s basketball, women’s basketball) and nonrevenue (all other sports). Participants who indicated participation in both a revenue and nonrevenue sport were eliminated from data analysis resulting in 1,703 responses (Table 4). Recruits from revenue sports were more likely to meet with an academic advisor and a professor than athletes from nonrevenue sports. Nonrevenue recruits were more likely to stay with a student-athlete on their official visit; revenue recruits were more likely to stay in a hotel and have a curfew during their official visit.

Attending an on-campus or off-campus party and visiting an underage club were also more likely if the recruit participated in a revenue sport. Engaging in sexual behaviors such as consensual touching and consensual sex were also more frequent for revenue sport recruits. Rape, weapons possession, vandalism, threat of violence, or participating in a fist fight all were significantly more prevalent among revenue sport recruits (although the results were significant, the numbers were very low).

The final research question was, “Did the behavior of recruits on official visits significantly change after the implementation of new recruiting rules in 2004?” The year of the prospect’s official visit was treated as a demographic variable in this study. Participants were coded as either “pre” (those taking official visits 1999-2000 through 2003-04) or “post” (those taking official visits after the 2003-2004 academic year). Participants taking official visits in multiple years who would be considered in both the “pre” and “post” category were excluded from this data analysis. Official visits were analyzed based on 62.5% (1,242) recruits taking one or more visits from 1999-2000 thru 2003-04 and 37.5% (745) of the recruits reporting taking one or more visits in post category (Table 4). No differences were found between groups for any variable in the academic/athletic category. Many of the social behaviors with negative connotations were significantly more likely for recruits taking official visits from 1999-2000 through 2003-04. Going to a bar, attending on-campus and off-campus parties, drinking alcohol, using recreational drugs, visiting strip clubs, and engaging in consensual sexual touching and consensual sex all were significantly less likely to occur after the new NCAA rules

were implemented. Additionally, participation in robbery, vandalism, the threat of violence, and fist fights all were significantly less likely after the new rules were implemented.

### **DISCUSSION**

This study sought to explore the experience of prospective student-athletes on their official recruiting visit(s). Although there always is speculation as to what occurs on the official visit, this study was the first to solicit information directly from student-athletes regarding their experiences and quantitatively analyze such information.

When considering which activities are most prevalent on a Division I official visit, a number of positive aspects were uncovered. It is encouraging to discover that 78% of all prospective student-athletes surveyed met with an advisor and 46% met with a professor. Certainly it would be ideal if all prospective student-athletes met with academicians, be it advisors or professors. However, it seems that institutions are highlighting academics during official visits through either academic advisors or professors. Recruits are in the final year of high school and many have not decided on an academic major at the time of their recruiting trip. Thus, the prevalence of meeting with an academic advisor as opposed to a professor is understandable. Institutions should continue their efforts to have recruits meet with professors, as these meetings provide information regarding the academic expectations at the university and course of study available to recruits.

It also appears that the NCAA and its member institutions have done an acceptable job educating prospective student-athletes regarding the rules of recruiting; nearly 93% of those surveyed reported having an understanding of the NCAA recruiting rules. It was troubling that even though almost all recruits indicated an understanding of NCAA rules, 118 (6%) individuals indicated receiving a souvenir from an institution, which violates NCAA rules. Institutions should continue to be proactive in educating student-athletes about NCAA rules, starting at the initial recruiting contact.

While the findings in this study regarding prevalent social activities on official visits are attention-grabbing, practitioners would not be surprised. Prospective student-athletes reported participating in some social behaviors that could be considered negative during their official visits. Social behaviors reported included alcohol consumption, recreational drug use, attending parties on and off campus, visiting strip clubs and bars, and engaging in unwanted sexual contact. Overall, 30% of those surveyed reported consuming alcohol during their visit and 12% reported going to a bar. Of those student-athletes that reported consuming alcohol on their official visits, 96% were under the legal age of 21 at the time of their visit. Data collected by the NCAA (2001) indicated that 78% of student-athletes used alcohol and the results from the National Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) (2004) were that 56% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported drinking at least one alcoholic beverage within the previous 30-day period (U.S. Department of Health, 2004). Although the recruiting visit percentages are lower than national data, the recruiting visit occurs over a 48-hour period, and 45% of the participants in the study indicated that they took only one official visit. Thus, reducing drinking on official visits should be addressed by coaches and administrators.

