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Abstract

This master's portfolio is comprised of three separate papers that were written at the request of the three professors on my interdisciplinary studies portfolio committee.

The first paper is an expansion of a research paper written in a Sport Management class for Dr. Dana Massengale. This paper explores the possibility of the compensation of Division I student-athletes and explains the complex situation that the NCAA faces in the O'Bannon legal case.

The second paper was written in a Business Management class for Dr. Liz Karam. This paper is introspective in nature and places myself in the position of a business called 'Strawn Inc.'. This paper explores my personality traits, strengths and weakness in order to fully describe the nature of products that 'Strawn Inc.' produces.

As the Business Marketing representative on my portfolio review committee, Dr. Fox requested that I write a paper that expressed my intentions upon enrolling in my graduate program, key themes I learned through all three of my areas of study, and what I have learned that will be valuable beyond graduation and into my career. Some major points of discovery in this paper include the importance of both the management of people and relationships as well as the management of planning and processes in sports, business and life.

NCAA's Fight to Maintain Amateurism

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The NCAA has eight specifically stated purposes for existence, some of which overlap and work in congruence with each other. However, as the collegiate sports market has produced incredible revenue gains in recent years, some of the principles for which they stand have become more and more difficult to defend alongside the defense of others. The NCAA Division I Manual states that the “basic purpose of this Association is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the educational program and the athlete as an integral part of the student body and, by so doing, retain a clear line of demarcation between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports.” (NCAA, 2013) The said “clear line” has become a tightrope on which the NCAA and the institutions it governs have been forced to walk. Anchoring one end of the tightrope is the fight for the preservation of amateurism and the value of athletics in higher education. And at the other end of the tightrope is the projected \$790 million in revenue that the NCAA will bring in this year, most of which is through media rights payments driven by America’s obsession with college sports and the athletes involved. The tightrope is being stretched further and further every year as revenues for the NCAA approach the billion dollars per year mark. As the balancing act appears to be approaching a crescendo, it is important to examine several areas of this billion dollar brouhaha; the participants, the status quo, the conflict, the groundbreaking litigation, the possible outcomes, and the effects that may likely follow.

The Status Quo

The question to pay college athletes has been around for quite some time, although in recent years the argument for their payment has gained a head of steam. Despite the growing

number of those who have grown to accept the idea of compensating Division I student-athletes, there is still a large percentage of the population in support of the NCAA's fight to maintain amateurism. Whether fans love college sports for the effort that college athletes give out of "love for the game", or for the Cinderella story, most everyone can agree that there is just something special about college sports that set them apart from professional sports. This passion is shared by the NCAA and shows great pride in their facilitation of the industry that has captured the hearts of most Americans. The NCAA's website promotes their non-profit financial model that distributes roughly 60% of total revenue "directly to the Division I conferences, which pass most of that money along to their member institutions to support their athletics programs" (NCAA, 2013), and in turn fund the athletic scholarship program at each member institution. Many university officials and athletic administrators at both the university and conference level support the NCAA in the contention that scholarships also allow for the university who awards them to have a unique dynamic that doubles the return on their investment. Universities recruit and pay for an athlete to play for their program for three reasons; to help build a team that will have athletic success against other schools, hopes for a conference championship, and possibly a national championship. This will help the school's image and increase revenue to help pay for the future success of the school, including the athlete they recruited and paid for to come to college. Johnny Manziel and Texas A&M is just one example of the worth of university athletics can bring to the university as a whole. Shortly after the end of the 2012 football season, the TAMU Times wrote an article on the "Research conducted by Joyce Julius & Associates [that] shows that the redshirt freshman winning the prestigious [Heisman] trophy produced more than 1.8 million media impressions, which translates into \$37 million in media exposure for Texas A&M." (TAMU Times, 2013) Granted,

Texas A&M hit the proverbial jackpot, awarding a scholarship to Johnny Manziel was better return on investment than you'll find in just about any business venture there is. The second return on investment that a scholarship provides is the insurance that the athlete stays in school at least for that year so that all of the previously stated success will be able to occur, and so that the athlete will actually receive a collegiate level education, as this is the definitive goal of all educational institutions. Ultimately, the payment of a player through an athletic scholarship provides an education first, and second a symbiotic relationship that helps the athlete progress their athletic career, while representing and forwarding the progress of the school.

On the flip side of the same coin, university administrators and the NCAA assert that paying the players in addition to, or in lieu of scholarships, can breed opportunity for financial mishaps that could jeopardize the relationship between the student-athlete and the school and possibly in the un-enrollment of the athlete. This would be the worst case scenario. In a more realistic situation, a paid athlete overspends his budget and comes up short for necessary educational items, like books, or other supplies. This would indefinitely result in the possible failure of a course, which would then make the athlete ineligible to participate in sports. This is not to assume that a college athlete can't handle being paid, but it is necessary to understand that paid athletes, no matter what the level of play and in what sport, have trouble managing their money. It is widely known that many professional athletes go bankrupt after their retirement, no matter how high profile player or salary they earned. To be exact, 60 to 80% of all NBA and NFL athletes go bankrupt within five years of retirement. Brent Williams, an ex NFL player who made every money mistake he could have possibly made, and is now a financial advisor and money manager for guys like he used to be, did an interview with morethanmoney.org explaining the difficulties athletes experience managing their money. He talks about how

athletes, who grew up in families that didn't really talk about money and planning for the future, are very susceptible to making financial mistakes. This family dynamic can be connected with those of low income backgrounds who are doing what they can to make ends meet. This is a characteristic of the socioeconomic background of a large group of student-athletes that need more money to pay for college in excess of their scholarship, or who may be eligible for payment if the pay for play system is implemented. He also says, "[People] have the same problems and the same issues, whatever [their] income, because the problems are not the money: the problems are inside of [them]." (Gerloff, 2005) Even if these problems aren't underlying within the student-athlete, school officials fear that a "pay for play" model could cause a shift in the psyche of the collegiate athlete that would make him or her feel more valuable and in turn make choices that could negatively affect their education and future career opportunities. The NCAA believes that they can prevent this outcome by maintaining amateurism in college athletics, through the use of scholarships as compensation of the student-athlete. These scholarships hold the students accountable to keep education first.

The NCAA views scholarship as indirect payment and as a vehicle for an education, which is the true purpose of collegiate athletics. Critics, however, see inconsistency in NCAA's model because of the scholarship limits in place. These limits include a maximum number of full ride scholarships a school can offer, which many times don't actually pay for all the expenses of attendance. Given that these full time students are full time athletes as well, they don't have the time to work part time jobs, therefore often come up financially short for their needed extras not provided by their scholarship, if they are on scholarship at all. Much of the public understands that NCAA athletes don't receive enough scholarship money to pay for all of the cost of attendance, which includes living expenses and miscellaneous expenses needed to live

a normal lifestyle. Fuel for transportation, medical expenses, entertainment, extra nutrition, and emergency funds are just some examples of this. According to Jay Coakley, in 2008 the average athletic scholarship was worth about \$8,700. This average was only awarded to 55% of all athletes, leaving 45% without any aid. Of those that did receive aid, 6.8% of all student-athletes received full scholarships. Coakley also says cost of attending “most NCAA institutions” is in the range between \$15,000 and \$45,000. (Coakley, 2008) These limits effectively cap the amount of money that makes it back to the student-athlete and in most instances falls far short of paying for an education.

Conversely, it is well known that scholarships aren't the only way that collegiate athletes receive payment. Albeit not a monetary payment, a student-athlete has far more opportunities than regular, non-athlete undergraduate students. Among these are academic opportunities like free tutoring, special advising and counseling, physical needs met like provided meals and clothing, social opportunities like automatically having a group of friends to hang out with, and future career opportunities. As discussed in a Sports Illustrated Article written by Paul Daugherty, this applies to those on scholarship as well as those who are not. Although Daugherty's article mainly pertains to major universities one hears and sees in the news on a regular basis, abundant opportunities for student-athletes at smaller D-III schools are available as well. An article in the USA Today, written by Kelly Whiteside, describes the way the NCAA allocates the revenue produced by D-1 football and men's basketball. Of the revenue earned, and aside from the 60% that is distributed to D-1 conferences, almost 20% goes to what they call Programs and National Office Services. These services, which are provided to student-athletes at every NCAA school, are addressed in Whiteside's article. The argument to pay players in order to fully cover cost of attendance and to provide for miscellaneous living expenses was

voiced by Maurice Clarett, a star running back for Ohio State University who is known for his academic and behavioral controversies including academic misconduct, dismissal from OSU, and a lawsuit against the NFL to enter the draft early. In 2003, Clarett “gave the issue a national platform when he railed against the riches of college athletics while expressing resentment that Ohio State didn't buy him a plane ticket to fly home to attend the funeral of a boyhood friend. (School officials said he could have used the NCAA's Special Assistance Fund but failed to fill out necessary paperwork.)” (Whiteside, 2004)

The “proper paperwork” refers to one of the many aforementioned Programs and Office Services provided by the NCAA. “Beyond school-issued scholarships, the NCAA is funneling \$750 million over 11 years into funds designed to directly benefit athletes.” Some of the programs benefit the needy athletes and some aren't “limited to the disadvantaged and can be used for an array of personal needs.” The NCAA offers “catastrophic-injury insurance” for those who become injured during a covered event and will provide benefits in excess of the benefits received by another coverage policy. “The NCAA also offers the Special Assistance Fund, established in 1991 to help student-athletes in financial need to cover basic or emergency expenses.” This includes, “clothing or travel home (a maximum of \$500 an athlete year) or "other essential expenses," including academic supplies, medical and dental costs not covered by insurance and family emergencies. There is no monetary limit on the latter.” To go even further for their athletes, the NCAA also provides the Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund. “It's available to all athletes, regardless of financial need and whether they have exhausted eligibility or no longer compete for medical reasons. It can be used for such personal and educational expenses as travel home, computers and other school supplies, clothing, medical expenses for spouses and dependents, summer school, degree-completion programs and professional development.”

