Exceptional Admissions and Retention Rates for Freshmen:

Comparing Athletes and Non-Athletes.

by

Eric Shaw-Gardow

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
in

Masters of Education

Approved: 2.0 Semester Credits

Robert Peters

Research Advisor

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

May, 2005

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin Stout

Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Shaw-Gardow Eric D.

(Writer) (Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

Exceptional Admissions and Retention Rates for Freshmen: Comparing non-Atheletes to Atheletes

(Title)

Education, Dr. Bob Peters, May, 2005 31

(Graduate Program) (Research Advisor) (Month/Year) (# of Pages)

American Psychological Association, 5th edition

(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

Every post-secondary institution has admission standards for incoming freshmen. There are a minimum number of freshmen that are admitted to the institution that fall slightly below the institution's minimum admission requirements.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout has a Mission and Strategic Plan that follows the guidelines established by the University of Wisconsin-System Board of Regents. When students do not meet these requirements they're either placed on a waiting list or sent a denial letter illustrating that the requirements for admission were not met. These students are made aware of the appeal process.

Acknowledgments

Many students like to acknowledge people who have significantly contributed to their graduate education on this page and are welcome to do so. Remember, however, that *Acknowledgments* are not part of the scholarly work; *Acknowledgments* and its page number are not listed in the Table of Contents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The most sincere thanks goes out to all who have supported me…

- **My wife ~ Brooke Shaw-Gardow**
- **EJ**
- **Mama and Papa Shaw**
- **My Advisor ~ Dr. Robert Peters**
- **Dr. Cynthia Gilberts and the entire Admissions Staff**
- **Larry Graves in Records and Registration**
- **Gordie Sisson**
- **Ed Andrist**
- **Every player that I recruited to play basketball at UW-Stout**

Including but not limited to all of the other people with in Office of Admissions, Records and Registration, Department of Athletics, and the College of Human Development at the University of Wisconsin – Stout for assisting in my thesis project.

THANK YOU!

~ Eric Gardow

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract..... ii

List of Tables.....vii

Chapter I: Introduction

University of Wisconsin – Stout Admission Requirements.....2

Education Community Services.....3

Athletes of Exceptional Admissions.....5

NCAA Member Institution.....5

Statement of the Problem.....6

Research Question.....7

Definition of Terms.....7

Assumptions.....8

Limitations.....8

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction.....9

Retention Rate Indicators.....12

Freshmen Year Predictors.....13

Academic Indicators.....14

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction.....18

Research Question.....18

Subjects.....18

Procedure.....19

Data Analysis.....19

Limitations.....20

Chapter IV: Results

Freshmen Admissions and Retention Rates.....21

Athletes in Competition and Retention Rates.....22

Freshmen Admissions by Exception.....22

Athletes versus Non-Athletes and Retention Rates.....23

Athlete Retention in Consecutive Years.....23

Chapter V: Summary

General Admissions.....25

Exceptions to Admissions.....25

Retention Rate Indicators.....25

Athletes of Exceptional Admissions.....26

Limitations.....26

Recommendations.....27

References.....28

LIST OF TABLES

Table One: Freshmen Admission and Retention Rates.....20

Table Two: Athletes in Competition and Retention Rates.....22

Table Three: Athletes versus Non Athletes and Retention Rates.....23

Table Four: Athlete Retention in Consecutive Years.....23

Table Five: Non-Athlete Retention in Consecutive Years.....23

Chapter I Introduction

Every post-secondary institution has admission standards for incoming freshman. There are however, a minimum number of freshmen that are admitted to the institution even though their qualifications fall slightly below the institutions minimum admission requirements. Of those admitted, nearly a third of college freshmen do not return to school the following year (Smith, 2002). In community colleges, less than half of the students enrolled each semester will return the following semester; with a dropout rate of 60% from one semester to another (Levitz & Noel, 1991). The question then becomes what is the likelihood of freshmen retention of students who are admitted with exceptions and who may be at-risk to be retained for second semester? It is the intent of this research project to examine the statistics for exceptional admissions and retention for freshmen into their second semester at the University of Wisconsin – Stout.

The University of Wisconsin- Stout has an individualized Mission and Strategic Plan that follows the guidelines established by the University Of Wisconsin System Board Of Regents. The Select Mission at the University of Wisconsin – Stout states that it is "characterized by a distinctive array of programs leading to professional careers focused on the needs of society" (University of Wisconsin – Stout Mission Statement, 1998.) These programs are presented through an approach to learning which involves combining theory, practice and experimentation. Extending this special mission into the future requires that instruction, research and public service programs be adapted and modified as the needs of society change (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1998).