When examining national averages, other social behaviors engaged in by recruits also are prevalent in the general 12<sup>th</sup> grade population. Seven percent of participants in this study reported engaging in consensual sexual contact or intercourse. Based on national averages, 62% of students have engaged in sexual behaviors by the time they reach the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (U.S. Department of Health, 2004). However, recruits generally are entering unfamiliar territory with people they have not previously known when making an official visit to a college campus, which makes the behavior extremely risky. With this in mind, institutions should address the risks of sexual activity when they inform recruits of their expectations for the visit.

The media attention given to instances of deviant behavior on official visits is troubling. These results demonstrate that specific incidents of deviant behavior of recruits are not representative of the vast majority of recruits. For example, 0.4% of recruits reported involvement in rape and 1.2% indicated involvement in a fist fight. Although one instance of fighting or rape is too many on an official visit, these results are much lower than the national media would have the public believe. As a comparison, MMWR data show that 11% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders experienced forcible sexual intercourse and 27% reported involvement in a fight (within a 30 day period preceding data collection) (U.S. Department of Health, 2004).

When evaluating the findings of the second research question, “Do the behaviors of recruits on official visits vary with demographic variables?,” a few findings are worthy of discussion. Gender plays a significant role in the likelihood of participation in social and deviant behaviors. This was expected, given the findings of national surveys from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For nearly all negative social behavior and deviant behaviors among youth between the ages of 10 and 24, males participated at a higher level than females surveyed (U.S. Department of Health, 2004). This is congruent with the findings of this study and is representative of many of the behaviors reported in high-profile NCAA recruiting scandals. Results showed that males participated in consuming alcohol, using recreational drugs, and engaging in sexual intercourse significantly more frequently than females during their official visits. Miller, Merrill, Barnes, Farrell, and Sabo (2005) found that for high school students “participation in sports was associated with marginally more misconduct for girls and marginally less misconduct for boys” (p. 189). Although this study did not indicate the percentage of athletes and non-athletes engaging in misconduct, it does demonstrate that there may be a relationship between sport participation, gender, and behavior in this age group.

It was discovered that prospects in revenue sports were more likely to meet with athletic academic advisors and professors during their official visits compared to those from nonrevenue sports. Additionally, a greater number of Non-White students met with a professor (44%) than did their White counterparts (38%). Typically, revenue sports host multiple recruits on a given weekend which may make arranging meetings with academic personnel easier. It is encouraging that revenue sport and minority student-athletes are being exposed to the university academically. However, nonrevenue recruits visit with professors at a rate of only 32%, which is cause for unease.

During the recruiting trip, revenue sport recruits and Non-White participants were significantly more likely to stay in a hotel and have a curfew during their trip. This might relate to the “recruiting weekend” structure of revenue sports, which are comprised of over 50% Non-White student-athletes. Nonrevenue sport recruits and White recruits were much more likely to stay with a student-athlete, which might be related to a limited amount of available funding for nonrevenue sports to support hotel stays. Recruits in revenue sports also had a significantly higher rate of attending parties on- and off-campus, visiting underage clubs, going to strip clubs, and engaging in consensual sexual touching and intercourse. It could be argued that the “recruiting weekend” structure in revenue sports lends itself to attending parties, using drugs, and engaging in sexual behavior. However, this group also had a higher instance of having a curfew, which needs further study.

The most startling finding regarding ethnicity is the difference in the number of student-athletes that reported drinking alcoholic beverages on their recruiting visits. Nearly twice as many Whites (31%) reported drinking alcohol on their recruiting visit as Non-White participants (17%) and alcohol consumption was not significant with regard to sport participation. It is possible that the differences noted in the numbers who reported participating in alcohol consumption are related to the differences in how athletes were housed and whether they were placed under a curfew by the institutions they visited.



An area of continued media scrutiny and attention is the area of deviant behaviors among college recruits. After evaluation of the data in this study it was found that a small but significant difference does exist when examining ethnicity and deviant behavior. As noted in Table 2, Non-Whites reported greater involvement in deviant behaviors such as rape, robbery, weapons possession, and fist fights than their White peers. Revenue sport participants were involved in rape, weapons possession, vandalism, threat of physical violence, and fist fights at a slightly higher (but statistically significant) rate than nonrevenue sport recruits. These findings suggest the need for further study. It is possible that deviant behaviors are underreported or exaggerated between ethnicity and sport participation due to the self-reported nature of the study.

