

Mission Integration in Athletic Departments of Catholic Colleges and Universities

A Study Conducted by

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Results of the Assessment Survey

Beginning in November, 2005, an assessment tool designed by the Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development, Neumann College, was sent to all athletic directors at Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) member institutions. The purpose of the survey was to identify best practices and needs regarding the integration of an institution's mission/vision/values into its athletic program. A complimentary copy of the instrument was sent to each president with a letter from the President of ACCU making a special request for the institution's participation.

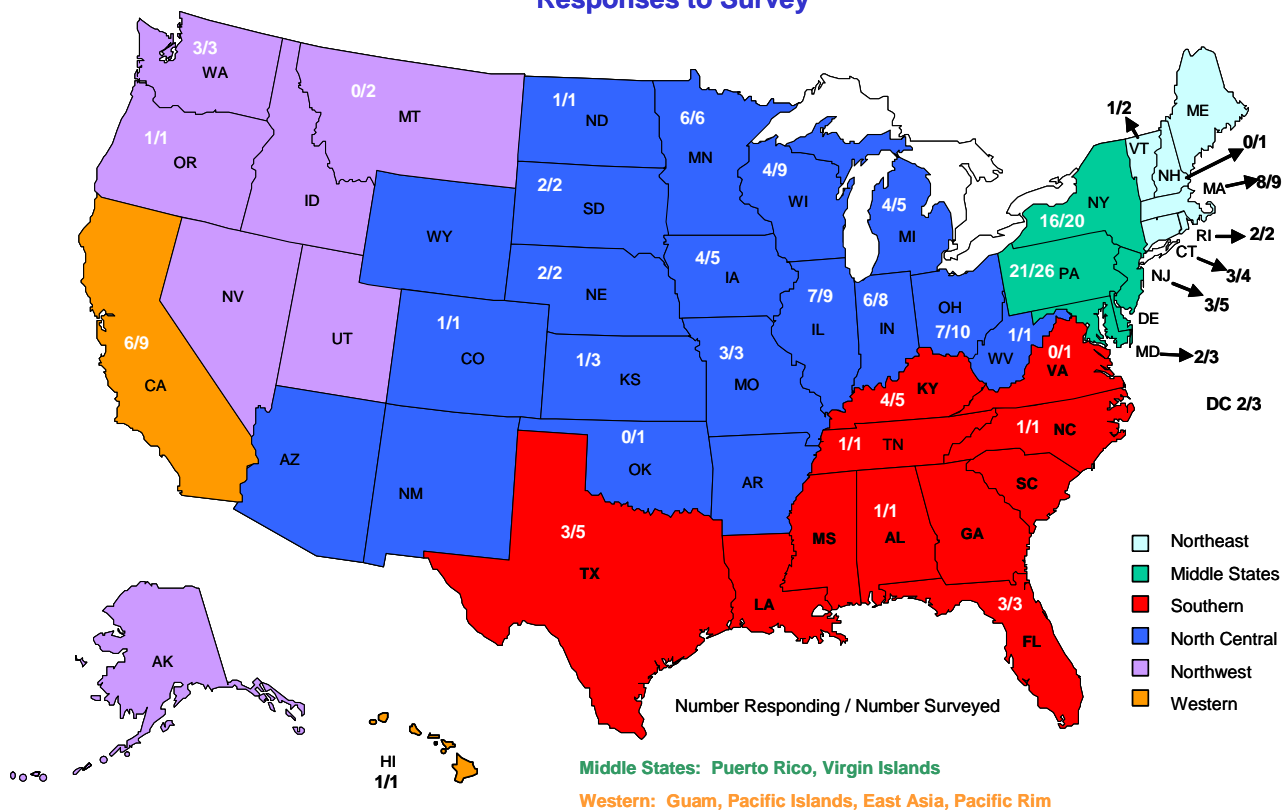
One follow-up mailing was sent in December and surveys continued to be received into January, 2006. A total of 139 institutions completed surveys, comprising 80% of the 174 institutions surveyed. Eight of the 139 responding institutions did not identify their institution on the assessment. Consequently, key variables such as state, region, classification of the athletic program and number and type of sports are not available for these 8 respondents.

Characteristics of the Responding Institutions

The map below shows the distribution of institutions by state as represented by the two numbers printed in each state. The first number indicates the number of institutions which submitted assessments. The second number is the number of ACCU member institutions in the state that were surveyed. The Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) groups states into regions. These regions are depicted on the map with a legend showing the color keys for each of the 6 regions. Thirty-seven of the fifty states have ACCU member institutions located in their state. All but 4 of those states had institutions who participated in the assessment. States with no responding institutions included Montana, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Virginia. States with no numbers are those that have no ACCU member institutions.

Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Regions

Responses to Survey



As shown in Figure 1, the majority of ACCU member institutions responding to the survey are located in the North Central and Middle States regions. The percentages of institutions responding by region were similar as presented in the table below.

Region	ACCU Members	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Middle States	57	44	77%
North Central	66	49	74%
NorthEast	18	14	78%
NorthWest	6	4	67%
Southern	17	13	76%
Western	10	7	70%
TOTAL	174	131	75%