The University of Wisconsin Stout has six goals that are to be implemented within a Five-Year period. According to the University of Wisconsin – Stout Mission and

Strategic Plan (1991), goal one is to offer "high-quality, challenging academic programs that influence and respond to a changing society." The second is to "preserve and enhance the educational processes through the application of active learning principles." Goal three involves the "promotion of excellence in teaching, research, scholarship and service." Goal four, deals with the "recruitment and retention of a diverse university population." Goal five "fosters a collegial, trusting and tolerant campus climate." The final goal encompasses "providing safe, accessible, effective, efficient and inviting physical facilities" (¶ 1).

University of Wisconsin-Stout Admissions Requirements:

Keeping the above goals in mind, the admissions requirements at University of Wisconsin – Stout, indicates students must graduate in the top 50 percent of their high school class or have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale for high schools that do not rank their students, or they received a composite score of 22 or greater in the ACT or 1030 or greater on the SAT. High school unit requirements must include four English credits, three math credits, three social science credits, three natural science credits, and four elective credits. A foreign language credit is not required at the University of Wisconsin – Stout. It is the belief within the system, that the completion of these admission requirements improve the likelihood of success in college including the retention rate of incoming freshmen.

Freshmen academic progress rates are closely monitored by the admissions office through the Dean of Student's office. Currently at University of Wisconsin – Stout there are a substantial number of staff that are associated with the academic monitoring process. The support and the placement of these services are available to all students

including freshmen. According to the Dean of Student's Office, there is a significant difference between those who participate in the process and those who do not (Thomas, J., personal communication, April 5, 2004). Proving this belief to be true and having a strong interest in the retention of its students, the University has a campus-wide committee that studies the entire process of admissions and retention.

Education Community Services:

At a time when resources have decreased in higher education, there are still programs in place to assess and modify services to best meet the needs of the student, as efficiently as possible. According to Young (1992) "all major elements of the education community, including academic affairs, administrative and business services, admissions, advancement, alumni, and student services must work collectively and intelligently to understand the concerns, issues and plans for student retention" (p. 472). The University of Wisconsin – Stout provides an array of services to assist student success in the educational endeavor.

At the University of Wisconsin – Stout; the Dean of Students office provides consultation and answers to questions, concerns, and complaints. Counseling Services provide professional help with educational, personal development, and relationship issues. Counseling services provide career exploration and major selection services provision of testing and consultation to explore academic and future professional interests. Academic and Advisement services assist students in making schedule changes, changes to academic programs, as well as transfer and withdrawal decisions by students. The Stout Student Association (SSA) is involved in all decisions concerning students through representation on committees. Registration Services process schedule changes,

course registrations and transcript requests. Study Skills Services provide training thorough individual assistance, reading improvement and study skills classes. The tutoring program provides free tutoring services. The Multi-Cultural Student Service office gives students of color assistance and support to aid in retention and graduation. Financial Aid Services help students obtain financial assistance and campus employment through federal work study and state payroll positions. ASPIRE is an academic support program providing academic monitoring and advisement for students from a first generation or low-income background.

Admissions Exceptions:

For those applying to college who do not meet the standards for either assured admissions status or candidate for admission status can be considered if, in some other instance they appear to show a chance of success. The Freshmen Admissions Policy at the University of Wisconsin – Stout (1998, ¶ 2) states that the "other instances" include, but are not limited to, the "variable intensity of the curriculum from different high schools, and grading systems." For example, the student who receives an average grade in an extraordinary curriculum could be considered for exception, thus students participating in Advanced Placement (AP) courses may be considered for admission under exception. Consideration may also be given to disadvantaged students as a result of a substandard education, for example; students that come from a family with a reduced income level or a diverse ethnic background could still have a chance of being admitted, providing, proper documentation of limited educational opportunity. Some of the more popular exceptions are granted to students of non-tradition backgrounds. Examples would include applicants that are veterans of service or young adults who have been out of high

school two or more years. The applicant would have to demonstrate an increased maturity level based on life experiences. The least common exception is given to students under the age of 21 who have completed a General Education Diploma (GED) and have the potential of being admitted under the sole judgment of the Director of Admissions. A "special student" category is created under circumstances the student earns a cumulative GPA of 2.0 for a minimum of 12 credits. In addition a strong recommendation must be in place from a high school guidance counselor supporting the potential of the student.

Athletes of Exceptional Admissions:

The relationship between admission exceptions and college athletes is of particular interest to the current study. The recruiting of athletes to an academic institution is not only central to the student; it is a considerable part of the college life. At times athletes who are academically below standard admission qualifications would appear to be prime candidates for exceptions in admittance to college. An important part of the recruiting process entails identifying a candidate that will be retained academically and athletically. It is equally important to identify the recruit's ability to meet potential admission criteria or the need to request admission exception.