The third question, “Did behavior of recruits on official visits significantly change after the implementation of new recruiting rules in 2004?” explored participation in certain behaviors based on the year of the visit. Many factors could have had an impact on the changes in behavior of recruits on official visits after 2004. In a short period of time in 2004, intercollegiate athletic recruiting went through rule changes and intense media scrutiny. First, recruits, student-athletes, and coaches at the University of Colorado were found to have engaged in inappropriate behavior that caught the attention of the national media (Anderson & Dohrmann, 2004; Jacobson & Suggs, 2004; Wieberg, 2005). Then, the NCAA created a task force to consider and recommend new restrictions on the recruitment of prospective student-athletes (NCAA, 2004a). In March 2004, the U.S. House of Representatives held a hearing to address the alleged abuses during the recruiting process and to provide a forum for open discussion on the topic. Finally, the NCAA recommended and passed legislation that placed new restrictions on recruiting and required institutions to develop their own recruiting policies and held them accountable for the actions of recruits during the official visit (NCAA, 2004b).

As stated above, one aspect of the rule changes requires athletic departments to have a set of policies that govern the official visit on their campus and that the university president must sign off on the policies (NCAA, n.d.). Additionally, NCAA bylaw 13.6.1 states that “the institution may be held accountable through the NCAA enforcement program for activities that clearly demonstrate a disregard for its stated policies” (NCAA, n.d.).

The most significant behavioral change after 2004 was in the number of recruits using alcohol on their official visits. Prior to 2004, an average of 32% of recruits reported drinking on their official visits between 1999-00 and 2003-04; in 2004-05, only 19% did. Other behaviors that were significantly reduced included going to a bar, attending an on- or off-campus party, using recreational drugs, visiting a strip club, engaging in consensual sexual touching and intercourse, robbery, vandalism, the threat of violence, and participating in fist fights. Given these findings, media attention to the issue of recruiting, the efforts of the NCAA, and individual institutions' examination of internal policies may have resulted in positive social changes on official visits while reducing participation in risky and deviant behaviors. Whatever the reason, recruits demonstrated more positive behavior after 2003-2004 academic year compared with the averages of the 5 prior years.

### **LIMITATIONS**

This study is limited in a few areas. First, an accurate determination of how often specific behaviors occur can be made if student-athletes identify during which official visit the behaviors occurred. This study focused on the occurrence of the behavior and did not address how many times the individual student-athlete engaged in the behavior. The collection of these data was sacrificed to ensure a large sample size. The researchers believe that identifying institutions where behaviors occurred would have limited the participation of the institutions in this research. Second, due to the method of obtaining a sample, it is possible that the sample may not be representative of the experience of all student-athletes. Finally, due to the

sensitive nature of some of the behaviors discussed in this research and the self-reporting survey method, it is possible that student-athletes may have under-reported or over-reported some items in uncomfortable subject matters.

### **IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSION**

There are many related areas of research that warrant scholarly examination. A future follow-up study examining the same variables would be useful in determining changes in recruiting behaviors over a period of time. It would be ideal to analyze these behaviors based on the number of times the behavior occurs instead of the mere presence of the behavior. Additionally, researching the content of individual institutional recruiting policies would aid in interpreting the findings of this study. The high level of alcohol use occurring during official visits also is a potential topic of study, as is the examination of which behaviors are related to other behaviors on official visits. The legal questions of potential institutional liability associated with alcohol consumption on the official visit also should be investigated.

In conclusion, both practitioners and academics should be aware of the reality of what occurs during a NCAA Division I official recruiting visit. The future of intercollegiate athletic recruiting provides fascinating future discussions and research. Results of this study will aid institutions in structuring their recruiting policies and behavior expectations for recruits. The official visit is intended to provide the prospective student-athlete insight into the institution and the coaches a chance to become acquainted with and evaluate the prospect. These findings provide a base for future recruiting research and information on the official visit experience of NCAA Division I recruited student-athletes.