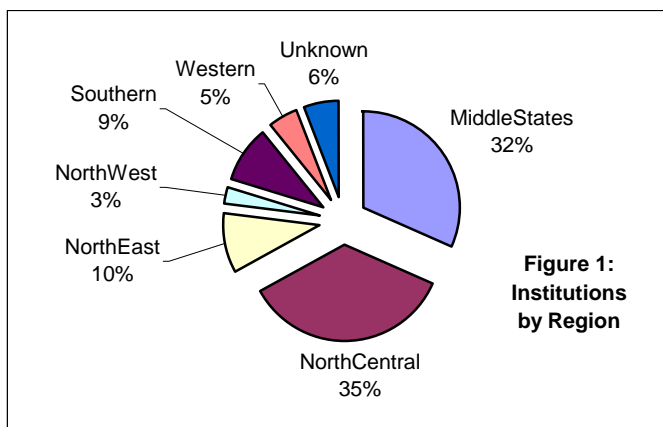
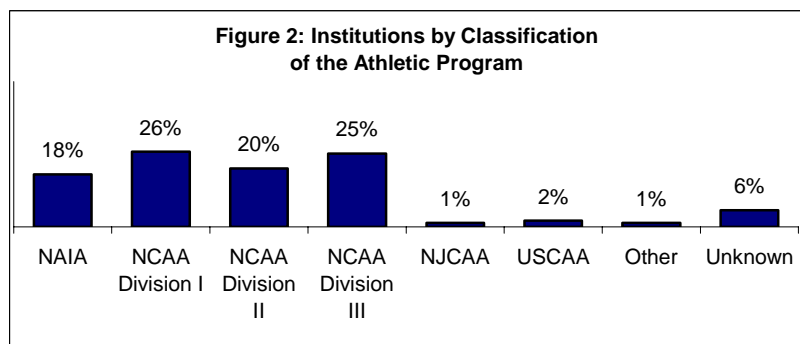
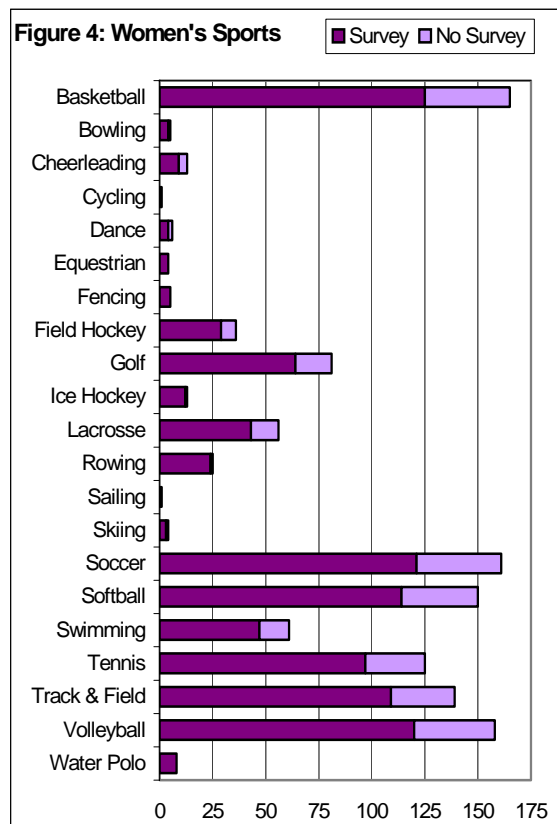
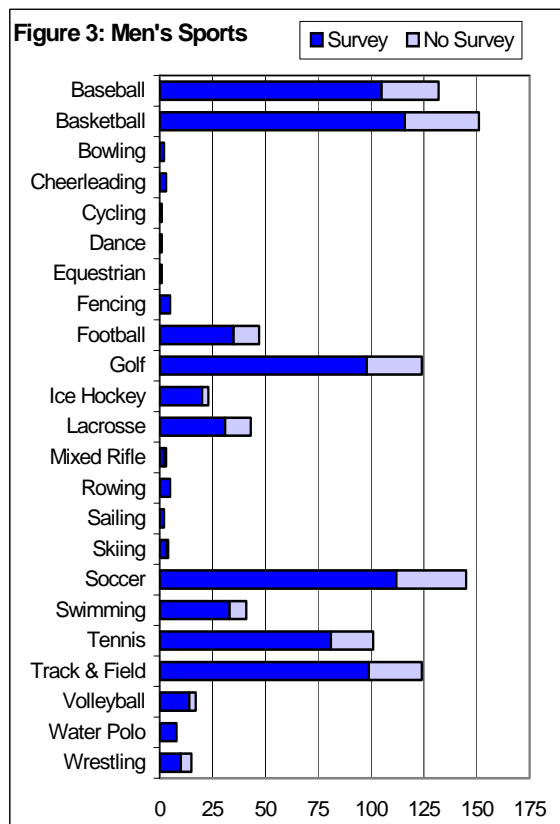


Figure 2 shows the distribution of responding institutions by the classification of their athletic program. NCAA is the predominant class across the institutions. As shown in the accompanying table, response rates differ by classification. NCAA Division I and II institutions have a disproportionately higher rate of response than other classifications.



Classification	ACCU	# of respondents	Rate
NAIA	36	25	69%
NCAA Div. I	40	36	90%
NCAA Div. II	33	28	85%
NCAA Div. III	53	35	66%
Other	11	7	64%
TOTAL	173	131	76%

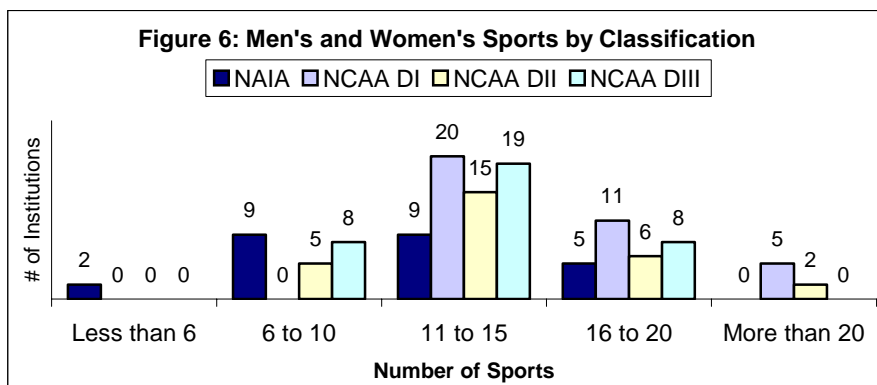
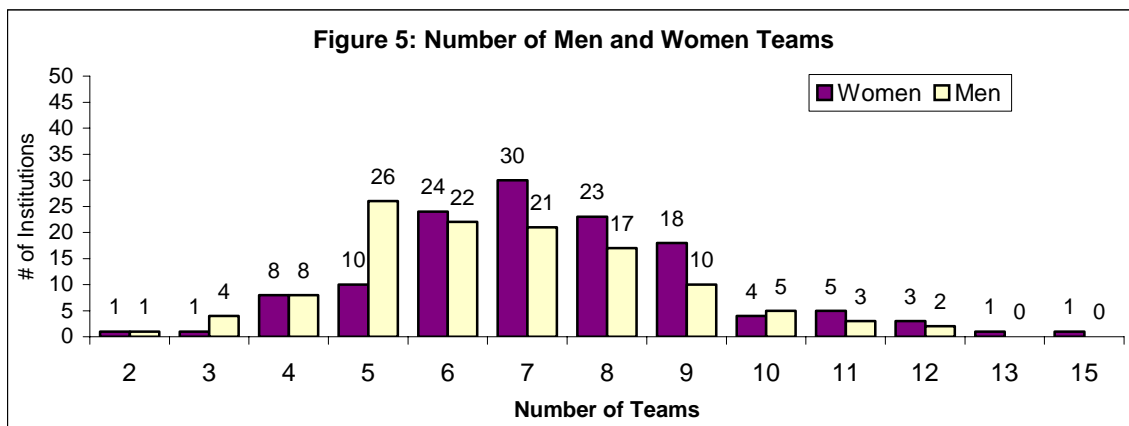
Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the number of institutions by sport for both men and women sports. The darker shading in each chart represents the institutions who responded to the survey.



- The predominant men’s sports among the ACCU member institutions (Figure 3) include basketball, soccer, baseball, track and field, golf, and tennis. Similar numbers of institutions have football, lacrosse and swimming for men.
- The predominant women’s sports among the ACCU member institutions (Figure 4) include basketball, soccer, volleyball, softball, track and field, and tennis. About 75 institutions have golf and about 50 have lacrosse and swimming for women.

Figure 5 shows the total number of men and women teams for the responding institutions.

- Two-thirds of the institutions have between 5 and 8 men’s teams and three-fourths of the institutions have between 6 and 9 women’s teams.
- One institution has only intramural sports and another is in the process of acquiring intercollegiate status.
- Ten institutions have 10 or more men’s teams and 14 institutions have 10 or more women’s teams.