(NCAA, 2013) The NCAA provides Division I student-athletes with opportunities that eclipse those of regular undergraduate students who don't affiliate with athletics. Nevertheless, those in favor for the compensation of student-athletes are not focused on what the athletes already have; they are focused on what they aren't receiving. In some recent events, current and former players have taken steps to challenge the NCAA on many of their policies and bylaws that may financially impede the student-athlete during and after their participation in Division I athletics.

While some student-athletes still struggle to make ends meet, a more popular argument is that many student-athletes (namely Division I Football and Basketball players, which are the only two revenue producing sports in collegiate athletics) don't receive the proper compensation for what they deserve. On one side of the scale, these players put in hard work and long hours in a high profile industry that produces nearly a billion dollars per year for the NCAA, which is then distributed to conferences and universities by the millions. On the other side of the scale, these athletes directly receive little to no share of ticket sales, television and marketing rights, performance-based rewards, and other forms of income generated by these athletes, but instead see the revenues funneled mostly into lavish facilities, enormous athletic program budgets, and into the pockets of coaches through multimillion dollar contracts. Even though the athletes are positively affected by nicer facilities and larger budgets, this has caused critics of the NCAA to push for the direct compensation of the student-athletes that make the million dollar revenues possible. Feeling the heat of the public cries for better student-athlete compensation, the NCAA has begun to take small steps in order to pacify public cries.

In 2011, the NCAA approved changes "that gives conferences the option of adding more money to scholarship offers, schools the opportunity to award scholarships for multiple years, imposes tougher academic standards on recruits and changes the summer basketball recruiting

model.” (Associated Press, 2011) They also reintroduced a stipend for athletes on scholarship that they believed should cover the cost of attendance, not just full tuition, books, and room and board. ESPN reports an article from the Associated Press that the extra amount introduced is \$2,000. Interestingly, the stipend became delayed and was never implemented. Feeling further pressure for more money to the athletes, in early 2013 the NCAA approved a much smaller concession, again in the form of stipend, but this time at \$300 which would allow athletes to attend non-scholastic events. (Pierce, 2013) Although Mark Emmert, the president of the NCAA, believes they are taking steps toward a better model for the athletes, the coaches and the universities, many people are calling him out on the inconsistency of conceding small amounts of money to the athletes in the form of these stipends, while persecuting student-athletes that make similar amounts by selling their jersey for their own financial gain. In 2012, Emmert and the NCAA took even more heat from college basketball fans and analysts after neglecting due process by rendering several players ineligible to play during most of the season in order to investigate the possibility of student-athletes who were suspicioned to be taking under the table financial offers from universities and boosters. The players were reinstated when the investigators came up empty handed. Of course these financial gains of student-athletes are all explicitly and strictly prohibited in the NCAA Division I manual, but the NCAA’s “break rules to enforce the rules” actions by neglecting due process only fueled the fire for those in opposition to the NCAA. Those calling Emmert out have also advocated the reconstruction of the NCAA’s financial model and their policies regarding player compensation rights. Several payment models have been suggested by advocates of student-athlete compensation. These include “Pay-for-Play” formats, or compensation based on NCAA revenues, “Olympic” style compensation that is based on rewards and sponsorships, and even regulated or unregulated “Largesse”, or

allowing boosters to pay athletes to play for their university. Those calling for more compensation and in a much more direct form, may not have to wait on the NCAA making tiny concessions forever.

The O'Bannon Case

In 2009 Ed O'Bannon, a former UCLA basketball player and member of their 1995 NCAA championship team, led a class action lawsuit against the NCAA and EA Sports for using his and other athlete's likenesses in a video game that included the '95 championship team. O'Bannon's argument is that when he came to UCLA, the NCAA forced him to sign a contract that gave his player likeness rights to the NCAA. By doing this the NCAA would be able to use his image without compensating him on earnings made from TV and media rights, effectively maintaining the player's eligibility for participation in the NCAA. This becomes an issue when the student-athlete graduates; whether the NCAA has the right to use the player's likeness for financial gain. Because the NCAA used O'Bannon's image likeness on NCAA broadcasts and on videogames to earn revenue many years after his graduation, the NCAA has set that player's image or likeness at a value of \$0 because they failed to compensate him for the use of his likeness. O'Bannon's lawsuit was quickly joined by Sam Keller, a plaintiff of a previous lawsuit against the NCAA of the same nature. Together, their case attracted attention and gained the support of key figures in the industry. O'Bannon was also joined in his class action suit by basketball greats like Bill Russell and Oscar Robinson as well as others. The class also amended their original lawsuit from receiving payment from not just videogame deals with Electronic Arts

and the Collegiate Licensing Company, but also from media and TV broadcasts of the NCAA. In January of 2013, the case gained unprecedented traction against the NCAA when a California judge overseeing the case rejected a motion from the NCAA that claimed the plaintiffs couldn't expand their lawsuit from only the issue of videogames to include TV broadcasts and all media as well. Currently, the case is in discovery phase where those involved on both sides surrender documentation that may be of assistance to the case as evidence. In an expert report of class certification, written by Dr. Roger Noll, professor *Emeritus* of Economics at Stanford University, the plaintiffs argue that after graduation or the end of their eligibility, the student-athlete should be entitled to financial compensation, and because of the NCAA's usage player likenesses in a trade bargain for no compensation violates the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890. (Noll, 2013) The landmark statute was put in place "to protect the consumers by preventing arrangements designed, or which tend, to advance the cost of goods to the consumer." The NCAA allegedly violated this law by setting a player image or likeness at \$0 by not compensating them for the use of their image in broadcasts and videogames. The NCAA asserts that the allegations are false; claiming that the NCAA does not and has not retained the broadcast rights of any former NCAA student-athlete, and has never sold those rights in the form of player likeness, player number, or names to EA sports or any other entity. The information posted on the NCAA's website dismisses the case with confidence, believing that "the filing shows that the theories of the plaintiffs are not supported by facts, economics or the law. It further demonstrates that plaintiffs should not be allowed to pursue a class action based on inaccurate theories and speculations aimed at destroying amateurism in college athletics." The NCAA remains poised and comforted by the history of the protection of amateurism. "We look forward to its eventual resolution in the courts. Amateurism in intercollegiate sports has been repeatedly upheld by courts at all levels

from the Supreme Court in 1984 to a District Court just last month (Rock v NCAA).” (NCAA, 2013) However, the NCAA has taken further actions to squash the class action suit before it goes to trial. Because the NCAA filed a motion against the certification of the class, the next hearing is in June of 2013 to certify the class and should determine if the plaintiffs of the class have enough in common in their grounds to file suit. At that point if the class is certified, the case will either go to a trial by jury or the parties may choose to engage in a settlement outside the of court of law. Either way, there could be massive repercussions for the future of the NCAA and all of the institutions that it governs.

The following is mostly hypothetically presented, but should be considered in order to prepare for a possible cataclysmic shift in collegiate athletics. The current litigation allows for the exploration of all the possible outcomes and the effects that could follow. In every instance but one, that being the jury rules in favor of the NCAA, effectively retaining the status quo and further strengthening the protection of amateurism in collegiate athletics, there will have to be some sort of major financial transaction, and would also open the door for all former athletes whose likenesses have been used by the NCAA to individually file suit and settle for some payment from the NCAA. Given the situation that the NCAA faces, it could be accurately assumed that the NCAA would choose not to settle out of court, and continue to battle for the preservation of amateurism. Should the case go to trial, the NCAA isn't falsely comforted by the history of the court's protection of amateurism, both at the state and federal level. Historically speaking, the NCAA has withstood more than one hundred years of governance over collegiate conferences and their representation of amateurism along with the promotion of education has been largely victorious over its challengers. However, history could be in the making.

Due to our society's growth, acclimation, and attachment to the digital or cyber world in the last decade, representations of people's personal likeness through avatars, real-life and animated characters, social media profile content, intellectual property, and in the sports world; names, jersey numbers, and even statistics have become a common issue in the realm of intellectual property and publicity rights. The issue is usually caught somewhere between the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that declares the freedom of speech and the right of publicity. As defined by Marilyn Osborn in an article in the *Journal of Law & Education*, the right of publicity "is the inherent right of every human being to control the commercial usage of his or her identity." (Osborn, 2010) Because the freedom of speech includes the ability to use an individual's likeness as a resource in any form of speech, whether the form of speech is verbal, visual, or a combination thereof, it is bold to assert that the unauthorized usage of an individual's likeness could trump the right of publicity. However, the right of publicity may overcome the first amendment because the right of publicity forbids the commercial usage of any aspect of an individual's identity, which has become an incredibly common issue in recent decades. Implied consent to commercially use an individual's publicity rights applies "within the scope of employment" (Osborn, 2010), but because the student-athletes are technically not employed by the NCAA, the conference, or the school, the right of publicity prohibits the NCAA from commercially using the student-athlete's likeness. One possible exception to this, as defined by law, the first amendment trumps the inherent right of publicity if the individual's likeness is used outside of the intention to benefit the user, or if the individual's likeness is used in a newsworthy commentary (freedom of press), but because the NCAA makes massive profits from the use of player likeness, the NCAA cannot make this argument.