NCAA Member Institution:

The University of Wisconsin – Stout is a member of the National College Athletic Association (NCAA), Division III. According to the Athletics and Physical Education Brochure from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, the NCAA sets standards for entrance into intercollegiate athletics and continuing eligibility for play. The NCAA strives to support the integration of athletics together with academics. The ultimate member goal is to see that student-athletes receive the same treatment as other students in the campus

population. Athletes should not have any unique privileges in the process for admission, academic advisement, course selection and registration, grading, on and off campus housing or financial aid. The NCAA also supports all recognized team sports for men and women equally.

Conference Designation:

The varsity sports programs at the University of Wisconsin - Stout are members of Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC). The WIAC is patterned after the NCAA with the sole purpose of regulating and supervising athletic contests between the conference universities. They have the ability to enforce and maintain the integrity of the NCAA through an educational administrator, coaches, and athletes. Other Members of the WIAC are UW-Eau Claire, UW-La Crosse, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Stevens Point, UW-Platteville, UW-Whitewater, UW-Superior, and UW-River Falls.

The WIAC requires that student athletes maintain full-time student status (12 credits), maintain a minimum of a 2.0 cumulative grade point average, and be progressing toward a degree (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2003). There are no athletic scholarships given and the use of gifts or other financial incentives to recruit athletes to the university are prohibited. It is the intent of the WIAC to promote fair play, enhance leadership and gender equity. The league also serves to increase public understanding of and appreciation for the importance and value of athletics for women and men (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 2003).

Statement of the Problem:

The intent of this thesis is to compare enrolled freshmen involved with the Intercollegiate Athletics versus non-athletes and the correlation between the academic

success, admission and retention, in cases of "Exceptional" admission for the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 at the University of Wisconsin – Stout.

Research Question:

Are there differences in retention rates between the admittance of "exceptional" students participating as an athlete or non- athlete beyond their first semester of college?

Definition of Terms:

The following terms are considered typical vocabulary used by the staff within the admissions office.

Academic Advisor: A staff member of an institution who monitors a student's academic progress. Additional assistance is provided with registration, study skills, and counseling on issues of academics and athletics.

At-Risk Student: Any student who is identified as having characteristics the university perceives as potential interferences or obstacles to successful adjustment in college. Examples given would be students with a low ACT score, low socio-economic status or students of minority status.

Exception: An action which takes place outside of the rule which is similar to a plea for grace or forgiveness. Example include being granted admission in spite of low class rank, GPA, or ACT score

Retention: To remain in a similar state or position and continue in the same direction from the beginning. For example, in an institution of higher education, retention of a student is maintaining active participation in academics from one semester to another.

Recruiter: Someone who assists in replenishing the student body through active promotion of the strengths and attributes the institution has to offer.

Semester: An academic year term in which the student is officially enrolled for seven or more credits. If a student is enrolled for fewer than seven credits, two such terms are considered to be equivalent to one semester. A summer session is not considered a semester.

Assumptions:

The study assumes that the data collected from 2000 to 2003 provided a representative group. The research also assumed the data provided by the Admissions Office and the Sports Information Office at the University of Wisconsin – Stout to be accurate. Additionally, the researcher assumed that data entered into the Admissions Office and Sports Information Office was to be accurate and up to date and that all available data regarding student admissions and athletic participation was collected and entered.

Limitations:

The data collected for this research paper was limited to information from the 2000 to 2003 academic years at the University of Wisconsin – Stout and may not be generalized to other post-secondary institutions. A limitation of this study is the lack of information about students who have transferred in or have been re-admitted after the spring semester of 2003. This would include a student-athlete who might have dropped out after the first semester and then was re-admitted after the 2003 spring semester.

Chapter II Literature Review

The University of Wisconsin-Stout admissions process actually begins in the first years of high school. There are several categories of admission described in the university's general information. The admissions information for this study relates to freshmen admission policies. The University of Wisconsin – Stout admissions handbook online defines freshmen as "graduates of high schools in the United States and those who will be graduating, who have not attended another university or technical college or school after high school" (¶ 1).

The University of Wisconsin – Stout begins accepting applications one year prior to the actual enrollment date. Usually there are a set number of applicants the school accepts and there is no deadline for applying. At the time of application, students are encouraged to declare a major, but are allowed to select "undecided" when they turn in their paperwork. In addition to the requirements for general admission, certain programs within the institution may have different or higher entry standards than the school. Thus, being admitted to the institution and being admitted to a program are two different admission procedures. If the incoming freshman will be taking classes to work toward a degree, that student must first apply for admission to the university. All incoming freshman can receive the application paperwork by requesting it in writing from the desired institution, or with the help of a high school guidance counselor, or using the internet.