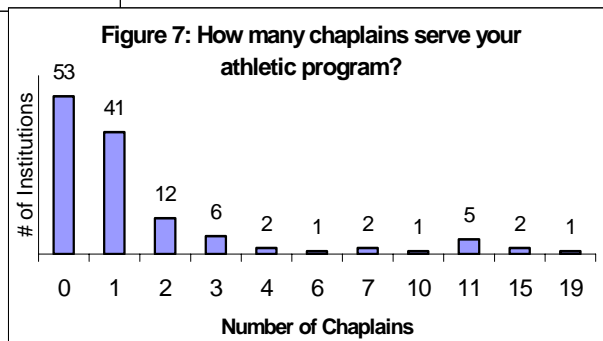
The total number of sports (Figure 6) differs by classification of the athletic program.

- Having the fewest number of sports, most of the NAIA institutions have between 6 and 16 sports.
- NCAA Division I institutions have 11 or more sports. Most of Division II and III institutions have between 11 and 15 sports.

Chaplains Assigned to Teams

Of particular interest in this study was the extent to which chaplains were part of the athletic program. Figure 7 shows the number of chaplains that serve the institution’s athletic program.

The largest number of institutions (53) have no chaplains serving their athletic programs; 41 have one chaplain; 12 have 2 chaplains and fewer institutions have more than 3 chaplains. The institutions that report 10, 15 and 19 chaplains also report a 1 to 1 ratio of chaplains to teams, one chaplain is assigned to each team. Three of the 5 institutions that reported having 11 chaplains have not assigned the chaplains to specific teams. All 5 institutions have 10 or more sport teams.



Mission/Vision/Values in Athletic Programs

Using a 5-point scale, athletic directors were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about their institution's mission/vision/values and how these statements are related to and integrated in their athletic programs. Respondents used the scale from 1, *Strongly Disagree* to 5, *Strongly Agree*. They were also given the option of indicating *Don't Know* although very few used this response. Figure 8 presents the average rating for each statement. The midpoint of the scale is shown; generally, average ratings below the midpoint indicate disagreement with the statement and above the rating, agreement.



With average ratings of 4.9 and 4.8, respectively, there was strong agreement that

- *there can be a connection between sports and character development, and*
- *my institution's mission/vision/values statements are clear.*

There was also a high level of agreement (4.4) among respondents with the statement *there can be a connection between sports and spirituality.*

There was general agreement with the following statements:

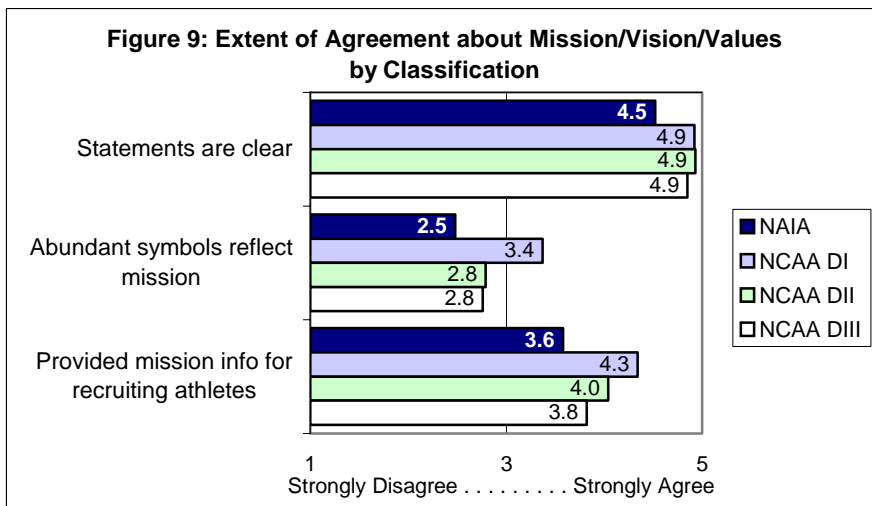
- *The staff and coaches of my athletic department feel a sense of responsibility for the mission/vision/values of the institution. (4.2)*
- *My institution consistently incorporates its mission/vision/values into the hiring process of the athletic department staff and coaches. (4.1)*
- *The staff and coaches of my athletic department can accurately express the institution's mission/vision/values in their own words. (4.0)*

Four statements fell above the midpoint but below 4.0.

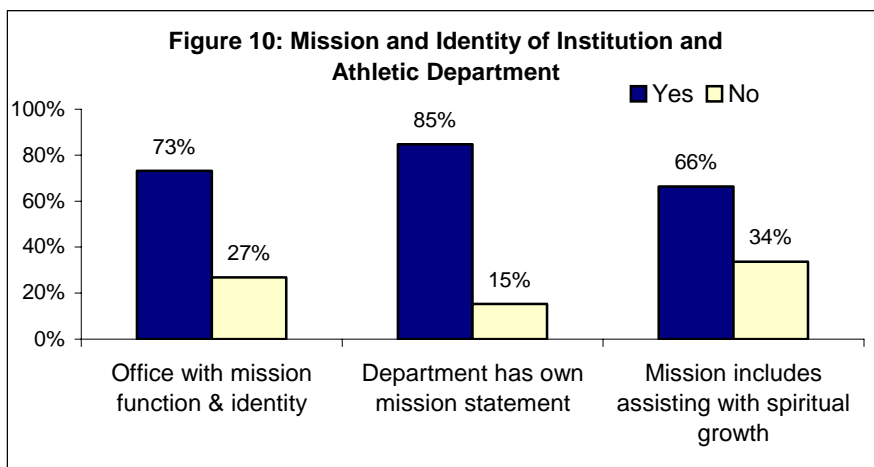
- *My institution consistently provides sufficient information about its mission/vision/values during the recruitment process for student athletes. (3.9)*
- *A deep commitment to mission/vision/values is likely to contribute to a winning athletic program. (3.9)*
- *My athletic department has traditions and rituals that celebrate and advance the mission/vision/values of my institution. (3.7)*
- *My athletic department actively promotes the spirituality of our student athletes. (3.4)*

With an average rating of 2.9, respondents tended to disagree that *there are abundant symbols throughout our training and practice facilities, locker rooms, courts and fields that reflect the mission/vision/values of my institution.*

Average ratings were calculated and statistical analyses were performed to determine if there were any differences among the institutions based on their geographic region or the classification of their athletic program. There were no differences in responses based on the region in which the institutions were located. There were differences based on the classification as shown in Figure 9.



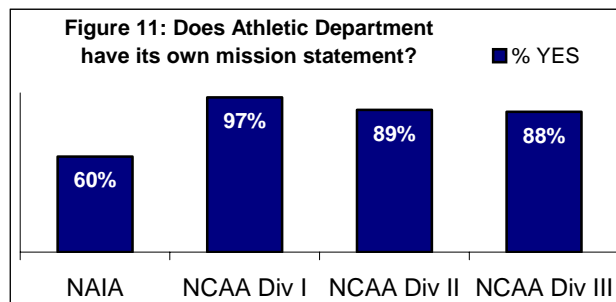
- NAIA institutions expressed less agreement that their *mission/vision/ values statements are clear*.
- There was less agreement with NAIA institutions that they were *provided sufficient information about mission/vision/values for recruiting student athletes*, while NCAA Division I institutions agreed more strongly that they were provided such information.
- NCAA Division I institutions felt there were *abundant symbols throughout their training and practice facilities, locker rooms, courts and fields that reflect the mission/vision/values of the institution*. While the other institutions felt that symbols were not abundant, NAIA institutions expressed the most disagreement with the statement.