In addition to the shift of society's views on publicity rights, the NCAA could be up against some tough competition. The plaintiffs have brought on some exceptional firepower including titan lawyers Ken Feinberg, who oversaw claims from the Sept. 11th attack, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and is also currently negotiating settlements in the Jerry Sandusky case, and Michael Hausfeld who has experience in an antitrust case against Microsoft and has represented victimized groups like holocaust victims and Native Americans against high profile corporations. Also, on the Plaintiffs side is Sonny Vaccaro, long time NCAA antagonist and sports marketing executive as well as National Collegiate Players Association president Ramogi Huma. Together, they have established The Former Collegiate Athletes Association (Farrey, 2013). In the instance that the lawsuit goes to trial and the plaintiffs win the case, this association may serve as a distribution center for the financial compensation of former student-athletes from the NCAA, whether from individual lawsuits or from a possible retroactive payment of student-athletes upon graduation. Given that in antitrust cases damages are tripled, possibly billions of dollars will most likely be surrendered to the former athletes involved in the O'Bannon case. This could possibly bankrupt the NCAA and would open the door for a new organization to take over the governing position keeping collegiate athletics together. This obviously would be the worst case scenario for the NCAA, its member institutions and the organizations that participate with collegiate athletics. If the NCAA wins the case, the status quo would be retained and would possibly solidify the NCAA's death grip on money derived from the student-athletes through their player likeness rights.

Due to the NCAA's portrayal of nonchalant confidence, it seems what most likely will not happen, but probably should, in order to avoid the possible worst case scenarios for both parties, is a settlement outside of court. However, this would most definitely represent a loss for

the NCAA from a positional standpoint of retaining amateurism in collegiate athletics. With the NCAA's confidence duly noted, there are some athletic and university administrators who have openly discussed the possibility of a settlement and what the negotiations may entail. This gives reason to believe that the NCAA may actually choose to save itself from fighting a losing battle in court, and confirms the possibility of a settlement. Should both parties agree to a settlement, the NCAA would have to pay some sum of money to the plaintiffs for compensation of using their likenesses, but this amount would be far less than the damages should the case be ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, helping the NCAA avoid total bankruptcy. This will be a definite win for former and future players alike because it will allow them to be compensated in some form or fashion. Former student-athletes of the NCAA not involved in the O'Bannon case would then also be able to file suit against the NCAA in individual cases and would be able to be compensated through settlement. This could potentially pick apart the NCAA and draw them closer to bankruptcy depending on the amount of lawsuits that come from former student-athletes looking to get a piece of the pie.

Models of Compensation

In the scenario that the NCAA agrees to a settlement, and is able to avoid bankruptcy from possibly thousands of individual lawsuits from former student-athletes, payment to current players for the use of their likeness would be inevitable. In order to maintain some level of amateurism, no matter how they compensate the student-athletes, whether by a percentage of their earnings or by a set amount each year, the NCAA would likely hold the payments to an

athlete until they have used all of their eligibility or upon graduation. Only then would that athlete receive payment, and from that point on would be compensated a cut of profits derived from using their likeness in TV broadcasts, videogames, and other media forms. Depending on the size of the cuts that go to the athletes themselves, this would greatly diminish the amount of money that the NCAA currently distributes to conferences and universities.

Sports Illustrated's Andy Farrey claims he spoke with a power conference athletic director who "tossed out \$2 million a year – to distribute to athletes" (Farrey, 2013). If this is the case, this would only be feasible to the "Big 5" power conferences now that the Big East has lost its heavy hitters to other lucrative markets. This would include 60 universities amounting to \$120 million in payments to players. The NCAA has long touted that they distribute 96% of their revenue back to the members of the NCAA and 60% directly to Division I conferences and schools, which according to their audited 2012 income, amounted to roughly \$522 million (NCAA, 2013). If the \$2 million per school were agreed upon, that would send nearly a quarter of the NCAA's 60% distribution money that fund a large chunk of each universities coaching salaries, facility improvements, team budgets, scholarships, etc., directly to the student-athletes. While this would take away a portion of these funds, it is safe to say that athletic departments would still be able to operate, granted they make some budget cuts. However, setting a specific amount would be rejected by those demanding a cut go to the student-athletes because it would not be adjusted for the recognized substantial growth in the media rights revenues over the last several years. In the expert report on class certification, economist Dr. Roger Noll writes that the plaintiffs are contesting for 50% of media rights profits to go to the student-athletes (Noll, 2013). Although it is highly unlikely that the plaintiffs would secure such a high percentage, based on NCAA's audited media rights revenue from 2012, this would send roughly \$350

million to the student-athletes at the 60 schools in the power conferences. This huge cut would no doubt send coaches' salaries, facility expansions, and team budgets plummeting in order to stay in operation. It would be likely that several sports that do not generate revenue would be cut. Additionally, the amount of scholarships would be greatly decreased, and perhaps only offered to athletes not eligible for the proposed "pay for play" system.

Furthermore, problems would stem from determining what sports or athletes would be eligible for the "pay to play" model, whether the school level distributed cut is 50% or \$2 million set amount. Questions arise whether those funds would be distributed to only revenue generating sports, or distributed evenly across all sports in order to comply with Title IX.

According to Title IX, which was signed into law in 1972 under the Education Amendments, "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013) Title IX uses a three part test in order to decide whether institutions that fall under the law are within the compliance boundaries. The said institution is compliant if it is able to pass any one of the three parts. The tests are:

- (1) "Whether intercollegiate level participation opportunities for male and female students are provided in numbers substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or",
- (2) "Where the members of one sex have been and are underrepresented among intercollegiate athletes, whether the institution can show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex; or",
- (3) "Where the members of one sex

are underrepresented among intercollegiate athletes, and the institution cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, as described above, whether it can be demonstrated that the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program.”

This three part test has enabled Title IX to advance gender equality immensely in the last 40 years in areas that stretch far beyond athletics. Title IX has had impact in all levels of public academia. Despite the rich history, little action has been taken to precisely define the reaches of the law, should collegiate athletes become eligible for compensation through the NCAA, conferences, or university. According to the language of the law, Title IX specifically seeks gender equity in; “participation” (which is expanded to athletic opportunity) and “benefits”, as well as the restriction of discrimination. The proposed compensation of players would not infringe upon any of these said opportunities for athletic participation, but depending on the finite definition of the term “benefits”, compensation of a select group Division I student-athletes may possibly violate Title IX. As currently defined, the interpretation of equal athletic opportunity and benefits extend to these ten specifications;

- “(1) Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes;
- (2)The provision of equipment and supplies;
- (3) Scheduling of games and practice time;
- (4) Travel and per diem allowance;
- (5) Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring on mathematics only;
- (6) Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors;
- (7) Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities;

- (8) Provision of medical and training facilities and services;
- (9) Provision of housing and dining facilities and services;
- (10) Publicity.” (Office for Civil Rights, 1979)

While it may be argued that most higher education institutions most likely fail at accomplishing at least one of these to the fullest extent, the interpretation given says nothing about entitlement to equal payment, with the exception of “per diem” which is strictly regulated. From this it can be concluded that the term “benefits” would most likely not include compensation, therefore not forbidding the NCAA, conferences, or schools from paying a select group of Division I Athletes. This would be limited to those athletes on teams responsible for generating revenue for their conference and school. With this conclusion, it should be noted that upon a reconstruction of the financial system of the NCAA, conferences, or schools in order to compensate the student-athletes, tremendous efforts to amend Title IX would also likely happen to accommodate student-athlete compensation.

It also may be noted that even though the NCAA doesn’t directly receive federal funding, the supreme court ruled in the 1999 case (NCAA) v. R.M. Smith, that the NCAA does indeed fall within the parameters of Title IX due to the indirect reception of federal funding through the dues that its federally funded member institutions pay to the NCAA in order to participate. This would effectively keep the NCAA from bypassing Title IX, should it be amended to include equal compensation, through the direct payment of student-athletes rather than going through the conferences and members institutions. This ruling also helped to define the extended reach of Title IX.

Assuming the bylaws of Title IX are amended to include equal payment across both genders, in the case that student-athletes become eligible for compensation, funds would have to

be distributed equally. Using the proposed \$2 million per school suggestion, using a sample school from a power conference with 400 athletes, receiving a cut of \$2 million would put \$5,000 in the pocket of the athletes each year. This amount probably isn't the huge profits most people assume would be going to the athletes. Although a model that rewarded performance and amount of revenue generated would probably be put in place due to Title IX, if that \$350 million were to be distributed evenly amongst the 60 schools, at a sample of 400 athletes (across all NCAA Division I sports) per school, it would send over \$14,000 a year to the student-athletes.

A more fitting model would compensate only the student-athletes that participate in the revenue earning sports; football and basketball. If Title IX failed to find governance over the compensation of student-athletes, possible compensation models could be constructed with complete creativity and relevance. This would be incredibly huge for the student-athletes who are widely given credit for generating the revenue for the NCAA from media rights at nearly a billion dollars per year. If a 50/50 revenue split were implemented, these (roughly 100)athletes would see their proposed trust accounts fill up at a minimum average of \$58,000 a year and grow from there as the NCAA sees more revenue gains each year from media rights income. A college football or basketball athlete could be looking at a quarter million dollar paycheck from the NCAA upon graduation or the end of their four years of their eligibility. If this is the case, it can probably be expected that the NCAA would fight for a bylaw in the contract with the student-athlete to only relinquish compensation upon graduation, not at the end of eligibility. This would provide incredible incentive for student-athletes to finish their degree, as well as a financial reward that rivals the possibility of a failed professional career. The only instance when a student-athlete would forgo an incredible quarter million dollar reward for graduating would be in the extremely small case of athletes that are a guarantee to play successfully in the

NFL or NBA. This payment system within the “pay for play” model is the most appealing financially; because it offers a substantial amount to the student-athletes that some believe deserve a cut of profits from the NCAA, while providing great incentive to finish their degree.