The University of Wisconsin – Stout has five specific requirements that freshman must complete to be admitted to the institution (University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1998). Applications and transcripts can be submitted as early as September for admission to the

following fall semester or early March for the following spring semester. UW-Stout enrollments are limited, so it is important that individuals apply early. Applicants must be a graduate from a recognized high school or equivalent and must have a minimum of 17 high school preparatory credits with the following distribution: four credits of English, three credits of mathematics, three credits of science, three credits of social science, two credits from the above areas, or foreign language, two credits from the above areas, or fine arts, computer science and other academic or vocational areas. Applicants must provide evidence that he or she is prepared to do satisfactory work. UW-Stout requires that applicants graduate in the top 50 percent of their class, or have a cumulative score of 22 or better on the American College Test (ACT) or a combined verbal and mathematics score of 1030 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). UW-Stout provides special consideration for applicants who have served at least 180 days of active military duty, are at least two years out of high school, or have been disadvantaged as a result of substandard education, family income level, or ethnic background. All freshmen must take the ACT or SAT; however, the test is not the only criterion for admission. The admission test requirements may be waived if applicants have been out of high school two or more years, or age 21 or older, or are an international student.

As stated earlier in chapter one, those individuals applying to college who do not meet the standards for either assured admission or candidate for admission, can be considered if, in some other instance they appear to show a chance of success. The Freshmen Admissions Policy at the University of Wisconsin – Stout (1998) states that the "other instances" include, but are not limited to, the variable intensity of the curriculum from different high schools, and grading systems. For example, the student who receives

an average grade in an extraordinary curriculum could be considered for exception. Consideration may also be given to disadvantaged students as a result of a substandard education. For Example, students that come from a family with a reduced income level or a diverse ethnic background could still have a chance of being admitted providing proper documentation of limited educational opportunity. Some of the more popular exceptions are granted to students of non-traditional backgrounds. Examples would include applicants that are veterans of service or young adults who have been out of high school two or more years. The applicant would have to illustrate an increased maturity level based on life experiences. The least common exception is given to students under the age of 21 who have completed a General Education Diploma (GED) and have the potential of being admitted under the sole judgment of the Director of Admissions. A "special student" category is created under circumstances the student earns a cumulative GPA of 2.0 for a minimum of 12 credits. In addition a strong recommendation must be in place from a high school guidance counselor supporting the potential of the student.

According to Steve Pemberton, former admissions officer at Boston College, "there are several big factors that constitute a university's admission decision." He refers to them as the "significant six." They include making the grade, the same yardstick for everyone, the "write stuff", getting to know you, who you know, and getting involved (as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 28). Elaine Harlan, who is an admissions representative at the University of Missouri - Rolla says that she "likes to see that a student is involved in something that involves commitment"(Smith, 2003, p. 28).

When dealing with admission questions, and admission exceptions, we must look at freshmen retention issues in general. Tinto (1993) stated that, "75% of those students

who do depart will leave during the first two years of college, the greatest proportion in the first year of enrollment" (p. 188). There are many predictors of success for freshmen entering college. These predictors include family and financial issues, academic skills, social, and behavioral issues.

Retention Rate Predictors:

One predictor of freshmen retention in college is associated with indicators of financial stability. According to Braunstein and McGrath (1997) freshmen who were retained were not facing financial difficulties. The students who persisted came from higher social and economic backgrounds as defined by family income. The mean family income for those students who were retained was $45,223, while the average family income for those students who were not retained was $33,625. Besides family finances, family dynamics also influence college success. Family attitudes and daily practices relating to children's education and schoolwork are influential (Dornbusch, Titter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987). "These daily attitudes and practices may be the result of the degree to which academic education is prioritized in the student's families" (Goldenber & Gallimore, 1995, p. 186).

The groundwork to academic success, or lack of it, begins long before college, with student's prior academic experiences. According to Braunstein et al. (1997) one reason freshmen remain is because they are academically prepared to persist. This conclusion is based on the fact that the students who were retained had higher grades in high school courses. At College, negative attrition occurred with students having a high school grade average of "C" or below (Fralick, 1993). Agreeing with Fralick, Levitz and Noel (1990) stated that "high school grade point averages are a determining factor in

college success" (p. 10). Miller (1991) also stated that "high school GPA has the largest relation to attrition" (p. 19).

In addition to the importance of grade point averages, another prior academic standard that predicts college success is standardized testing. Based on an in-house institutional research conducted by Braunstein et al. (1997), freshmen who were retained showed higher Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores than the students who were not retained. According to Kern, Fagley, and Miller (1998,) prior academic achievement as measured by the ACT was significantly related to college grade point average.

Another predictor of success for freshmen retention is the first semester grade point average. According to a study by Braunstein et al. (1997), the grade point average for freshmen who were retained was 2.76 while the average for those who were not retained was 1.88.