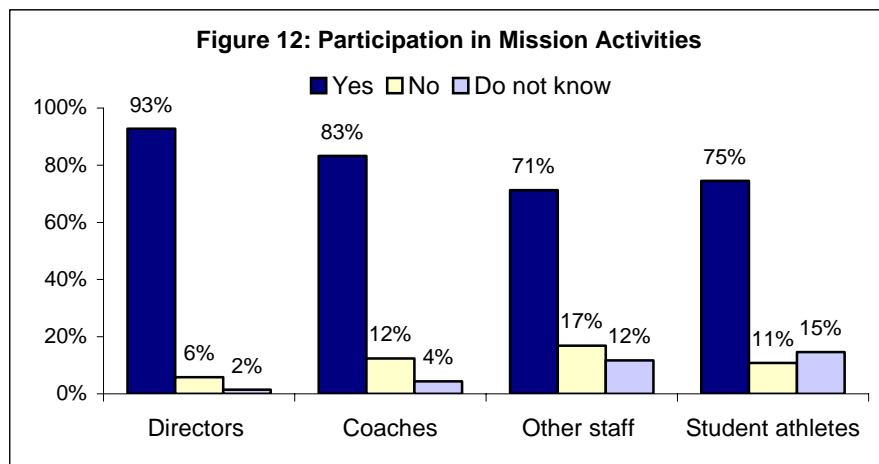
- Nearly three-fourths (73%) of the responding institutions reported that their institution has an office whose primary function is the mission and identity of their institution. (See Figure 10.)
- A large percentage (85%) said their athletic department has its own mission statement and two-thirds said their department's mission statement includes assisting student athletes in their spiritual growth.

The athletic departments of nearly all (97%) of the NCAA Division I responding institutions have their own mission statement; 89% of NCAA Division II and Division III institutions have their own mission statements for their athletic departments.

Considerably fewer NAIA institutions (60%) reported having a mission statement for their athletic department.



Respondents were asked if four groups participated in any mission/vision/values activities over the past year. These groups were: 1) athletic directors, associate directors or assistant directors; 2) coaches; 3) other staff of athletic department; and 4) student athletes. Figure 12 shows the responses.



- More than 9 out of 10 institutions reported their athletic directors, associate directors or assistant directors participated in mission/vision/values activities in the past year.
- Participation in these activities was high with other groups as well. More than 8 of 10 coaches participated and more than 7 out of 10 staff and students athletes participated.

Respondents were given a list of strategies and asked to indicate which they have used over the past 12 months to promote their institution’s mission/vision/values in their athletic program. Twelve institutions (12) did not report employing any strategies. For those 127 institutions who responded to the question, Figure 13 shows the percentage who indicated they employed a particular strategy.

- Nearly all (94%) reported having service projects organized by the athletic department for student athletes.
- Half used education on mission/vision/values provided specifically to members of the athletic department (53%) and to student athletes (50%).
- One-third placed articles about mission/vision/values in athletic department publications.
- Retreats/evenings of reflection were held for coaches or other athletic department staff (28%) or for student athletes (24%).
- Other strategies listed by respondents are identified in the next section: “Responses to Open-ended Questions”.

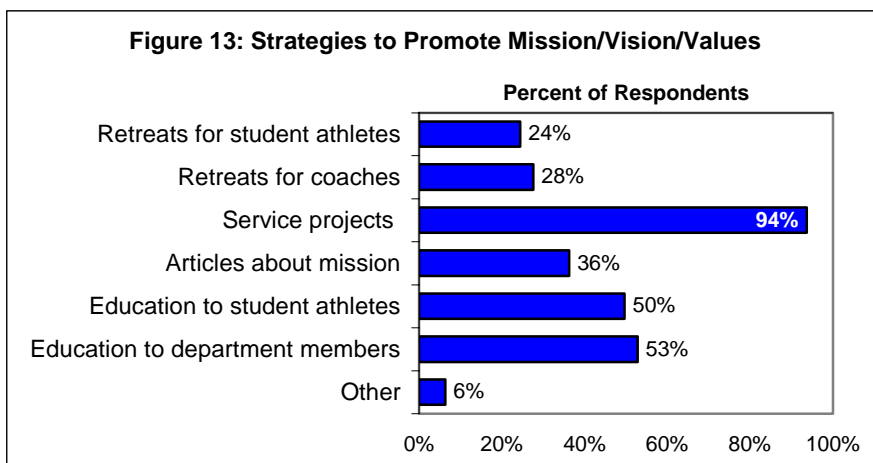
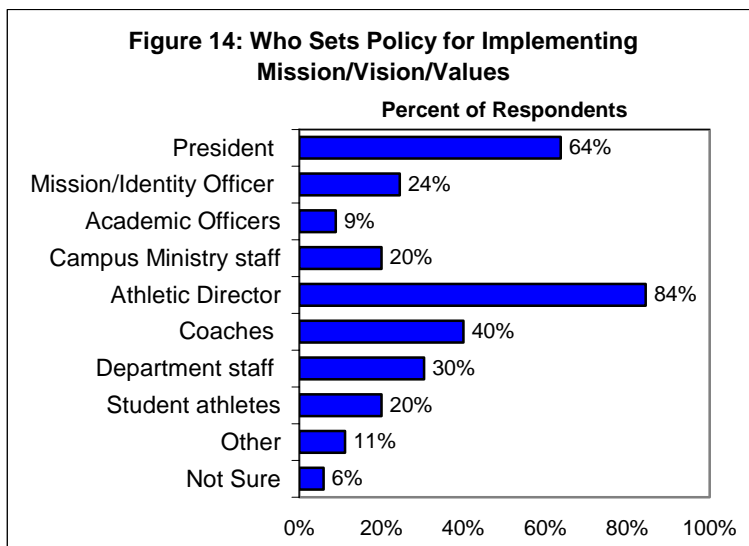
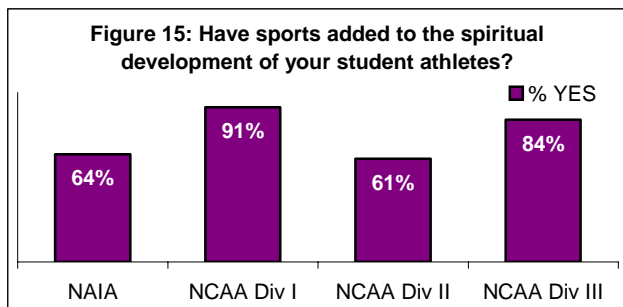


Figure 14 presents the responses to the question, *Who at your institution sets policy for implementing your institution's mission/vision/values into your athletic program?* Athletic directors could mark all that apply.