A possible payment system within a “pay for play” model that has not yet been proposed, but could possibly operate within the guidelines of Title IX, if it is amended to require equal payment opportunity to both men and women, is a model that cuts all Division I sports out of payment except for “Head-Count Sports” or sports that fall under a Title IX section, being two men’s sports; (the moneymakers) football and basketball, and on the women’s side; basketball, gymnastics, and volleyball. Currently, this section of sports is limited by the NCAA on how many individuals can receive athletic scholarships, but allows all athletes in these sports to receive a full scholarship. Although this cuts out athletes in many other sports, this will provide income for athletes that are eligible for full scholarships. According to NCAA’s 2010 publication of participation rates, this number is 32,978 athletes. Using a \$350 million estimation under the 50/50 revenue split advocated by the plaintiffs in the O’Bannon case, if the revenue was distributed evenly across all athletes, this would put an athlete’s yearly pay just over \$10,000, roughly. Remember though, that this might not only require the significant downsizing of Division I athletics to only two men’s sports and three women’s sports, it would also likely take away half of the NCAA’s distributions to conferences and universities to fund scholarships as well as coaching salaries, facilities, team budgets, etc. While this payment system could present a solution to a “pay for play” model that operates within the parameters of Title IX, this model could also significantly cut scholarship and educational opportunities for athletes in sports other than those that would be retained. Unless government officials cannot amend Title IX to

apply to paid student-athletes, the fight to pay players is caught between a serious legal obstacle and the pragmatic issue of paying those that contribute to the profits of the NCAA.

However, if the NCAA were to adopt a model that only compensates Division I football and basketball players, issues arise beyond gender equality. Assuming that the 50/50 revenue split would be divided between the football and basketball teams according to how much revenue the teams themselves generated, because the numbers of members of a football team is far greater than that of a basketball team and would allow for a walk-on athlete on the basketball team to make more money than that of a star quarterback. University of Texas athletic director Christine Plonsky issued a statement for the O'Bannon case that expressed her concern for what she believes is the possibility of unfair payments to certain athletes and the possible results of such payments. After giving revenues brought in by both the University of Texas football team and basketball team she explains, "If the various NCAA rules precluding pay for play were eliminated, NCAA Division I FBS (Football Bowl Series, formerly Division 1-A) schools would pay tens of thousands of dollars annually to all of the members of their football teams, including walk-ons who did not receive athletics scholarships, and potentially, for some schools, more than \$100,000 annually to each of their Division I men's basketball players (again, including walk-ons), without regard to how frequently a given player played in a game or appeared in a broadcast. I do not believe that is correct." (Dodds & Plonsky, 2013) Although, Christine Plonsky voices her concerns for a "pay for play" system, her argument is quick to assume that the basketball and football funds would be split evenly among participating teams.

Many advocates of the compensation of student-athletes have viewed the International Olympic Committee's model of compensation of athletes very favorably. This model allows for the payment of athletes through performance-based rewards like cash prizes and obviously the famous Olympic medals. The International Olympic Committee also allows Olympic athletes to engage in sponsorships and endorsement deals. Those in favor of an Olympic style model point heavily to the NCAA's Basketball Distribution Fund as a model already set in place that would send cash prizes directly to the players as compensation. Currently, the NCAA's points based reward system they call the Basketball Distribution Fund "provides monies to be distributed to Division I conferences based on their performance in the Division I Men's Basketball Championship over a six-year rolling period." Each year, a "unit" assumes a different value based on the revenues brought in by the championship for that year. The NCAA specifies that "One unit is awarded to each institution participating in each game, except in the championship game. In 2011-12 each basketball unit was approximately \$242,200 for a total of \$184.1 million distribution." (NCAA, 2013) From this, we can contest Christine Plonsky's argument, explaining that a walk-on athlete on a team that is not good enough to be invited to the tournament, or even loses in one of the first rounds of the tournament, will earn significantly less than a player of a championship team. This system may also be translated into Division I football.

Previously, The Bowl Championship Series awarded financial compensation to the conferences in a similar fashion and could take on the same model in order to compensate players and teams based on performance, but the BCS is being replaced. Starting in 2014, Division I college football will be implementing their new four team playoff system. The system uses three "contract" bowls and three "access" bowls to ensure that it is open access to all

schools that are able to play their way in during the regular season, using a ranking system and a selection committee to select the teams eligible for the playoff. Previously, the BCS media contract was worth about \$180 million per year, but under the new playoff system ESPN has solidified a media contract worth somewhere between \$400 and \$500 million per year. (Dinich, 2012) This will be significantly more money to the conferences and in the case that a “pay for play” system is implemented, using a model based on how well each of the teams play, could send more money to football teams than basketball teams earning rewards from the championship tournament. Also, those teams who do not play in the six top bowls, will still be able to play in the Football Bowl Series as they have in previous years. According to how well they play in that bowl, just as each team earns a cut from a bowl game, the players could be compensated from this cut as well, although it would be significantly less than if they had performed better to earn a spot in a higher profile and more profitable bowl. Outside of the old BCS system, there will continue to be 30 bowls with an average payout of just over \$2 million, ranging from \$7.25 million down to \$0.5 million. This puts to rest the concern shared by Ms. Plonsky and many others that the number of basketball players is significantly less than football and therefore would send more money to the walk-on basketball player than to the star quarterback.

Under the Olympic style compensation model, Division I student-athletes would not only be compensated through performance-based rewards or “cash prizes”, it also would allow for student-athletes to engage in sponsorship and endorsement deals. Historically, the Olympics were closed to professional athletes up until just a few decades ago. The International Olympic Committee opened its doors to professional athletes because they felt it gave all nations an even playing field to start from by deregulating the payment of players. It was then that some national

governments and even private companies began to sponsor athletes to go to the Olympics. It allowed someone to fund their training, nutrition, travel, equipment, and any other financial cost in order to have success at the Olympics. Translated to collegiate athletics, this system could possibly open up the door for individuals such as university boosters and private companies alike to sponsor an athlete, effectively funding their collegiate career. Historically, the NCAA has been adamantly opposed to the paying of players by boosters and other individuals, fearing that the level playing field of amateurism would be lost. In past investigations that have uncovered under-the-table deals of paying players, the NCAA has come down with a heavy hand by vacating wins, individual awards and achievements, championships, entire seasons, and even shutting down entire sport programs for several seasons at a time. Many argue that allowing boosters and others to pay the student-athletes with cash gifts, often referred to as “largesse”, would cause a lack of fairness across the league because teams with large fan bases and generous donors and boosters would rule the recruiting world, being able to pay the most to recruit the top talent. Others argue that this is already the case and little would change if at all. In an article that points to the advantages of the Olympic model, Andy Staples includes a comparison of the top football recruiting in 2013 and a list of the top football revenue producing schools for the 2011-12 school year. The list shows that four of the top revenue producing schools are also in the top seven in recruiting, and the others aren’t far behind. Expanding, Staples points out, “13 of the top 20 revenue producers are ranked in the top 20 of Rivals.com [recruiting] class of 2013 team rankings. The wealthiest schools already get the top recruits. Allowing boosters or companies to pay players wouldn’t change anything with regard to competitive equity.” (Staples, 2013) If the NCAA were to implement a system that allowed boosters to pay student-athletes, it would likely come with some sort of regulation in order to justify some sort of fairness. Some of

these regulations may include allowing a player to accept a sponsorship, but if he chooses to accept the sponsorship from a booster or company, he is then ineligible for scholarship. This would ensure that scholarship money goes to someone on a need-basis. Also, further regulations such as salary caps could be implemented so that major companies associated with collegiate sports aren't paying them egregious amounts beyond the full cost of attendance.

The Olympics also allow for the participation of athletes with endorsement deals. Endorsement deals differ from sponsorship in the idea that sponsors pay for the athlete to participate. Through the sponsor, they may or may not see a boost in business by being the sponsor. An endorsement is a business transaction that involves the payment of an athlete in return for that athlete to provide a testimonial and represent that company so that others are drawn to that company or brand. (Fetchko,Roy, Clow, 2013) Endorsement deals for student-athletes would be much less common than a sponsorship because of the selectivity a company would have when choosing a candidate to endorse their brand. The selection of an endorser usually includes both "likeability" and the endorser must be "a fit" or in alignment with the style, or values of the brand. Typically, only the most prominent sports figures, even at the professional level are able to obtain endorsement deals. With this said, a company that offers an endorsement deal to a collegiate athlete would be making a gamble that the athlete would continue to stay at the top level of performance in their respected sport through the end of their college career and professionally. Endorsement contracts are usually longer than 5 years and would require the athlete to keep a favorable image in the public eye. In the case that endorsements were allowed by the NCAA, only a select couple would likely to be eligible for major endorsement deals. Local endorsements would likely be much more common. Said "likeability" would be much easier to achieve on the local level. Within college towns there is a

much stronger feeling of relatedness of star student-athletes. Endorsement deals would be very popular for local businesses just as it is with former star athletes. It is highly unlikely that these local businesses would be able to fund an endorsement contract at the size that the public typically sees on the national or international level. If this option was made available to student-athletes, it is highly likely that student-athletes would be able to acquire player agents to manage their brand. These agents and their activities could be regulated by the NCAA as well. Salary caps on endorsement contracts, publicity marketing time limits and prohibitions of certain time periods that interfere with education and athletic participation, and other parameters could be enforced if the NCAA believes it is necessary.