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**Table 1**  
**Official Visit Behavior – Descriptive Statistics**

Behavior	Reported Non- Participation		Reported Participation		Total Respondents
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
<u>Academic/athletic behavior</u>					
Met with academic advisor	426	22.4%	1,477	77.6%	1,903
Met with professor	938	54.4%	786	45.6%	1,724
Practiced sport	999	77.4%	291	22.6%	1,290
<u>Social behavior</u>					
Attended an athletic event	617	37.3%	1,036	62.7%	1,653
Stayed with a student-athlete	589	31.0%	1,310	69.0%	1,899
Stayed in a hotel	1,277	66.6%	640	33.4%	1,917
Had a curfew	1,548	82.0%	340	18.0%	1,888
Went to an underage club	1,739	89.9%	196	10.1%	1,935
Went to a bar	1,694	88.1%	228	11.9%	1,922
Went to an on-campus party	1,153	60.0%	770	40.0%	1,923
Went to an off-campus party	1,256	65.6%	660	34.4%	1,916
Drank alcohol	1,298	70.4%	546	29.6%	1,844
Used recreational drugs	1,882	97.7%	44	2.3%	1,926
Went to a strip club	1,909	97.9%	40	2.1%	1,949
Engaged in consensual sexual touching	1,886	95.8%	82	4.2%	1,968
Engaged in consensual sex	1,898	97.0%	59	3.0%	1,957
<u>Deviant behavior</u>					
Engaged in unwanted sexual touching	1,930	98.6%	28	1.4%	1,958
Involved in rape	1,961	99.6%	8	0.4%	1,969
Involved in threat of violence	1,942	99.2%	16	0.8%	1,958
Participated in vandalism	1,944	99.0%	20	1.0%	1,964
Participated in robbery	1,962	99.3%	13	0.7%	1,975
Involved in weapons possession	1,957	99.4%	12	0.6%	1,969
Participated in fist fight	1,937	98.8%	23	1.2%	1,960

**Table 2**

**Significant Official Visit Behavior by Gender**

Behavior	Gender		Chi-Square
	Male	Female	
<u>Academic/athletic behavior</u>			
Met with academic advisor	69.8%	77.2%	$X^2(1) = 24.18, p < .01$
Met with professor	44.8%	34.4%	$X^2(1) = 22.45, p < .01$
<u>Social behavior</u>			
Stayed with a student-athlete	59.6%	70.6%	$X^2(1) = 26.38, p < .01$
Stayed in a hotel	35.9%	28.5%	$X^2(1) = 12.48, p < .01$
Had a curfew	19.0%	15.2%	$X^2(1) = 5.03, p < .05$
Went to an underage club	11.4%	8.3%	$X^2(1) = 5.13, p < .05$
Went to a bar	14.1%	8.9%	$X^2(1) = 13.56, p < .01$
Went to an on-campus party	42.9%	34.6%	$X^2(1) = 14.33, p < .01$
Went to an off-campus party	38.7%	28.0%	$X^2(1) = 25.96, p < .01$
Drank alcohol	30.0%	24.9%	$X^2(1) = 6.66, p < .05$
Used recreational drugs	2.9%	1.5%	$X^2(1) = 4.59, p < .05$
Went to a strip club	3.4%	0.7%	$X^2(1) = 20.00, p < .01$
Engaged in consensual sexual touching	7.3%	1.2%	$X^2(1) = 47.13, p < .01$
Engaged in consensual sex	4.7%	1.3%	$X^2(1) = 20.45, p < .01$
<u>Deviant behavior</u>			
Engaged in unwanted sexual touching	2.4%	0.5%	$X^2(1) = 13.32, p < .01$
Participated in vandalism	1.6%	0.4%	$X^2(1) = 8.03, p < .01$
Participated in fist fight	1.7%	0.6%	$X^2(1) = 6.07, p < .05$