- The vast majority (84%) indicated the athletic director sets policy.
- Slightly less than two-thirds said their President also sets policy for implementing mission/vision/values into the athletic program.
- Four out of 10 of the institutions said coaches have a responsibility and 3 out of 10 indicated departmental staff.
- Campus Ministry staff and student athletes have a responsibility in 20% of the institutions.
- Eleven percent of the institutions selected *other* and listed the following:
 Vice President (2)
 Vice President for Student Affairs (5), Student Life (2), Student Development (1)
 Provost/VPAA (2)
 Advisory board or advisory committee (2)
 Executive Director for Catholic Values and Campus Identity



Finally, respondents were asked, *Have sports added to the spiritual development of your student athletes?* Overall, 75% said Yes. However, as shown in Figure 15, there were substantial differences based on the classification of the athletic program.



Considerably more of the institutions in NCAA Division 1 (91%) and NCAA Division III (84%) believed that sports added to the spiritual development of their student athletes than did the NCAA Division II institutions (61%) or the NAIA institutions (64%).

Ways in which sports adds to spiritual development are identified in the next section which reports answers to open-ended questions.

Responses to Open-Ended Survey Questions

Four open-ended questions were included in the survey in order to gather a broad range of information in key areas. The following questions were placed at the end of the survey following the items that asked for numeric responses and scale point answers. The four open-ended, narrative questions followed the order below:

9. *Please give examples of your athletic program putting the institution's mission/vision/values in action (e.g., community service projects of student athletes, recruitment practices, formal recognition, dress code, a formal cut policy, academic support programs, expected behavior during games/practices, etc.)*
10. *Please share a practice or activity that you have found especially effective in integrating your institution's mission/vision/values into your athletic program.*
11. *Have sports added to the spiritual development of your student athletes? If yes, please explain how?*
12. *Please identify any aspects of integrating your institution's mission/vision/values into your athletic program that need improvement.*

Putting the Institution's Mission/Vision/Values into Action

9. *Please give examples of your athletic program putting the institution's mission/vision/values in action (e.g., community service projects of student athletes, recruitment practices, formal recognition, dress code, a formal cut policy, academic support programs, expected behavior during games/practices, etc.)*

Written answers to this question were provided by 112 institutions. All answers were closely analyzed and grouped into 11 categories. The 11 categories were not superimposed *a priori* upon the responses; rather they emerged empirically as responses were being analyzed. Because in most cases, a response from a single institution contained subparts which fit several categories, there are many more categorical entries (255) than there are institutions (112). On average then, a single institution's answer could be partitioned into 2.3 response categories. Consider one college which answered this question in the following few words:

"Community service, mass, academic support."

This single answer received a check mark in three different groupings: (1) Community Service (2) Liturgy (3) Academic Support

Overwhelmingly, "community service" was the most commonly cited means for putting mission/ vision/values into action. All but nine (9) respondents noted community service and, upon inspection of the response set, it seems probable that most of the nine not explicitly mentioning community service do indeed engage in it. The reason for these conspicuous absences may be related to the structure of the question in that it was not designed to be exhaustive but rather to elicit "examples." Additionally, as seen above "community service" was the first example (prompt) used to inform respondents of the types of responses we were seeking, and this too may have increased the frequency of this entry.

Fifty-two institutions mentioned formal behavioral expectations/policies/procedures for athletes, and in certain cases, for coaches. Twenty-three specified academic support services, and another five specifically noted life skills training (e.g., workshops in values, life styles).

Four areas were referenced by between ten and fifteen institutions: various forms of recognition (15), liturgies (14), dress code (13) and recruiting (12). Eight institutions referenced their Mission, itself. Programs/practices concerning game behavior, in particular reading statements before games to student athletes and to fans, were mentioned by six respondents. Coaches serving as role models were pointed out in four cases.

Table I displays frequencies by category of response.

Category	# of Responses
Community Service	103
Behavioral Expectations	52
Academic Support	23
Forms of Recognition	15
Liturgy	14
Dress Code	13
Recruiting	12
Mission Statement	8
Game Behavior	6
Life Skills	5
Coaches as Role Models	4
TOTAL	255

As noted, a close read of the raw data points up that more institutions actually engage in these activities than the reported numbers. What appears to be occurring is that institutions, as requested, highlighted certain activities as opposed to recording each and every activity they sponsor.

Community Service: Not surprisingly, the types of community service ranged considerably, including services such as: Special Olympics, delivering and serving food to seniors and to soup kitchens, visiting children at hospitals, walkathons (e.g., Breast Cancer, Lupus), Make A Wish Foundation, food and toy drives, leadership seminars for high school students, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, hurricane relief including service trips to Katrina struck areas, Run for Life, free sport camps, Habitat for Humanity, sports clinics in low income neighborhoods, working with blind and physically disabled children. In addition, a few schools perform on-campus services (e.g., cleaning the grotto).

The way that community service is delivered varies. In many institutions the SAAC (Student Athlete Advisory Council) plans and coordinates community service. At a few schools, Campus Ministry works with athletes in providing service events and service trips. While some schools encourage voluntary community service for their athletes, a good many schools mandate it. For example, institutions reported requirements such as:

- “All student athletes perform a minimum of four hours of community service monthly.”
- “Each team is required to complete at least one service event per semester.”

A few institutions included coaches in mandated service: “All student athletes and coaches must complete sixteen hours of community service as a team each year.”

As is apparent, it is common practice for teams to engage in service projects (e.g., “Our men’s soccer team will be traveling to Louisiana over semester break to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.”). In some schools, student athletes appear to provide service in groups including all athletes or spanning several teams. At times, the SAAC itself seems to complete certain projects.

Expected Behavior: As noted, 52 institutions cited behavioral expectations as ways in which mission/vision/values were put in action. Typically these were codes of conduct and student athlete handbooks that documented behavioral expectations in a wide set of areas such as sportsmanship, team travel, and class attendance. Dress code was specifically mentioned in fifteen (15) cases. One school singled out “a written honor code”. At several schools, both players and coaches must sign the code of conduct.

About ten institutions referred to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character Code which advances “five core values...servant leadership, integrity, responsibility, respect and sportsmanship”. One school noted: “A Champions of Character policy is signed by all athletes and they are held accountable.” At some institutions these values are read before each game. See appendix on page 18 for a brief description of the Champions of Character program.

A number of schools stress behavior at orientations and ongoing training sessions and seminars. Mention was also made of a written code of conduct for prospective student athletes (signed by parents also) visiting the school on recruiting trips as well as a code of conduct for coaches and student athletes during the recruiting process.

Mission Statements: Mission Statements, both at the institution and athletic department levels, are sometimes used to convey behavioral and value expectations. Some schools introduce their Mission within the recruiting process and many continue Mission education through orientation and the academic years. “[Our] orientation program includes review of mission for all student athletes and staff.” “[Our] mission statement is fairly well publicized.”

Examples of Mission statement use in the recruiting process include:

- “All potential recruits are informed of the importance of our institution’s mission statement.”
- “The mission/vision/value of the University is a huge selling point for some staff and students alike.”
- “We share our mission statement during recruiting visits.”