Freshmen Year Predictors:

Other important predictors that influence first semester success include study skills, organization, time management and goals. These study skills have been shown to be related to college success (Carroll, 1988). Maccan, Shahani, Dipboye & Phillips (1990) reported a significant relationship between self-reported time management behaviors of students and their performance, as reflected in both self reported GPA and quality of performance. They also found that those who practiced time management were clearer about their role and perceived that they performed better than those who did not report time management behaviors. Specific time management and study skills are predictors that also influence early grade point averages. According to Kern et al. (1998) "time management, concentration information processing, selecting main ideas and self

testing have indirect effects on attrition which then affect a students GPA" (p. 28). According to Smith (2002) "survival, college style, is about time management, getting connected with people, paying attention to academic skills, 'keeping your eyes on the prize,' and realizing that college is ultimately up to the student" (p. 30).

Another important retention tool available for freshmen is the use of academic advising. Advising encourages the planning of short and long term goals for students of all levels. A study done by Astone, Numes-Wormeck, and Smodlaka (1989) found that intensive academic advising at a public institution increased retention rates through academic advising. The program required a minimum of three hours per week of academic advising per semester for each student. The advising covered topics such as goal setting, study skills, motivational tools and attitudes. There was a 10% increase in the retention rate from the rates of the previous year. The authors also conclude that the personal attention and extra guidance created positive effects for the high-risk group of students.

Academic Intangibles:

Goal orientation, academic motivation, resilience, and social connectedness are all social factors that influence these predictors of freshmen retention. At Cuyamaca College 85% of the freshmen departures "indicated lack of commitment and did not have clear academic or career goals" (Tinto 1991, p. 30). According to Fralick (1993) uncertainty or lack of academic and career goals is one of the most significant reasons students drop out of college without achieving their goals.

Student success and retention is greatly influenced by an individual's motivation. Motivation is one of the factors in Tinto's (1975, 1982) model of student attrition. Kern

et al. (1998) found that attrition is more strongly correlated to motivational self-ratings than to learning and study skills. Each student deals with goal orientation and academic motivation differently. Covington (1984) have distinguished two motivational profiles: "one type of student, those labeled "mastery oriented", welcomes challenge, and is able to maintain focus and persist in the face of obstacles; a second type of student, labeled 'learned helplessness", shies away from challenges they fear they will not be able to meet and is easily distracted by fears of inadequate performance" (p. 90).

Freshmen retention and student success predictors also include emotional resiliency, and social connectedness. Braunsteing et al. (1997) found that "social integration, coping skills and emotional maturity influence why freshmen leave" (p. 190). Two consistent predictors of retention and success were the degree to which students became academically and socially integrated into their environment. Several researchers have reported systematic cognitive and personal advantages for students who have frequent and informal contacts with instructors and with peers, and who become engaged in intellectual and social pursuits on campus early in their college careers (Milem, 1998: Pascarella, 1985).

The first three to six weeks of students' college attendance is a critical time when they form opinions about the college and about themselves that determine whether they will continue their education. Levitz et al. (1991) reported that "50% of the dropouts occurred in the first six weeks and that half of the students who did not have significant contacts with counselors or teachers during the first three weeks would not return the second year" (p. 5). Other research also supports this belief and has shown that the most critical factor in student retention is a caring attitude by faculty and staff (Crocket, 1991;

Jones, 1986). Others focus on the contribution of variables such as the comfort level of the student on campus, and the degree to which they feel accepted and validated in their college world (Tinto, 1993).

With well established social supports, adversity may still arise, and this is where resiliency and persistence is needed. Research conducted by Cabrera, Nora & Castenda (1992) suggested that "social involvement promotes academic success, status attainment, and persistence" (p. 573). Most notably, student's level of persistence in the face of obstacles was consistently related to a range of measures of their academic and social integration (Strange, 1999). As stated earlier, "this persistence is to the degree that their ability to persist when attempting to meet those challenges appears to be linked to their level of comfort in that environment" (Strange, 1999, p. 199).

Co-curricular life can help to facilitate student relationships and increase student-faculty communications. Faculty and staff can contribute to student retention by developing advisement linkages with students through campus organizations, campus activities or college work-study programs. Fralick (1993) and Braunstein et al. (1997) recommend that freshmen retention can be increased if faculty and administrators can share the predictors of retention with other members of the community. They then can use this information to strengthen retention effectiveness of freshmen advisement and co-curricular life.

When dealing with admission questions, and admission exceptions, we must review the predictors of success for freshmen entering college. These predictors include family and financial issues, academic skills, social, motivational and behavioral issues.

As the forementioned research states, student involvement in academic, social and co-curricular life at college is crucial and beneficial for success of all students.

Chapter III Methodology

Introduction:

The methodology in this study includes a description of the subjects from which the data is collected, the selection of sample and analysis procedures. Also included in this chapter are the limitations of the methods used for this study.

Research Question:

Is there a difference in retention rates between the admittance of "exceptional" students participating as an athlete versus non- athlete beyond their first semester of college?