While some school officials have voiced their opinions on the side of the NCAA, some have acknowledged the possibility of a financial system that pays players, and have even named possible actions they would take should the payment of Division I athletes become a reality. Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany has specifically expressed in a declaration in the O'Bannon case that "if current NCAA rules prohibiting student-athletes from being paid for playing in college sports did not exist, I do not believe...that the Big Ten would participate in a 50/50 revenue sharing or any other "pay for play" model with student-athletes." (Delany, 2013) He continues his declaration by pointing to a possible option that the Big Ten would take if a "pay for play" model was adopted by the NCAA Division I athletics. He explains that the Big Ten would choose to follow the Division III model by choosing to "forgo revenues" and take measures to "downsize the scope, breadth, and activities in athletics" and implementing only need-based financial aid to attend their universities, similar to the Ivy League schools. Taking such a strong stance against the "pay for play" model reflects much of the common feelings on the subject by many other university administrators who hold the value of a quality education at a renowned

university over the lucrative opportunities that collegiate athletics offer. In an interview with Andy Staples, Delany also uncovered a number of issues by asking one question that will have to be addressed if student-athletes are compensated: “Would those athletes then be considered employees by the government?” (Staples, 2013) If they are paid by the universities they play for, it is certain that they would become state employees, which opens issues of taxation and workers compensation. Similarly, compensation in the form of “cash rewards” from the NCAA, as proposed in the Olympic system of payment, student-athletes would possibly pay a heavy federal tax.

Taxation, state employment, self-employment, brand management, player agency, federal law, state law, rules, regulations and other implications are just the beginning of the myriad unanswered questions and unknown variables that present themselves when proposing a system to compensate players by means other than scholarship. Although the NCAA has faced many an opposition in the last 100 years, they may have never faced an opposition quite like the O’Bannon case. Current litigation could have the perfect timing, given the circumstances in today’s society, to fully bring an end to amateurism and the NCAA as a governing body in intercollegiate athletics. With the possible crumbling of the NCAA looming in the near future, it will be interesting to see how the college sports world will be reconstructed to keep the grip on the multibillion dollar sports industry of today and the effects it will have on education, private business, government and the American people.

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'Strawn, Inc.'

Caleb Strawn

Mission statements are typically used by companies and organizations that wish to express their reason for existence; in my case, I have a mission statement for my personal purpose. I am 'Strawn Inc., my mission is to create positivity, opportunity, and value in the lives of all those around me. This is incredibly broad, spanning across all facets of my life, and reaching deep into the web of relationships that make up society as a whole. I apply this mission at work, in my social life, with my family, and any other capacities that I am active in. It pushes me to constantly improve myself, so that I can grow the extent to which I affect and influence the people around me. It forces me to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and in many other ways.

While my mission statement may seem expansive and ambiguous, my vision statement provides a clearly focused platform to analyze my leadership and management abilities. My vision for the next decade is to lead an organization that effectively combines the lessons from sport, adventure, and all physical activity to provide and create opportunities for others to increase the value of their lives. This vision is the culmination of many personal experiences that served as pieces to a puzzle which forms a picture of my future and my calling in life.

Many people go through phases of deciding what occupation to choose for their life, some beginning at an early age; and I was no exception. At the ripe age of eight, I had aspirations of a career in the NBA. Although I have clung to my love for sports throughout my life, I have developed other, more realistic aspirations for myself. I also decided at one point that I would own my own business, even though the specific vocation was not important. I began my

first year of college as an engineering student. Driven by my knack for creativity and ingenuity, I aspired to build better, faster, safer, and more efficient automobiles. As is typical for a young undergraduate, I became discouraged and burned out between the high level of classes and my low level of commitment. Following this fallout, I changed my major to Exercise and Sport Sciences with plans to pursue my passion for sports and positively influence the lives of young people in the same way my coaches had influenced me. Invigorated by a new desire for teaching young people, I completed my ESS degree with a minor in Education, and a minor in English. During this time in my undergraduate experience, I gained an incredible amount of knowledge and insight into human communication, learning styles, and behavior.

With graduation on the horizon, a crippled economy coupled with my thirst for self-improvement influenced me to postpone the start of a career in coaching and teaching at the high school level. I wanted to know what Division I sports looked like from the inside, and also to further my education in an area that I was not at all familiar with, but was interested in because of the profitability. Business was a subject that I had never studied but had a desire to learn, with hopes that one day I may still be able to own a business and ensure a work life that I will be passionate about. Now that I have almost completed my graduate degree in Sports Marketing and Management, this has become more than a hope, but a vision at which I will strive to achieve.

During this time in which I've gathered the pieces to my puzzle, I've also developed a set of core values. Whether instilled by my parents or learned through experience, these core values guide my decision making and define who I am as a person. I consider myself to be an ethical person and strong in my moral code. My core values are integrity, selflessness, responsibility, faith, and discipline. I believe integrity is important because it encompasses and fosters a wide

range of valuable assets like honesty, trust, and duty. Being a person of integrity allows for others to place trust in me because I am honest and open about my own motivations and actions. Doing things for the right reasons shows others that I can be counted on to accomplish a goal, and do so in an honorable manner.

Selflessness is important to me because it is at the root of what I feel I am called to do. I would like ‘Strawn, Inc.’ to be thought of as a non-profit organization that strives to grow in order to maximize the benefits it offers. I am here to serve others and increase the positivity in the lives of those around me. I do my best to act in a way that maximizes the good for others, and in some cases that may mean I need to make sacrifices. I am a firm believer that no great feat may be accomplished without sacrifice.

Another core value is responsibility. I believe that a person is forever responsible for their actions and should be willing to answer to success and failure just the same. From a very young age, I can remember my mother telling me that “we are given great privilege, and with that comes great responsibility”. This is something that I have not forgotten but have established it as a building block on which I build my life on.

I place high importance on discipline. I also learned what discipline was at an early age. My parents were not afraid to discipline me when I could not discipline myself. Through my own experiences, I quickly learned that it is better to discipline yourself, so that others don’t have to. Since that time, I have done my best to discipline myself in every aspect of my life. I try to behave in a way that is conducive to achieving my goals, respecting others, and representing myself and others who I associate with in a favorable light. I have learned to exhibit self-control, which often brings me pride and a sense of accomplishment.

Lastly, faith guides me as much as any other value that I place importance in. Faith is not something that I use to shift my responsibility, rather to place trust in myself and others that the right decisions will be made and the outcome will be for the best. This may seem like blind optimism, but I can differentiate between the two. Blind optimism is the amplification of evidence in order to manifest a positive attitude, while faith is the belief that even from nothing, there will be something. Faith requires no evidence and allows for peace of mind. Faith creates stability and courage.

These core values will be guides for making important or tough decisions in the workplace. I believe that authentic leadership is something that can be learned, but it must have a strong foundation of core values that becomes a part of someone at an early age. Authentic leaders consider their values with every decision they make, and I plan to use this tactic in my own decision making. Using an ethical decision making model will ensure an ethically acceptable decision will be made. I feel that my core values are in alignment with many of the consequentialist and deontological principles and theories that are used in Trevino and Nelson's Ethical Decision-making Model. My virtue ethics that I use for daily guidance will also provide the appropriate amount of direction to sufficiently undermine or support the ethical issue.

Using the surveys from myvirtualmentor.com, some of the values that I ranked the highest are; Achievement, Self-Direction, Stimulation, and Benevolence. Achievement is defined as "personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards". Because I ranked this the highest, and I include Selflessness as a core value, it may seem contradictory but I see my personal achievements as important stepping stones to a place where I may be able to serve others more easily, and with more impact. I want to achieve in order to create benevolence.

Self-Direction was ranked second highest because of my engrained mindset of independence. I have always been a very independent person, and I have a need to choose my own destiny, explore my own capabilities, and set my own goals. Self-Direction is important because it allows me to have my own sense of accomplishment when I finish a goal or task I set for myself and satisfies my intrinsic need for achievement.

Stimulation is important to me because of my high level of curiosity. I need stimulation in order to stay focused or passionate about a goal, task, or subject. I am constantly seeking something new to learn. When something becomes repetitive or predictable, I quickly lose interest and become sensitive to outside stimulation. I enjoy excitement and action. I love to travel to new places and do things I've never done before. Learning new things excites me, and I often find myself craving random knowledge or researching odd subjects.

Benevolence is ranked so highly because of my desire to help people. This is a key factor that has helped choose the direction of my career path. As mentioned before, I feel called to coach/teach/create opportunity for those close to me, and/or involved in my circles of influence. I want to become someone who leads others to better lives and enables people to improve themselves and their life situation.

My virtual mentor was very helpful in the results that it provided, because they were so inclusive to so many different aspects of my leadership skills and abilities. Through these reports I was able to confirm previous suspicions and also discover new assets and liabilities of 'Strawn, Inc.'. Most of my liabilities are converse sides to some of the assets I offer, and some are much more impactful and require greater attention. I believe this section is just as important as the section describing my assets, because this is where I can learn the most and make a serious

effort to improve myself. My most hampering liability is the avoidance of conflict. Like most of my other liabilities, I have been previously aware of my downfalls in this area and have struggled with the improvement of them for quite some time. Avoiding conflict has been one of my liabilities that I have improved greatly, but is still an issue when dealing with team mates and coworkers. I typically see these people as my friends and don't want to make them upset by calling them out on something that is wrong or done with poor performance.

Another liability is Time Management, or lack thereof. Because I am person that seeks excitement and am quick to be distracted, I struggle with properly managing my time. I often find myself distracted and derailed from projects, by getting lost in some small detail or peripheral task to the project. This is difficult as many times I find myself against tough deadlines, and working like mad to get the task or project completed. That said, I do work well under pressure. I enjoy the rush of racing deadlines and find energy in pushing myself finish in time, and do the best possible job. When I have too much time to do a project, I often lack the drive to aggressively attack the assignment and my ability to concentrate or focus is frustratingly low.