Two schools explicitly pointed out that the athletic department’s mission statement “fits nicely into the university mission statement.”

The charism of the religious order was also mentioned by one school: “Coaches talk about the value of a Jesuit education during recruiting...developing the whole person.”

Liturgy: Citations to liturgy were made by 14 schools. Team retreats were mentioned in several cases. In at least one case, team members, coaches and chaplains are expected to attend the retreat.

- “We afford our student-athletes the opportunity to participate in a team retreat and mass prior to their season of competition.”
- “They retreat...as teams with their teammates, coaches and chaplains.”

Several institutions offer a “pre season mass” or an annual mass. Blessings and prayer were also mentioned by several schools:

- “We have a blessing of athletes that sets the tone for the semester. Campus Ministry, President, Athletic Department collaborate on this.”
- “Blessing of all athletes twice per year.”
- “Invocation before all games.”
- “Prayer read before each football game by priest.”
- “Our entire football team and coaches take a knee when anyone is injured.”

A single school mentioned offering “evenings of reflection” but “these have not been offered for some time.”

Coach participation was noted as important by a number of schools and others underscored the efficacy of having other individuals and offices outside athletics participate in prayer and liturgies such as the University President and Campus Ministry.

Recognition: Fifteen schools mentioned recognition as a way to make mission palpable. A rather unique honor was recognition for off-season community service.

In several schools, athletes attaining high grade point averages, most improved GPA, were recognized with awards such as free dinners and gift certificates to book store. Special “scholar athlete awards,” “value awards” and “leadership” awards were also noted including a “Champion of Character Award.”

Game Behavior: Six institutions shared practices regarding game behavior. Many of these represented by the following observation: “A policy is read over the PA (Public Address system) prior to all athletic events regarding appropriate behavior of both teams and fans.”

Best Practices

10. *Please share a practice or activity that you have found especially effective in integrating your institution’s mission/vision/values into your athletic program.*

A total of 104 institutions generated 121 “best practices.” Once again, community service, with 34 citations, topped the list of responses. No single service type of community service emerged; rather, what stood out was the positive effect

that service can have upon mission/vision/values, especially building teamwork and a respect for others less fortunate. Only one event occurred within the college community, when a staff member's son with cancer was asked to throw out the first pitch at a baseball game. Nonetheless, looking within one's campus may be a very rewarding focus. However, all the other examples of service were with the external community such as Make-A-Wish, Toys for Tots, economically deprived schools, Special Olympics and other settings such as those mentioned in the former item, question #9.

Only two participants briefly mentioned service learning. This is an important finding since there is momentum to fuse "service" with "service learning." The lack of comment in this area may suggest that enhancing direct service projects with service learning may be a genuine need and opportunity.

Liturgy, Prayer, Chaplains and Campus Ministry: What was not anticipated was the high number of responses that related to liturgy, prayer, chaplains and Campus Ministry. A total of 24 responses (20% of schools) cited liturgy, mass, retreats and other prayerful activities as especially effective in integrating mission/vision/values. Another five responses dealt with chaplains and campus ministers. Chaplains traveling with teams, saying mass and conducting retreats were highlighted. Retreats are not always for the student-athletes; one school reported its best practice as a retreat for Senior Staff.

Masses said each semester were cited several times, including a mass for athletic staff, coaches as well as families and their student athlete children. At some masses, student-athletes "sponsor the mass and do the singing, reading, presentation of the gifts, greeting, etc." Several schools referred to prayer before each game; participation in these pre-game prayers was not always mandatory. Some schools have traditions wherein chaplains bless student-athletes as well as the locker rooms. Also stressed was the importance of prayer permeating many settings throughout the year such as "part of our meetings, dedications and social functions."

Some of these activities are informal. At one school, campus ministry staff sponsor a "pizza and prayer" night where "student athletes can speak openly with the members of campus ministry about any topic they wish." At another institution, there is a tradition of the football team playing a fun game with the "priest at the grotto before every game – home and away."

Orientation and Training: Orientation and Training Programs were seen by eleven respondents as excellent means to convey mission/vision/values. Bringing in guest speakers was identified in four other instances while other formal programs were specified by seven respondents.

A mandatory student athlete orientation day/meeting at the beginning of each semester was proffered by several institutions. The content of such orientations could range from code of conduct to media pictures. In addition, special orientations might also be held for first year student athletes. In terms of training, topics included: team building, leadership skills, and values. In addition, four entries had to do with Life Skills training including drug/alcohol education/prevention and anxiety.

The guest speakers might discuss traditional topics such as sportsmanship, but at one school the guest speaker is from within the college and "speaks about the school's history. The tie-in is that the student athletes represent all the [members of the religious order] who gave their lives for the college."

Among the seven respondents selected other formal programs as the best way to internalize mission/vision/values, in practically every case that program was the Champions of Character sponsored by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. This seems to be a very popular and well received program. A brief description of the program and its web address is included in the Appendices.

Mission Statements: In ten cases, the mission statement was actively utilized to promulgate mission/vision/values. For example:

- "Athletic department mission statement is given to all coaches and staff at annual retreat with time devoted to what it means and how we live it."
- "All candidates for coaching positions will meet with the President and the Abbott to ensure that they understand our mission and will become advocates of that mission."
- "Students and staff know the mission statement and try to live it in our day to day lives."

One university includes a section on "the University and the Mission" in a required class taught to student-athletes by academic counselors. Another "developed an athletics department magazine to showcase the mission and values and

success of the athletic department and help 'brand' [our athletics program] in that manner." Several respondents felt it very effective for the President of the University and/or the leader of the religious order meet with staff, coaches and student athletes "to discuss the mission of the University as well as the role of athletes within that context."

Behavioral Expectations: Six institutions reported best practices as setting formal behavioral expectations for their athletes, especially by means of policy handbooks and other policy dissemination. These included drug and alcohol policies; dress code, cut policy, team behavior. One institution indicated: "Team social contracts – specifically identify minimum behavior competencies with the opportunity to further define respected team behaviors." Another mentioned reading announcements before games to encourage appropriate fan behavior.

Staff Meetings: Five institutions looked to staff meetings as ways to instill mission/vision/values, particularly devoting a portion of monthly or every other week staff/coach meetings to discussion/reflection upon mission elements.

Rewards, Recognition, Coaches, And Social Events: Three institutions indicated recognition for athletes, particularly "rewards based on Values rather than MVP." Three schools also pointed up the need for coaches to embody mission: "Each sports program becomes personal and bonding. Developing coaches who share in the mission and developing that concept stronger than the concept of winning. NOT EASY TO DO BUT IT IS DOABLE!" Social events were cited twice.

SAAC, A.D.: One school highlighted the role of SAAC. Only one school mentioned the role of the Athletics Director. Another cited as Recruiting as means to furthering mission.