Subjects:

The University of Wisconsin-Stout is a mid-size, public, mid-western institution with an enrollment of approximately 7,000 undergraduate full-time students.

The subjects of this study were enrolled as freshmen at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the fall of 2000 thru 2003. The sample consists of freshmen who were admitted under "exceptions standards."

All subjects for this study were enrolled as full-time students during the first semester. This study will be examining the retention of student athletes vs. non-student athletes who were admitted under the above "exceptions standard" from their first to second freshmen semester.

Control samples were taken from subjects who were admitted in good standing and who participated in any sport who began at Stout as first time freshmen for the cohort years of 1999 through 2002.

Procedure:

The data for this study was obtained from the University of Wisconsin – Stout student database referred to as Datatel, which is administered and monitored by the Registration and Records department. This database contains information regarding student personal and academic information including GPA, number of credits attempted and number of credits earned for full-time students.

The athletic department, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) compliance officer monitors academic eligibility standards though the use of Datatel, by comparing team rosters with academic records including semester GPA, cumulative GPA, as well as the number of credits earned overall. After the completion of each semester, Datatel is updated and student enrollment status is monitored which results in updates on student transcripts. From this procedure, Larry Graves in registration and records can determine current university enrolment and retention.

The university database supplied the statistics to assess the dependent variable of academic achievement as it applied to the identified students. Information obtained from the university database included aggregate data as follows: number of freshmen admitted overall, number of freshmen admitted through academic exceptions, number of student-athletes admitted through use of academic exceptions, overall freshmen retention rates, exceptional admittance student retention rates, and exceptional admittance of student-athlete retention rates.

Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed to look at statistical significance in terms of retention into second semester between student athletes vs. non-student athletes. Data was analyzed using the fall semester for 2000 to 2003. Control group data was also analyzed to determine retention rates of Athletes vs. Non-Athletes for Cohort years of 1999- 2002 admitted in good standing. Microsoft excel was used to determine the percentage retained and to run t tests.

Limitations:

A study with a longer time frame may indicate a more accurate picture of the impact of the participation in athletics on long term retention, graduation and/or general achievement.

This study contains extraneous variables that may influence results. The study did not take into account students emotional and or physical health, family and financial obligations. Additionally, this study does not look at parent's educational levels, or ethnicity that also can influence academic success. In 2003 there was direction given to the office of admissions from the Provost Council at the University of Wisconsin – Stout to minimize such exceptions for athletes. There was not a written policy established however it was implied verbally to reduce exceptional admissions to athletes.

Chapter IV Results

Results of this study are based on the freshmen retention rates for students admitted under good standing and under exceptional standards for the fall of 2000, thru the fall of 2003 at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. This data was further broken down to compare exceptional admission retention rates of student-athletes vs. non-athletes.

. Additional data was also reviewed considered retention rates from the first year thru the fourth year consecutively. The aggregate data was accumulated on athletes vs. non-athletes which were admitted under good standing from 2000-2003.

Freshman Admission and Retention Rates:

The freshmen fall admission numbers for the years 2000 thru 2004 differ by only 35 students; an average of 8.75 students per year. The percentage of freshmen retained over the four consecutive years held an average of 73.28 percent.

Table 1: Non-Athletes and athletes combined

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Total Freshman Admitted	1307	1272	1303	1280
Total Freshman Retained	980	929	938	936
Percentage Retained	74.98%	73.03%	71.99%	73.13%

Athletes in Competition and Retention Rates:

The retention data of all athletes involved in competition at the University of Wisconsin – Stout is shown in Table 2. The statistics show where the entire group of athletes, in all 14 varsity sports, retained at an average of 87.47 percent over a four year period.

Table 2: Athletes only

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Total Athletes In Competition	384	401	404	417
Total Athletes Retained	327	357	362	359
Percentage Retained	85.16%	89.03%	89.60%	86.09%

Freshman Admissions by Exception:

The total number of freshmen exceptions was divided into two groups. Admitted athletes by exception and admitted non-athletes by exception.

Athletes versus Non-Athletes and Retention Rates:

Table 3 shows the retention rates of those admitted athletes and non-athletes for four consecutive years. In should be notes that in 2003 there was direction given to the office of admissions from the Provost Council at the University of Wisconsin – Stout to minimize such exceptions for athletes. There was not a written policy established however it was implied verbally to reduce exceptional admissions to athletes.

Table 3: Athletes compared to Non-Athletes

	Fall 2000	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003
Total Number of Freshman Exceptions	78	29	57	27
Number of Non-Athletes Admitted	69	24	36	26
Number of Athletes Admitted	9	5	21	1
Number of Non-Athletes Retained	57%	22%	26%	24%
Number of Athletes Retained	7%	3%	17%	1%

Athlete Retention in Consecutive Years:

When tracking the retention progress in the group of athletes through consecutive year's table 4 shows that athletes were retained at a higher rate when compared to the non-athletes.