**Table 3**

**Significant Official Visit Behavior by Ethnicity**

Behavior	Ethnicity		Chi-square
	White	Non-White	
<u>Academic/athletic behavior</u>			
Met with a professor	37.6%	44.2%	$X^2(1) = 6.69, p < .05$
Practiced sport on-campus	12.9%	19.8%	$X^2(1) = 13.95, p < .01$
<u>Social behavior</u>			
Stayed with a student-athlete	69.5%	52.5%	$X^2(1) = 46.80, p < .01$
Stayed in a hotel	28.7%	42.2%	$X^2(1) = 30.77, p < .01$
Had a curfew	14.5%	24.7%	$X^2(1) = 26.80, p < .01$
Went to an underage club	7.5%	16.9%	$X^2(1) = 36.50, p < .01$
Drank alcohol	30.7%	16.5%	$X^2(1) = 37.80, p < .01$
Used recreational drugs	1.7%	3.7%	$X^2(1) = 7.27, p < .01$
Went to a strip club	1.5%	3.5%	$X^2(1) = 7.94, p < .01$
Engaged in consensual sex	2.2%	5.1%	$X^2(1) = 11.33, p < .01$
<u>Deviant behavior</u>			
Participated in rape	0.1%	1.4%	$X^2(1) = 17.34, p < .01$
Participated in robbery	0.3%	1.6%	$X^2(1) = 9.79, p < .01$
Participated in weapons possession	0.2%	1.9%	$X^2(1) = 16.76, p < .01$
Participated in threat of violence	0.5%	1.6%	$X^2(1) = 5.73, p < .05$
Participated in a fist fight	0.6%	2.9%	$X^2(1) = 16.78, p < .01$

**Table 4**

**Significant Official Visit Behavior by Sport Participation**

Behavior	Sport participation		Chi-square
	Revenue	Nonrevenue	
<u>Academic/athletic behavior</u>			
Met with an academic advisor	81.4%	70.3%	$X^2(1) = 19.14, p < .01$
Met with a professor	63.1%	32.0%	$X^2(1) = 123.16, p < .01$
Practiced sport on-campus	18.1%	13.9%	$X^2(1) = 4.30, p < .05$
<u>Social behavior</u>			
Attended an athletic event	58.3%	50.4%	$X^2(1) = 7.57, p < .01$
Stayed with a student-athlete	48.7%	73.1%	$X^2(1) = 82.38, p < .01$
Stayed in a hotel	55.5%	21.7%	$X^2(1) = 167.27, p < .01$
Had a curfew	28.6%	13.9%	$X^2(1) = 46.48, p < .01$
Went to an underage club	17.1%	8.0%	$X^2(1) = 27.31, p < .01$
Went to an on-campus party	51.5%	35.9%	$X^2(1) = 30/91, p < .01$
Went to an off-campus party	39.4%	33.0%	$X^2(1) = 5.56, p < .05$
Went to a strip club	3.5%	1.5%	$X^2(1) = 6.14, p < .05$
Engaged in consensual sexual touching	8.0%	3.3%	$X^2(1) = 16.31, p < .01$
Engaged in consensual sex	5.3%	2.5%	$X^2(1) = 8.07, p < .01$
<u>Deviant behavior</u>			
Participated in rape	1.0%	0.2%	$X^2(1) = 4.48, p < .05$
Participated in weapons possession	1.5%	0.3%	$X^2(1) = 7.54, p < .01$
Participated in vandalism	2.3%	0.5%	$X^2(1) = 9.75, p < .01$
Participated in threat of violence	2.0%	0.5%	$X^2(1) = 8.99, p < .01$
Participated in a fist fight	.0%	0.7%	$X^2(1) = 13.54, p < .01$

**Table 5**  
**Significant Official Visit Behavior Pre-and Post-2004 NCAA Rule Changes**

Behavior	Reported participat		Chi-square
	Pre-chæ	Post-change	
<u>Social behavior</u>			
Attended an athletic event	49.0	53.6%	$X^2(1) = 4.00, p < .05$
Went to a bar	14.0	6.8%	$X^2(1) = 23.80, p < .01$
Went to an on-campus party	42.6	31.9%	$X^2(1) = 22.27, p < .01$
Went to an off-campus party	37.4	25.6%	$X^2(1) = 29.33, p < .01$
Drank alcohol	32.4	18.5%	$X^2(1) = 45.57, p < .01$
Used recreational drugs	3.0%	0.9%	$X^2(1) = 8.95, p < .01$
Went to a strip club	2.5%	1.1%	$X^2(1) = 4.89, p < .05$
Engaged in consensual sexual touching	5.2%	2.1%	$X^2(1) = 10.89, p < .01$
Engaged in consensual sex	3.7%	1.5%	$X^2(1) = 8.29, p < .01$
<u>Deviant behavior</u>			
Participated in robbery	1.0%	0.0%	$X^2(1) = 7.85, p < .01$
Participated in vandalism	1.4%	0.3%	$X^2(1) = 6.52, p < .05$
Participated in threat of violence	1.1%	0.3%	$X^2(1) = 4.30, p < .05$
Participated in a fist fight	1.6%	0.1%	$X^2(1) = 9.70, p < .01$