Table II displays frequencies by category of response:

Category	# of Responses
Community Service	34
Liturgy, Prayer	24
Orientation/Training	11
Mission Statement	10
Other Formal Programs	7
Behavioral Expectations	6
Staff Meetings	5
Campus Ministry/Chaplain	5
Speakers	4
Life Skills	4
Coaches as Role Models	3
Rewards/Recognition	3
Socials	2
Recruiting	1
SAAC/AD	2
TOTAL	121

Have sports added to the spiritual development of student athletes?

11. *Have sports added to the spiritual development of your student athletes? If yes, please explain how?*

Once again, a very high number of respondents (91) took the time to write their comments. Recall that an institution's single comment could address several topics; this held true as 111 data entries were made on the coding list. Several points are especially interesting about these answers. First, almost 1 in 5 (19%; n=17) of the responding institutions were not sure whether sports adds to spiritual development. One can also surmise that a good number of those returning surveys but not answering this item are "Not Sure."

A second striking feature was the abrupt dip in community service. Only three institutions cited it as a means for spiritual development.

If community service dipped, the role of the Coach peaked with one-fifth (20%; n=18) of the respondents identifying the coach as a key agent of spirituality. In particular, the coach as role model was often cited.

- “Each coach, in their own way, promotes and, by role modeling, encourages spiritual growth.”
- “Each coach was hired because of strong beliefs and values. Coaches expectations of high class behavior.”
- “The constant mention by our coaching staff, the director of athletics, the president, and the abbot to our commitment to sports and virtue. The expectation is that we will be the model of virtue which incorporates spiritual values.”
- “When coaches are ‘real’ in their faith they directly effect the student’s day to day decisions. These things are usually seen through how they relate to their families. Going to mass together, discussing Christian perspectives as they relate to the way you play, and helping students distinguish between style and principles.”
- “It is on a team by team basis – the coaches who are more spiritual implement it more – a prayer before a game for example.”

Articulating “how sports added to spirituality” was a difficult challenge. Twenty-five respondents referred to intangible qualities and ten to lessons learned about life. Combined, these answers constituted over one-third (32%) of all 111 responses. In many cases these responses were reported in abstract terms such as: faith, courage, humility, discipline, perseverance, focus, sacrifice, compromise, responsibility, character development, moral development, spiritual development, recognizing the value of the individual, respect for others. Teamwork, mentioned fifteen times, was the quality most often cited. Sportsmanship and self-sacrifice were mentioned several times.

A number of respondents did, however, explain in more specific terms “*how*” sports and spirituality interact.

- “Because it shows student athletes that although we are created differently, when working for the Lord we can come together as one.”
- “By providing a way to commit themselves to something greater than themselves and winning with humility and losing with grace.”
- “Strong relationships built through sports team participation in concert with institutional mission.”
- “The experience of sports has an intrinsic spiritual dimension. It allows for the appreciation of one’s body, created in the image and likeness of God. It allows for a spirit of community, a coming together of persons in a deeper way than merely playing a game. The immersion of oneself fully into the activity of the sport can be a present moment experience of ‘flow’ that is akin to contemplation.”
- “They [student athletes] have a better appreciation of how the values of sport and the values of life intersect and interact...teamwork, self-sacrifice, reaching out to others, sportsmanship, unselfishness.”
- “Through athletics, student athletes learn to work with others. They build bonds with their teammates and they learn how to become effective leaders in a complex world.”
- “There is a connection among teammates that is a mental/spiritual bond that may or may not be specifically religious...working together is powerful.”

Shifting our attention to the topics of “*prayer, ministry and liturgy*”, we see that these areas are fairly prominent. Combined they account for 25 of the 111 responses (23%). Note that a single respondent could list more than one of these.

Prayer = 11

Ministry = 8 (chaplains, campus ministry)

Liturgy = 6

Responses varied within each category. Prayer most frequently was praying as teams before and/or after games. Other prayerful events included a devotional period after pre-game meals, going to mass together especially when out of town for competition, and blessing of the athletes,

Chaplains were understandably mostly noted for saying mass but also for: “delivering spiritual messages to our squad”, facilitating retreats, developing relationships with teams and individual players. Participation in campus ministry activities was also cited several times.

Liturgy included masses such as a “Welcome Back Mass”, “making every effort to allow our student athletes the opportunity to attend services when on away trips and bible sessions.

The mission of the institution was cited seven times, both generally (“Through a Christian attitude during competitions”), and specifically tied to the charism of particular religious orders. None of the seven responses made reference to a formal, written mission statement.

Other responses mentioned once or twice include:

- Champions of Character Program
- Policies and Procedures (e.g., no tolerance for profanity)
- Spirituality as an individual, informal dynamic
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Table III displays frequencies by category of response.

Category	# of Responses
Intangible Qualities	25
Coach (role model, prayer leader)	18
Prayer	11
Lessons Learned about Life Skills	10
Campus Minister/Chaplain	8
Mission Statement	7
Liturgy	6
Community Service	3
Spirituality is Personal/Informal	2
Policy/Procedures	2
Champions of Character Program	1
Fellowship of Christian Athletes	1
Not Sure	17
TOTAL	111

Aspects that Need Improvement

12. Please identify any aspects of integrating your institution’s mission/vision/values into your athletic program that need improvement.

This item garnered the fewest number of respondents but still had 66 institutions offer written comment. These comments were broken down into 85 discrete entries across 15 categories. There was a great deal of agreement in this area as one theme clearly emerged for improvement. Educating and internalizing the mission was noted by no fewer than 41 institutions. This includes 62% of responding institutions and accounts for 48% of all coded responses. Thus, the main story is the great majority of schools who felt they needed mission internalization and education. Many different themes and examples were cited under the broad rubric of mission education. A good deal used generic language such as “improving promotion of values.” Many comments were more precise. In terms of the recipients of mission education, 10 schools articulated education for all key constituencies – students, coaches, and staff; 11 emphasized mission education for their student athletes; 6 institutions specified coaches and staff.

Three schools referred to needing “more visual reminders of our mission statement placed in our athletic facility”... “more signs and reminders on the fields and in the locker rooms.” Four institutions felt a need to “realize their history” and better communicate the charism of their religious orders. Two schools mentioned involving their SAAC more in communicating mission. Only one school documented the need to “develop a mission statement” while another noted that “like many institutions the mission of this institution has changed over the last few years” and the new mission has not yet been widely learned.

Several institutions called for mission training in hiring and recruiting. Other concrete examples included:

- “Continued education needed about ‘what music is appropriate’ for pre-game warm up, etc. Use of profanity still too frequent in team settings.”
- “Ensuring that, on Catholic campuses, student athletes, coaches, etc. accept personal differences.”
- “Ways of educating our freshmen student athletes.”

Closely related to Mission, 8 schools cited educating in the areas of behavior and values. These tended to be primarily broad suggestions (“sportsmanship”; more reinforcement”; “we need to improve our values every day”).

Focusing upon retreats, three schools desired more retreats for coaches and staff.

- “We need more ideas from the outside environment. We need help planning and outfitting retreats for the coaches so that they can be better mentors and we can continue to encourage our growth as administrators. We’re weak in this right now.”
- “More education or retreats with staff and coaches.”
- “More retreats and/or workshops for departmental staff.”