Table 4: Athletes retained from year to year

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Number of Athletes Admitted and Retained From 2000-2004	9	7	6	4	4
	*	5	3	3	3
	*	*	21	17	15
	*	*	*	1	1

Non-Athlete Retention in Consecutive Years:

When tracking the retention progress in the group of non-athletes through consecutive years, the results show that the non-athletes were retained at a lower rate when compared to the athletes.

Table 5: Non-Athletes retained from year to year

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Non-Athletes admitted and Retained From 2000-2004	78	69	57	34	20
	*	24	22	13	8
	*	*	36	26	18
	*	*	*	26	24

The data from table 5 shows a significant reduction in year to year retention of the non-athlete group from 2000 thru 2004.

CHAPTER V Discussion

Summary:

General Admissions:

To be admitted as an incoming freshman to the University of Wisconsin – Stout, all students must meet the required admissions standards. As discussed in Chapter Two, applicants must be a graduate from a recognized high school or equivalent with a minimum of 17 high school preparatory credits with transcripts showing satisfactory work. Applicants must be in the upper 50 percent of their graduating class or have a cumulative score of 22 on the ACT or a combine score of 1030 on the SAT.

Exceptions to Admissions:

Sub-standard admission qualifications can be reviewed by the Director of Admissions and/or the Appeals Committee to determine if some other characteristics would show a chance of success. More likely consideration would be given to a disadvantaged student as a result of a substandard education or a very limited educational opportunity. Therefore overruling the appeal and providing an "exception" to admittance to college.

Retention Rate Indicators:

Higher grade point averages, higher standardized test scores, and the student's prior academic experiences, which begin long before college, are common indicators of success prior to getting into college. Once admitted and enrolled in to college, there are many traits, skills or other outside influences within that first semester that can manipulate the retention the rates. Time management, study skills and organization are three specific retention rate indicators.

Other academic intangibles also help with increasing retention rates, such as goal orientation, resilience, social connectedness and participating in a sport as a student-athlete. There is consideration given to co-curricular life which can help facilitate student relationships and increased faculty communications. That linkage alone can contribute to student retention by development through advisement.

Athletes of Exceptional Admissions:

The relationship between admission exceptions and college athletes is of particular interest to the current study. The recruiting of athletes to an academic institution is not only central to the student; it is a considerable part of the college life. At times, athletes who are academically below standard admission qualifications would appear to be prime candidates for exceptions in admissions to college. An important part of the recruiting process entails identifying a candidate that will be retained academically and athletically. The data demonstrates that admission by exception is more successful for athletes than non-athletes.

Limitations:

The data collected for this research paper was limited to information from the 2000 to 2003 academic years at the University of Wisconsin – Stout and may not be generalized to other post-secondary institutions. A limitation of this study could be the lack of information about students who might have transferred in or have been re-admitted after the spring semester of 2003. This would include a student-athlete who might have dropped out after the first semester and then was re-admitted after the 2003 spring semester.

This study also contains extraneous variables that may influence results. The study did not take into account students emotional and or physical health, family and financial obligations. Additionally, this study does not look at parent's educational levels, or ethnicity that also can influence academic success.

Recommendations:

This study raises the question regarding who should receive exceptions to admissions policies and procedures at the University of Wisconsin – Stout and rationale for those exceptions. The goal however is to see that the potential student-athlete receives the same treatment as other potential students who are applying for admission in to the University of Wisconsin – Stout.

The first recommendation is to conduct more research by tracking the retention rates through to graduation of students who were admitted by exception. A longitudinal study to compare graduation rates of 'non- athletes' versus 'athletes' with exceptional admissions. The question remains; does the higher retention rates of exceptional admissions for student athletes lead to graduation success at the university?

The second recommendation would be to research the students who were allowed in by exception to see if they were male or female. Comparing the exceptional admission student's success by gender in both groups may provide a totally different perspective.

A final recommendation is to track the sport the "athlete" group participated in. Each coach and/or staff may or may not have influence on academics and unequally promote the academic side of the student athlete. NCAA and WIAC academic policies are set to maintain specific standards to obtain eligibility to compete in each particular sport, however, coaches have differing procedures to attain those standards.

According to the literature review, predictors of freshmen college success involve family, financial issues, academic skills, social and behavioral issues. Once admitted and enrolled into college, motivation, connectedness, involvement, time management, study and organizational skills must be used. Students that have theses support areas and skills in place are more likely to be retained whether admitted under standard qualifications or under exception.

Students that have the ability and motivation to participate in collegiate athletics must also have these skills. However, for these student athletes to participate in education and athletics concurrently, they need to have efficient use of the above skills to be successful.