Some of my greatest strengths or assets include Locus of Control, Self-awareness, Flexibility, and Learning/Mastery Goal Orientation. My score for Locus of Control was a 7. This meant that I have a Locus of Control that is more internally oriented than external, meaning that I feel that people generally receive what they put in. In other words, I take more responsibility for results of decisions I've made, rather than interpreting the outcomes as results of things that are out of my control. I do realize that some things happen that really are out of our control, and understand that we can't control absolutely everything in life. According to

Myvirtualmentor, scores between 6 and 8 are typically characteristics of highly successful managers.

Another great asset I possess is my Self-awareness. This suddenly became apparent to me when I opened the first page of the Virtual Mentor Leadership Questionnaire, where a graphic shows your own self-assessment results alongside an average of all the respondents' feedback on the leadership survey. In this category, I was eerily close to reporting all of the same answers as the field of the respondents. My self-assessment responses were within .6 points from the average in all six categories of leadership; Integrity/Commitment, Collaborative Communication, Managing Performance, Conflict Management, Meeting/Presentation Skills, and Innovative Problem Solving. On the Self-Awareness survey I received a rating of 81 on a scale from 20 to 100. This was scored in the high category, which "research strongly demonstrates [future] leadership success because it is the basis for understanding how we influence others [and also, important] for personal growth". I am very open to feedback, even if that includes negative feedback, and I typically appreciate others' unique qualities, understanding that a good team requires a heterogeneous mix of personality types and cultures.

I have many stakeholders in my life now and will have many more in the future. I hope that most of these stakeholders will be positively affected by my ability as a leader. Some of these stakeholders include my family and friends outside of my career, but may still be just as eligible to receive positive or negative impact from my skills and abilities or personality traits, innate or developed. These people include those that I involve myself with through charities or community service, or even the daily passers-by that I interact with. More specifically, those internal to my future career, my coworkers or teammates, my bosses, my subordinates, and others in the workplace will definitely be affected by my leadership and management style.

These people will be impacted by my leadership and management style, because of the amount of time, and the circumstances in which we will interact. Daily communication, and the heightened need to perform, inherent in the workplace, will amplify these effects as well. I realize the difficult decisions I make in the workplace will have greater impacts on those stakeholders influenced by my leadership and management skills.

A great example of how my internal stakeholders may be more affected than the external stakeholders is to draw a parallel to my time working with Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) for a class project. In this instance, the internal stakeholders were the group members from my class, RMHC receptionist Sharon, the entertainment that we partnered with, as well as McLane Distributors who we also partnered with to obtain regular donations of snack foods to RMHC. The external stakeholders were the families that received the donations and live entertainment with a carefully prepared substantial meal. This is very similar to the stakeholders that will be impacted by my leadership style in my career. Then and now, my potential customers, or those who can benefit from my leadership and personality are endless. I plan for my positivity to permeate as wide as possible, and I strive for it to take a deep enough affect that it may be seen in others, and influence those lives around them.

In order to affect these people with that much intensity, I must offer a diverse line of high quality products. Some of the goods and services that I offer were mentioned before, but it is my locus of control that allows for stability in which others may be reassured or find confidence. Throughout my life, many of my friends, family, and coworkers have been drawn to me to seek out advice. Many times I feel no more qualified to solve their problems or issues than they are, but I apparently have the ability to listen to people and empathize with them, and effectively give guidance.

Another feature that I offer is my flexibility and my curiosity. I am always open to new experiences, challenges, problems, or any other unforeseen experience. I enjoy the rush of being forced to learn new things in order to overcome obstacles. I have always been considered a quick learner by my friends and family, and have used this to my advantage many times at work and in school. I love to take on new and different roles, and broaden my array of abilities. I am confident in many different activities not only in work and school, but in my personal life as well. I've enjoyed learning all kinds of tasks, hobbies, and interests ranging from building cars, playing guitar, recording music, capturing and editing video, all things sports and adventure, working on computers, carpentry, general repairs, and many other disciplines. As Thomas Henry Huxley put it, I strive to "learn something about everything and everything about something". This is also evident from my journey through higher education over the last 6 years. I am now educated at the collegiate level in Exercise, Sport, Nutrition, Education, Human Behavior, English, and now Management and Marketing.

Other products and characteristics I offer that others may struggle to imitate is my passion for high achievement and accomplishment. When I set my mind to do something and do it well, that is exactly what I'm going to do. I have learned this over the course of my education and experience in the last two or three years. I've matured as a person and grown and my confidence in my ability to learn has increased an incredible amount. Another product that I possess and has been brought to my attention in my Virtual Mentor survey is my charisma. Some of the feedback I received explained that I am "extremely charismatic and able to explain every detail of a problem or solution in a way that everyone understands, in a manner that will engage and better the group or team". I also received a higher score in giving presentations and being engaging than I rated myself. I suppose that I should take this strength and sharpen it in

order to become more confident in myself in this area, so that I can provide presentations at a higher quality than most others. Having qualities that others cannot imitate is very valuable. ‘Strawn, Inc.’ offers a product line that is a combination of these assets and many more that only I am able to offer.

‘Strawn, Inc.’ has also invested heavily in itself in order to expand its business and offer better products and services to as many customers as possible. I have invested heavily in my education and I firmly believe that it will be very beneficial in the near future. The cost has been considerable, much more than I had anticipated at the beginning of my journey through higher education. But the benefits of that cost have already been recognized by the stakeholders of ‘Strawn, Inc.’. As previously mentioned, my education has covered a large expanse of studies and it has furthered my flexibility and versatility. This has also been valuable because I have been able to draw upon my lessons from these different studies and apply them to other areas of study and facets of life. I have been able to take what I learned in my education course and put it to use during my time working both as a hotel bartender and also as a graduate manager for the Texas Tech basketball team. I have been able to invest with a wide variety of work and volunteer experiences as well. I have worked or participated in retail, restaurant, hotel, private clubs, charity organizations, Special Olympics, youth sports, elementary education, secondary education, Division 1 sports, and many other experiences. My investments in myself will not only pay for themselves in the near future, but they will be beneficial beyond measure and provide me with the opportunities I need to fulfill my vision for the next decade as well as my mission in life.

However, in order to do this I will need to continue investing in myself. I cannot obtain a job after I graduate and stop learning about myself and how I interact with others. I will

constantly need to continue developing better strategies for solving problems and challenges within and outside of the workplace. Previously, I discussed a few liabilities or weaknesses that I have already been aware of and trying to improve. My two most important growth objectives are strengthening my management of time and instead of avoiding conflict, embracing it in order to constructively solve problems. This doesn't mean I intend to start confrontations, but instead move forward without fear of confrontation with my coworkers or teammates. When I see something that needs to be addressed I will make the conscious effort to weigh the positive and negative possibilities that could come from either addressing a problem, or avoiding the problem for fear of confrontation. Sometimes, it will be wise to pick my battles, but those are situations that I must attack with purpose. I will start writing down the problems that I see need addressing within my group work in school or with coworkers. I will then weigh all sides of the issue with the ethical issues in mind and with each of the different scopes that are explained in the Trevino & Nelson ethical decision making model. Once I have a better and more conscious grasp on what needs to be done, I will be able to take action and solve problems and challenges with a much greater effectiveness and efficiency. This is a goal that will take long term effort. Problems where I have to address conflict won't manifest every day, so it will be much harder for me to be aware and make a conscious effort to uncover these problems. This is a goal that will take months and maybe years to perfect, but this is an area that I will be able to turn a weakness into a strength.

With regards to time management, I have already improved greatly, but still struggle somewhat with this issue. I have developed planning strategies that take advantage of calendars and lists. I've found that there is no secret to being a good manager of time; it just takes a lot of effort to create good habits. Other tactics that I will implement within the next 10 to 12 weeks

will be to take advantage of technology and use reminders, notifications, and alarms to keep myself aware of my deadlines. While getting places on time is part of the struggle, the main problem I face is the unconscious decision to procrastinate and succumb to the temptation of distraction. In order to fight this, I need to strategically place myself in situations that limit my ability to be distracted. Often times, it may include unplugging from the internet or getting away from items that strike my curiosity. I plan to improve these weaknesses in order to increase my efficiency and effectiveness and in turn become a better teammate, group member, manager, leader, and person. I believe that if I am able to improve myself, I will be able to help others improve themselves as well.

‘Strawn, Inc.’ can be thought of as a newly begun non-profit organization that is still within its infancy of operation. This doesn’t mean that ‘Strawn, Inc.’ is a weak entity or an ineffective organization, but that it has a future that includes incredible success due to its continuous investments in itself, and its infinite thirst for learning and self-improvement.

Vital Concepts in Sports and Business

Caleb Strawn

Decision

Earning a master's degree was never in my plans; at least not until a little more than a month before my first classes began in January of 2012. My decision to pursue a master's degree came from several different factors. One was the possibility of a graduate assistant position with the men's basketball team, enabling me to gain another year of experience in the college basketball world as well as providing an almost guaranteed acceptance into graduate school. However, the largest factor that pushed my decision to pursue a master's degree was a feeling of discontent with the field I was prepared to enter and to some extent with myself. Fresh off a fall semester of student teaching that completed a bachelor's degree in Exercise and Sport Sciences with a double minor in Education and English, I was prepared to coach and teach in high school. Although this career plan seemed to fit with what I wanted do in life, I felt as though I had robbed myself of a full education by limiting myself to learning what I was comfortable with. Growing up in a family whose world revolved around sports, both at the youth and high school level, I naturally became content with the idea of coaching basketball in high school. After all, my mission in life is to teach kids how to become better people through basketball and my influence as a teacher and a coach. In addition to this, I was, and continue to be, discontent with the public educational system and therefore was hesitant to jump into a coaching and teaching position that I wouldn't get paid much to do, and even worse - that I wouldn't enjoy it. As graduation quickly approached, I realized that pursuing a master's degree would not only postpone the inevitable dive into the 'real-world', it would also allow me to somewhat restart my education and re-focus what I wanted to learn about, and explore career

options that still fulfilled my life mission while fulfilling my needs and wants. I also knew that if I failed to find my way into a successful career, I could always fall back on my ability to coach and teach.