Two respondents specifically cited the need to “tie part-time coaches into the Mission, specifically, not just in theory.”

With respect to chaplains and other religious on campus, there was variation. One school wished that there was “more interest on the part of religious in athletics” while another sought “more events/activities in conjunction with campus ministries.” Yet another institution called for “formalizing the structure of team chaplains.” Four schools noted the need for more chaplains and another simply for more staff. Yet another expressed interest in creating a position, an Athletic Department Director of Spirituality. Only one institution called for a staff development program.

Five schools felt that communication needed improvement, both within the athletic sphere but also communicating with the student body *in toto*. Three institutions mentioned time demands and difficult schedules that “left little time to attempt to incorporate values into our programs.”

Two institutions explicitly noted formal, systematic evaluation of their mission-related activities. One institution felt it could do more “under the Champions of Character umbrella”; another sought improvement in pre-game prayer.

Finally, it is extremely interesting that only three institutions pointed to improving community service.

Table IV displays frequencies by category of response.

Category	# of Responses
Mission Education	41
Behavioral/Values Education	8
Campus Minister/Chaplain	7
Communication	5
Community Service	3
Retreats	3
Time	3
Visual Representations	3
Recruiting	3
Adding Staff	2
Evaluation	2
SAAC	2
More Interest by Religious	1
Pre-Game Prayer	1
Champions of Character	1
TOTAL	85

Note: One institution indicated that it needed improvement in “all” aspects and another one “most”; these two cases were not coded.

Relating the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Comparing the figures and frequency results of the quantitative findings reveals a high level of congruence and a major discontinuity.

Community Service: Ninety-four percent of the institutions reported athletes involved in service projects (Figure 13) while a similar proportion (92%; item 9) wrote in examples of community service as a way they put mission/vision/values into action. Community service was also the most frequently mentioned vehicle for effectively integrating mission/vision/values into athletic programs (item 10). Far and away, community service is the most common means of mission actualization. Yet, in puzzling contrast, in the narrative comments, only three institutions specified community service as adding to the spiritual development of their student athletes (item 11). This is a striking disconnect. One hypothesis is that community service is viewed as inherently good and is certainly “done a lot,” but is not seen as transforming hearts and minds. Perhaps what is missing is a pronounced emphasis upon service learning, a theme we revisit in the next section.

Connection between sports and spirituality: There was a high level of agreement among respondents (4.4 on a scale of 5.0; Figure 8) that there *can be a connection between sports and spirituality*. This affinity was not as strongly reflected in the narrative data where almost 20% “were not sure whether sports add to spiritual development” (item 11) and one can surmise that a good number of the 48 non-respondents shared this doubt.

Mission Education: Slightly over half of the respondents offered mission/vision/values education to their student athletes and athletic department members (Figure 13). Nevertheless, an even higher percentage of the institutions offering narrative comments identified mission education as needing improvement.

Coaches: The numeric data suggest the pivotal role that coaches play in mission and spirituality. Concerted effort is made to involve coaches in mission activities as more than 8 of 10 coaches participated in mission activities over the last year (Figure 12). Four of 10 institutions perceive coaches as having responsibility for implementing mission/vision/values (Figure 14). These findings accord well with the qualitative observation by fully one in five respondents (item 11) that the coach is the key agent of spiritual development among student athletes. Yet the data did not reveal if coaches are effectively equipped to live out that role.

Retreats: There also seemed to be a congruence between the qualitative and quantitative data in accenting the value of retreats, for both students and coaches (Figure 13; item 9, 10 11)

Writ large, the qualitative and quantitative items were in concordance with the notable exception of the handful of institutions who counted community service as adding to the spiritual development of student athletes.

Needs and Opportunities Suggested by the Data

The data point up a number of needs in the area of sports and spirituality at the college level. In addition, evidence-based recommendations emerge which can serve as opportunities to the Neumann Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development and other organizations committed to this relationship.

1. Community service is by far the most common means that universities and college implement to convey mission/vision/values. Yet, it seems to be falling short in personal impact and transformation. An opportunity exists to help schools make the transition from community service projects to **service learning experiences** for their student athletes. Only two participants briefly mentioned “service learning”. This is an important finding since there is momentum in higher education to fuse “service” with “service learning.” The lack of comment in this area may imply that enhancing ‘stand alone service’ with service learning is a pressing need thus making this theme an area for the Center to investigate and possibly become a leading proponent and educator.
2. The clearly articulated need for internalizing mission (item 12) seems to be a very appropriate area for the Center to respond.
3. Another opportunity would be for the Center to **equip coaches** and other athletic department staff with tools and language necessary to assist with their process of defining mission integration into athletics. About one-fifth of the respondents identified the coach as a key agent of spirituality. In particular, the coach as role model was often cited. It

seems to follow that the Center can advance sports and spirituality by focusing on coaches by offering them special training and education programs.

4. Given the rather strong presence of chaplains and campus ministers across all questions, offering educational and training opportunities customized for these groups seems worthwhile to test.

5. The amounts and nature of community services are delivered are impressive. Given the negative publicity often associated with college sports, launching a study to more accurately calibrate the extent of such services may be a very worthwhile undertaking for the Center for Sport, Spirituality and Character Development. It would also advance the Center's image a recognized research agent in the area of sports and spirituality.

6. Ninety-one respondents wrote an answer to the open-ended question: "Have sports added to the spiritual development student athletes?" Of these, almost one in 5 (19%; n=78) were "Not Sure." One can also surmise that a good number of those returning surveys but not answering this item are "Not Sure." This may present a very significant opportunity to the Center to train athletic staff in ways to further spirituality through their programs.

7. A number of respondents did, however, explain in more specific terms "how" sports and spirituality interact, and the quotes we cited and others might be used very effectively in educational sessions as prompts for deeper discussion about more specifically understanding sport and spirituality.

8. Time demands were mentioned by a number of respondents. Findings like these raise the possibility of the Center sponsoring a series of topic specific workshops that derive from this research such as: *Creating Time in the Department for Spirituality*.

Appendix:

Brief Excerpt NAIA Champions of Character from <http://naia.collegesports.com/index.html>

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Champions of Character program is designed to instill an understanding of character values in sport and provide practical tools for student-athletes, coaches and parents to use in modeling exemplary character traits.

Launched by the NAIA in 2000, the Champions of Character program addresses character issues more comprehensively than any other national program for youth. The program currently reaches hundreds of thousands of students on nearly 300 college and university campuses in North America and extends into their surrounding communities.

The NAIA Champions of Character program is an educational outreach initiative which emphasizes the tenets of character and integrity, not only for NAIA college students, but for younger students, coaches and parents in our communities.

Coaches, parents, administrators and community partners all have a role in developing students of character. The NAIA Champions of Character program brings them training, guidelines and behavior models to create positive environments that promote personal growth and fun sport activity.

Students

Discover how character training benefits academic and athletic achievement.

Coaches

Learn how Champions of Character can impact your team's attitude and performance.

Parents

Understand your role and how it benefits your student.

Administrators

Learn how the program strengthens relationships with the community.

Partners

Benefit from aligning your organization with positive youth programs