Looking at the results of this research study, it indicates that there are higher retention rates for athletes vs. non athletes admitted under standard qualifications. Additionally higher retention rates were identified for athletes vs. non-athletes that were admitted under the exception standard. This current research conducted at the University of Wisconsin Stout, validates previous research conducted on freshmen retention.

Reference List

Astone, B., Nunes-Wormeck,E., & Smodlaka, I. (1989). Intensive academic advisement: A model for retention. *College and University, 65,* 31-43.

Braunstein, A. & McGrath, M. (1997). The retention of freshmen students: An examination of the assumptions, beliefs and perceptions help by college administrators and faculty. *College Student Journal, 31,* 188-201.

Cabrera, A., Nora, A. & Castenda, M. (1992). The role of finance in the persistence process: A structural model . *Research in Higher Education, 3 (5),* 571-593.

Caroll, J. (1988). Freshman retention and attrition factors at a predominantly black urban community college. *Journal of College Student Development, 29,* 52-54.

Covington, M. (1984). The motive for self-worth. *Research on motivation in education.Ames, R. & Ames, C. (Eds).* Vol 1 student motivation. New York, Academic Press Inc., 77-113.

Crocket, D. (1991). Academic advising. In Noel, Levitz, Saluri & Associates (Eds). *Increasing Student Retention.* San Fransisco; Jossey-Bass, 244-263.

Dornbush, S., Ritter, R. Leiderman, P. Roberts, D. & Fraleigh, M. (1987). The relation of parenting style to adolescent school performance. *Child Development, 58,* 124-144.

Fralick, M. (1993). College Success: A study of positive and negative attrition. *Community College Review, 20 (5),* 10..

Goldenberg, C. & Gallimore, R. (1995) Immigrant, Latino parents' values and beliefs about their children's education. In Maehr & Pintrich (Eds.) Advances in research in motivation and achievement. Greenwich, CT: JAL Press, 9, 183-228.

Hayamizu, T. & Weirer, B. (1991). A test of Dweck's model of achievement goals as related to perceptions of ability. *Journal of Experimental Education, 59*, 226-234.

Jones, S. (1986). No magic required! Reducing attrition at the community college. *Community College Review, 14 (2),* 14-18.

Kern, C., Fagley, N. & Miller, P. (1998). Correlates of college retention and GPA: Learning and study strategies, testwiseness, attitudes and ACT. *Journal of College Counseling, 1 (11),* 26-35.

Levitz, R., & Noel, L. (1991). Using a systememattic approach to assessing retention needs. *Increasing student retention. Noel, L., Levitz, N., Salevai, D.,& Associates (3-14).* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Levitz, R., & Noel, L.(1990). *Comprehensive study of motives and attitudes associated with grade performance and persistence.* Coralville, IA: Noel & Levitz Centers for Institutional Effectiveness and Motivation.

Macan, T., Shahani, C. Dipboye, L. & Phillips, P. (1990) College student's time management: Correlations with academic performace and stress. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82,* 760-768.

Milem, J. (1998). Attitude change in college students. *Journal of Higher Education, 69,* 118-130.

Miller, R. (1991). Persistence in higher education: A review of the literature for continuing educators. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 38,* 19-22.

Nicholla, J. (1984). Conceptions of ability an achievement motivation. *(As sited In Ames, R. & Ames, C.(Eds) Research on motivation in education. Student Motivation. New York; Academic Press, Inc. 1, 39-73).*

Pascarella, E. (1985). Student's affective development within the college environment. *Journal of Higher Education, 56,* 646-663.

Smith, G. (2003). Confessions of an admissions officer. *Career World, 32(2),* 28-30.

Smith, G. (2002). Survivor- College style. *Career World, 30 (6),* 29-32.

Strange, A. (1999). Social and Academic Integration and college success: similarities and differences as a function of ethnicity and family educational background. *College Student Journal, 33 (3),* 198-205.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research, 45,* 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1982). Limits of theory and practice in student attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 53,* 687-700.

Tinto, V. (1991). Dropping out and other forms of withdrawal from college. *Increasing student retention. Noel, L., Levitz, N., Salevai, D.,& Associates (28-43).* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving college: *Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*(2nd ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University of Wisconsin-Stout. (2003). *Athletics and physical education.* [Brochure]. College of Human Development. Menomonie, WI: Author.

University of Wisconsin-Stout. (1998). *Mission and strategic plan.* Retrieval December 30, 2003, from: http:// www.uwstout.edu/mission.

University of Wisconsin-Stout. (1998b). *Student handbook online: Admissions requirements.* Retrieval December 30, 2003, from: http://www.uwstout.edu/admissions/admreg.shtml

Young, D. (1992). Student retention: Many more ideas. *College Student Journa,l* 26 (4), 472-475.