Even though I wanted to explore something other than the coaching and teaching model, I still felt the need to keep sports at the heart of my new endeavors. I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, constantly coming up with new ideas, inventions, or improvements. Beyond the typical childhood lemonade stand and lawn mowing service, I have had my own stents of self-employment and on several occasions throughout my education my dad suggested I study business. Taking his advice, I took an interest in the business side of sports. Before I applied to Texas Tech's graduate school, I met with Dr. Ralph Ferguson who told me about the Interdisciplinary Studies program that allowed for students to build their own degree. I recognized the unique opportunity to fine-tune a degree that could be used to broaden my education from sport sciences to sports business and business in general. I quickly assembled a degree plan that incorporated Sports Management, Business Management, and Business Marketing. Each section of my degree compromised of coursework that had a specific purpose. In the Sport Management section I wanted to gain understanding of how to manage a wide array of sports organizations. This would include the management of teams, leagues, venues and events. In Business Marketing, I tried to gain a basis of marketing knowledge through basic classes in marketing and advertising, and then fine tune my marketing skills within the services and business to business industries. I know that these two aspects of business are far reaching and will prove to be useful in my career. In my Business Management section of coursework, I wanted to learn about how to manage business processes and the people that make them work. From this, I found importance in taking classes in Leadership, Organizational Behavior and

Negotiation and Conflict Management. Although Price and Income Theory is not technically a management class, I took it because I felt that I was undereducated regarding the financial side of business and knew my knowledge of business processes would benefit greatly from a microeconomics class.

Coursework

Sports Management

- Marketing and Promotion in Sport
- Event Planning and Management
- Sport in American Culture
- Sport Management.

Business Marketing

- Marketing Concepts and Strategies
- Business to Business Marketing
- Services Marketing
- Advertising and The Consumer

Business Management

- Leadership and Ethics
- Negotiation and Conflict Management
- Managing Organizational Behavior and Organizational Design
- Price and Income Theory

At times it was difficult to adjust to the availability of classes, given that I was not enrolled in a set program with required classes. The classes I took were a combination of those that I had preselected when building my degree plan as well as those that I enrolled in due to what classes were available at the time I needed to take them. I see this as an experience that helped me recognize the importance of flexibility. Much like the life I expect after graduation, I

know that opportunities and events will present themselves and it is up to me to evaluate those opportunities and make choices based on how they will fit within the bigger picture and my life's mission.

While the process of determining my graduate schooling was an educational experience in itself, I have found that most of the courses I have taken have been constructed to emphasize a “learning by doing” model. Although this model was used occasionally during my undergraduate education, it was rarely at the center of the teaching philosophy like it has been in graduate school. This experiential-based graduate education has presented two key themes that have been reinforced by all three of my subject areas. As it is customary to draw commonalities from the parallel worlds of business and sports, I have discovered the two key themes that lie embedded in both and how I can use these to be effective in my future career. The first theme is the management of people, with specific regard to the importance of relationships and the ability to manage through leadership, motivation, negotiation, and conflict management. The second theme is the management of operations. This refers to the X's and O's of how to run a business or team by constructing a plan and processes that allows for both flexibility and perseverance as well as the appropriate communications to discover what changes to make or which areas need to be flexible in order to achieve the planned outcome. These key themes were learned not only in the classroom, but through experiences including events, simulations, and entrepreneurial projects. These two key concepts have provided me with the awareness, ability and confidence I need to succeed in the sports business industry.

People Management

The management of people is an incredibly important part of sports and business as well as most every other industry. Relationships are necessary for an idea to turn into a reality, whether that idea is an event, product, or company. In my time in graduate school I have learned this through the events that I was able to take a large role in organizing and executing. I have also learned this through the opportunity to manage a team of students responsible for the creation, launch, and promotion of a mobile device application. In order for these experiences to be successful, it has taken leadership, the ability to motivate and negotiate through good communication, and in a few instances manage conflict.

Experiences

The first event that I took part in was a golf tournament that was organized by my Event Planning & Management class. The professor gave us full range of creativity to decide the purpose and nature of the event. Although there was some conflicting ideas and creativity flowing abundant in the classroom, the class decided to organize a golf tournament in order to benefit a scholarship fund for sports management majors. We agreed that a golf tournament would be the most feasible event to conduct given our target market and the possible profitability. We split into departmental teams, some in charge of marketing and some in charge of finance, operations, and so forth. My group oversaw operations, developing the tournament logistics and ensuring the experience would surpass the expectations of the players and all those involved with the tournament. I was able to take a leading role in our group, immediately drawing out a plan that would ensure our desired outcome. My leadership manifested itself when my team members got behind the five things most important things I believed that we could control in order to reach our goals. Those five components included organization of time

and layout, transparency of scoring and operations, the high priority of player comfort, and the importance of a great attitude from tournament staff. From this experience I learned that there are many times when there is a need for someone to take a leadership position and no one is willing to step up. A leader can often times be born out of sheer courage, even when they aren't confident in their ability to lead, but have enough qualification in the subject whether through knowledge, ability, experience, etc. This was my situation in the golf tournament. I had never led the operations of a golf tournament, but neither had anyone else. I felt just as qualified or unqualified as the next person. The difference between myself and the others, was simply my willingness to say what I thought needed to happen. I had played in a golf tournament before and knew what the customer would want. So I found myself in this leadership role after no one else would speak up. Conversely, many times there is a fight for leadership over a position. In this case, it would have been preferred by most that the most qualified person based on skill, ability, knowledge, and experience secure that leadership role. However, many times a true leader emerges through the pure ability to manage relationships with great success, regardless of any other qualifications. I've seen this in many situations throughout sports and can be equally applied to the world of business. This idea gives me great confidence and inspiration to be a successful leader in whatever future endeavor I am involved with. I know that qualifications of a person based on the skills and abilities help a leader, but they do not make a leader.

To raise the most money possible, we constructed a tiered system of sponsorship. Other classmates and I spent weeks contacting local businesses in search of sponsors. This activity taught me a lot about sales and the importance of people and relationships in the facilitation of making an idea become a reality. Many of the sponsors I contacted were those involved in businesses that I had previously worked for or personally knew. Through my relationships, I

was able to obtain a large portion of our sponsorship money. However, not all of the pursuit of sponsors was easy. In some cases I had to use negotiation and motivation skills in order to persuade some sponsors to donate, or donate a larger amount than they originally planned. Later in my coursework, I took a course on negotiation and learned an incredible amount about the negotiation process as well as tools and tactics in order to be a successful negotiator. I really wish I would have had this skillset prior to seeking the sponsorships for the golf tournament; however I know that this will be incredibly valuable in the future relations I have with those that can assist with my ideas or interests.

Through the teamwork of the entire class, we were able to raise almost \$3,000 in scholarship money, all while operating a smashingly successful golf tournament in which over 100 people participated. The tournament was held at the prestigious Rawls Golf Course and included participation gifts, door prizes, a silent auction, four individual contests, and a great meal. We received excellent reviews and requests to continue our golf tournament annually.

I have learned a great deal about the management of people in other projects as well, including an on-going project in which I manage a group of undergraduates responsible for the development of a mobile device application called Book Hook. The app was created by my team of undergraduates to provide an alternative to the current textbook market in which bookstores charge a price for a textbook, and then buy back the same book at the end of the semester for an incredibly small percentage of the original price. The book stores are then able to sell the same book for nearly the same price to the students taking the same class a semester later, and the cycle continues. The idea behind our app is to connect students with each other so they can create their own textbook market by buying and selling textbooks to each other, bypassing bookstores and effectively saving a large percentage of the money that would be lost when they

sell their books back to the bookstores. I am proud of my team for a great idea, but the excitement of the great idea has been met with the demotivating combination of difficulty in the successful launch of the app and the burnout factor as their graduation approaches. My job as a manager comes with many expectations, one of which is to keep my team motivated, very much like the responsibility of a coach of a sports team must keep his team motivated when they are met with their own struggles throughout a game or season. In the beginning, it was easy to keep them motivated, as it usually is. I was able to key in on both the external factors such as a good grade and the possibility of financial gain as well as internal factors, such as the pride and sense of ownership of an innovative creation and accomplishment that could come from the success of our app. As we moved forward through the process of building a successful app, the motivation and morale of the team fell, as they became busy with other classes and the project became somewhat stagnant while in the lengthy review process of Apple's App Store. In order to keep my team producing at a high level, I used what I had learned from my Management of Organizational Behavior class and what I already knew from coaching and teaching. Using a "carrot and stick" method, described by Daniel Pink as the use of extrinsic factors like rewards and punishments to motivate, wouldn't help because the project had taken on a perception of much smaller importance in the minds of my team now that the idea of financial gain seemed less likely, and the good grade was dwarfed by higher priorities of graduation and finding a job. Instead, I keyed in on what motivated them intrinsically, reminding them of where the project could be even after they graduate. I questioned their loyalty to the project after graduation and whether they wanted to be involved. I encouraged them to think about the future of the app instead of the current struggle and in doing so; they re-recognized the possibility of its success. After each member thought about their future and the future of the app, I could see a flicker of

motivation rise through the recognition that they wanted to stay involved with the app because of its potential for success. After this realization, they worked with a sense of greater purpose.

Although this is on a much smaller scale, I recognized this is an example of the daily responsibility I will take on as a manager in the sports business industry. These tools and tactics that I have not only learned in the classroom, but practiced through projects and other experiences, are the same tools that I will use to manage the people and relationships of those that I work with, work for, and those that work for me.

Team Building

Another aspect of the management of people and the importance of relationships in the workplace is team building. In sports, there are varying degrees of team building or assembling key players that would result in a successful season. Professional sports experiences a maximum level of freedom to recruit and build a team, with the only limiting factor being money. At the collegiate level, coaches can build a team and recruit players, but must do so in a much more limited environment, typically within the guidelines of the NCAA or the governing body in which their school operates. In high school, coaches are completely restricted from recruiting athletes to attend their school in order to assemble teams that have a competitive advantage, and instead must select from students that already attend the said school. In the business world, all of these different situations may present themselves to a manager of a team. A manager may have the freedom to go out and recruit employees to build a team that will ensure success or a manager may be assigned a team of employees to work together on a project. My time involved with the Texas Tech basketball team and working in group projects has taught me some interesting strategies and tools for assembling a team that is inclined for success. Although specifically selecting a group of individuals to work together would be ideal, it is not often the

case. Being a successful manager of people, requires excellent team building skills by building cohesion, encouraging disruptive innovation and creativity, fostering healthy conflict, improving motivation and morale, and ultimately maximizing productivity even when recruiting, or team assembly is not an available option. This becomes evident when comparing my experiences like the development of the Book Hook app and other instances where I was assigned a team versus a major class project in my organizational behavior class where we were assigned to teams based on numerous personality traits and assembled with the greatest heterogeneity possible. This latter team was incredibly productive and had little troubles with creativity. We were able to accomplish most tasks we were challenged with, and did so with some level of healthy conflict. Both the assembly and management aspects of team building have been a valuable lesson throughout my graduate school experience that I will undoubtedly use as a future manager.

Effective relationship building and successful management of people can open doors to develop a network of connections all around you, allowing for achievement and success far beyond that of what a single person can do alone. For this reason, I believe that I have gained one of the most enabling managerial skills, whether in business, sports or both. While I recognize the significance of people and relationships in the workplace, I also recognize that this alone will not make a successful business manager. A well-constructed business plan and the processes that allow for constant innovation and progress through flexibility is at the root of both a successful team and business.

Learning Business

Beginning my sports marketing and management degree, I knew the greatest challenge I would face was learning about business. I had very little formal education in business,

marketing or finance. I found the business industry to be a complex combination of many different disciplines that must be artfully managed in order to be successful. In marketing, it takes strategic segmentation that relies on quality information and metrics, tactful targeting and an intuitive talent to position a product or company with great success. It takes a carefully crafted operations process and the financial discipline to budget and allocate a company's money to the right departments and in the right amounts in order to fuel the engine further down the road, becoming more and more efficient as it strives to achieve the next goal. Looking at an entire business with a magnifying glass can be intimidating and complex. However, taking a step back to see the big picture, I have discovered several key concepts that help make a business successful.

Planning

The first concept is importance of a plan. Similar to sports, planning is paramount to the success of a business. In basketball, we begin the season with a plan. This plan is made up of hundreds of smaller plans; practice plans, game plans, weekly plans, etc. The same concept is easily transferred to business. Just as we began our golf tournament with the development of several sets of plans, and in the same way I planned the first meeting and the entire semester with my Book Hook team, a startup business needs a plan. A quality business plan answers the questions regarding who, what, when, where, why and how. It does this by supplying information that provides guidelines for the development of that idea into a reality. Just as a great architectural idea cannot become a beautiful building without information about measurements and specifications laid out in a blueprint, a basketball team cannot win a championship without a blueprint for the season, every practice, and every game, and a business cannot get off the ground if it doesn't have a carefully constructed plan.

At the heart of every good business plan there is a set of goals that define a purpose or mission. Previously, because of my experience in sports and the competitive drive to be the best, I have always believed that a mission was a hard goal, set in stone from day one. I have learned through my projects and experiences, that a mission is far from permanent. Instead, it is a living, breathing organism that is subject to change but keeps its core true to the purpose of its creation. I compare a business' mission to a tree; while its trunk or core is deeply rooted, it remains almost immovable; however, it maintains the flexibility to bend in the wind without breaking. A startup company or any mature business must have flexibility to withstand the ever-changing market that it operates in. Some aspects of business are more subject to change than others, but every aspect must be flexible if that business is committed to survival and success. This includes a company's people, its process, its strategy and even the key products or services it offers. This is why a business plan should be put together to maintain the core values of the company while incorporating flexibility through the implementation of multiple smaller plans for each facet of the business.

MarketPlace Live was the best lesson in business flexibility that I have learned during my graduate school experience. The MarketPlace Live simulation was an eight week competition among teams of master's students from different universities all over the world who run a virtual company from startup. Some of the decisions and duties included using investment money to purchase market research, analyze the market, choose sales office locations and sales strategies, select a manufacturing location, develop products, and generate sales. The simulation included five different customer segments in 20 different locations throughout five different regions of the world. I served as Chief Marketing Officer and two others on my team acted as Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer. Every week served as a quarter where we would strategize

to gain market share from our competing companies, maximize profits, and effectively dominate the marketplace. This simulation was a valuable lesson because it not only taught us how to run a complex business, it required us to build a business plan and make changes to that plan every week in reaction and anticipation of the competition and the market trends. While implementing this flexibility into our company, every week we gave a quarterly executive briefing which emphasized how important it is to validate the business decisions with the business plan.

Communication

The second vital concept that must be present in the management of a business is the massive role of communication. In order for a business to be successful, it must effectively communicate internally by making sure that each department is on the same page and work in harmony to achieve the same goals while focusing on their area of expertise. A company must also communicate externally, proving its worth through a value proposition to its customers by using its products, branding and customer service. But the most significant form of communication for a business is its reception of information, or its ability to learn more about the environment in which it operates.

When a coach begins a season, he is looking for several major aspects in his players. Some of these characteristics are slower to develop, such as talent or skill, while others are much more controllable by the players themselves. One of the aspects that are controllable by the mentally capable athlete is 'coach-ability'. A good coach will always try to teach his players to be as coachable as possible. It is important to realize that if a player wants to dominate a sport, he must learn from the sport by being coachable. This concept can be directly applied to the world of business. If a company wants to dominate the market, it must learn from the market as

much as it can, and continue to do so as the market changes. In order for the company to learn, it must be not only open to communication from its customers, but it must do everything to encourage and enable the feedback so that it has an abundant amount of quality information that it can use to take action. In sports, a player's 'coach-ability' is a direct reflection of how quickly that player can progress. As a manager, it is my role to maximize a company's 'coach-ability', or the encouragement of feedback, and then use the right feedback to fuel the business decisions involved in business management. I associate 'coach-ability' to what *The Lean Startup* refers to as the "Build-Measure-Learn feedback loop." In the book, Eric Ries describes how this system effectively "steers a startup", but I believe this can be applied to a business at any stage in the company life-cycle. 'Build' is establishing a baseline or benchmark for a product, a service, a brand image, or any other aspect of a business so that there is something to measure. 'Measure' refers to the communication and feedback of information from customers to the business. This is an important stage in the feedback loop because it is vital that the business not only needs to interpret the data well, but they need to interpret the right type of data. A company can make a mistake by interpreting 'vanity metrics' instead of 'actionable metrics'. Coaches warn players, especially at the college level to never read their own press clippings. This is similar to vanity metrics because they only show the big picture but do not assess the true rate of progress and effectively make you feel better than you should. Instead, coaches constantly remind players of what they need to work on, and how it will help them accelerate the progression of skills. This is the idea behind actionable metrics. These types of metrics truly analyze the rate of progress and can answer the question that asks why performance is at the level that it is. When we are able to analyze actionable metrics and confidently take action to improve, we have experienced the 'Learn' phase of the feedback loop. From here, an athlete and business are able to implement

some sort of change in their skillset, products or features, or some facet that will yield a successful progression. Without effective communication and feedback, a business will spin its wheels and go nowhere, regardless of how hard the team of business managers works.

From this emphasis of communication comes the importance of feedback from a company's customers. A company will only find success if it is willing to adjust to the feedback and effectively change whatever aspect they need to change. Now that I have experienced this in the classroom and in my projects across all areas of study, it is clear to me that a business is only successfully managed when they encourage high levels of communication as well as the flexibility to implement a change discovered from that communication.

Conclusion

When combining the two main concepts of successfully managing a business' plan, process and operations, as well as successfully managing the relationships of the people involved with the company both internally and externally, failure to accomplish company goals is unlikely. This can be applied to nearly every aspect of sports, business, and life in general. If I view myself as a business, I can implement the discoveries I have made in graduate school, not just in my future companies but in my life. Looking beyond graduation, I have put together a plan for myself; firm but flexible in nature. I have a renewed sense of urgency that intrinsically motivates me. I possess the skills and abilities to build and manage the relationships with those around me through effective negotiation and leadership. I know the importance of being coachable and open to feedback. I also realize that I must take heed to actionable metrics and use the feedback to make the necessary changes to constantly improve myself. From this, I will

improve my opportunities and quality of life, but more importantly fulfill my mission to positively affect the lives of those around me.