Identities Beyond Athlete

Niya Blair Hackworth, Director of Inclusion NCAA office of inclusion
Purpose

Foster awareness about the realities and lived experiences of student-athletes

Understand the multiple identities that student-athletes hold

Learn how the pandemic has impacted student-athletes

Receive tools and resources that foster community during and after the pandemic with student-athletes
As a core value, the NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. We seek to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.

Diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for all student-athletes and enhance excellence within the Association.
The office of Inclusion will provide or enable programming and education, which sustains foundations of a diverse and inclusive culture across dimensions of diversity including but not limited to age, race, sex, class, national origin, creed, educational background, religion, gender identity, disability, gender expression, geographical location, income, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation and work experiences.

Adopted by the NCAA Executive Committee, April 2010
Amended by the NCAA Board of Governors, April 2017
The NCAA office of inclusion advances diversity, equity and inclusion in college athletics for over 1,100 member schools and athletics conferences.

The office supports student-athletes and individuals who teach and lead across the core areas of disability, international, LGBTQ, race/ethnicity and women.
Student-Athletes

- Over 500,000 student athletes
- 24 sports
- 90 Championships
- 3 Divisions
NC State Athletics believes in the University’s commitment to diversity, tolerance and inclusiveness. We believe in the diversity of our community and that differences of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender expression, physical and mental ability, and religious beliefs are one of our greatest strengths. This diversity should be respected by all members of our community.

NC State does not discriminate on the basis of color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, or any other category protected by law.

Further, NC State Athletics is committed to eliminating sexual harassment, sexual violence and interpersonal violence. This is demonstrated through the trainings, policies, procedures and resources available to all department staff and student-athletes. We comply fully with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits gender-based discrimination of both employees and students.

Moment of Reflection

What is one of your most salient identities?
Cultural Differences

Visible
- Skin Color
- Tone of Voice
- Age
- Student Athlete
- Native born/non native
- Race
- Religious Beliefs
- Military Experiences
- Geographic Location
- Political affiliation
- Values
- Ethnicity
- Parental Status
- Marital Status
- Culture
- Work Style
- Mannerisms
- Clothing/Attire
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Thinking Styles
- Work Background
- Smoker/Non-Smoker
- Socioeconomic Status

Invisible
- Educational Level
- Values
- Native born/non native
- Race
- Religious Beliefs
- Military Experiences
- Geographic Location
- Political affiliation
- Values
- Ethnicity
- Parental Status
- Marital Status
- Culture
- Work Style
- Mannerisms
- Clothing/Attire
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Thinking Styles
- Work Background
- Smoker/Non-Smoker
- Socioeconomic Status
More than…

In Division II, 33% of female student-athletes.
Impact of COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted one of your most salient identities?
Threats and Challenges: COVID-19

- **Athletic Identity**: Gayles (2015) noted that student-athletes must balance a unique set of circumstances, such as balancing athletic and academic endeavors, social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits, athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium, physical health and injuries with the need to keep playing, the demands of various relationships, and reconciling the termination of an athletic career with setting goals for the future.

- **Athletic Identity Foreclosure**: tend to choose this self-identity before they have considered other possible roles and statuses. They forgo exploration of other talents, interest, hobbies, or occupations and center their identity on athletic participation and achievement.
Threats and Challenges: COVID-19

• Sense of Belonging
  • Lack of community in home environment
  • New ways to connect with team and coaches

• Online learning
  • Struggle with the adjustment and keeping up with assignments
  • Struggle to connect with faculty, academic support staff or tutor
Threats and Challenges: COVID-19

• First-generation (incoming students)
  • Anxious thoughts
  • Concern with transition
  • Creating community

• Asian American
  • Xenophobia, discrimination, inappropriate jokes

• African American, Hispanic/LatinX, American Indian/Alaska Native
  • More likely to test positive for the coronavirus
  • Coping mechanisms with being home
  • Concern about athletic future
  • Implications of wearing a mask
Threats and Challenges: COVID-19

- **Socio-economic Status**
  - Lack of access to essential services (mental health professionals, medical services, internet, healthy food options)
  - Loss of employment

- **LGBTQ**
  - Increase rates of domestic violence
  - Experience discrimination
  - May avoid or be denied healthcare

- **Women**
  - Challenges with Title IX and federal and state law regarding gender equity
  - Limited opportunities to continue their sports
Threats and Challenges: COVID-19

- Visible and Invisible Disabilities
  - Challenge with online classes
  - Limited access to resources
  - Less likely to self-advocate

- International
  - Impact of travel bans
  - Financial limitations
  - Manage academic and athletic schedules across time zones
  - Feelings of being “on their own”
  - Experience racism and xenophobia
Intersectionality

Student-Athlete and (fill in the blank)
Student-Athlete COVID-19 Well-being Survey Results
May 2020
## Racial Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men COVID-19 Survey</th>
<th>Men Demographics Data</th>
<th>Women COVID-19 Survey</th>
<th>Women Demographics Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Academic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors &amp; Postgrads</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 15,148 men’s sport and 22,427 women’s sport participants in the full sample. An additional 38 did not indicate whether they played a men’s or women’s sport. Demographics data source [NCAA Demographics Database](https://www.ncaapre.gov).
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health

- A majority of student-athletes surveyed reported experiencing high rates of mental distress since the outset of the pandemic.
- Over a third reported experiencing sleep difficulties, more than a quarter reported feeling sadness and a sense of loss, and 1 in 12 reported feeling so depressed it has been difficult to function “constantly” or “most every day.”
- Mental health concerns were highest among respondents of color, those whose families were facing economic hardship and those living alone. Additionally, college seniors reported feeling a constant or near daily sense of loss at 1.5 times the rate of underclassmen.
- In most instances, the rates of reported mental health concerns experienced within the last month were 150% to 250% higher than have been historically reported by NCAA student-athletes who participated in the American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment.
### Mental Health Concerns During COVID-19 Pandemic

(Percent of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced sleep difficulties</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt mentally exhausted</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt very lonely</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt a sense of loss</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt sad</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelming anxiety</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelming anger</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt things were hopeless</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mental Health Concerns During COVID-19 Pandemic
(Percent of Participants Who Endorsed “Constantly” or “Most Every Day” by Race)

**Men**

- Experienced sleep difficulties: 28% White, 37% Black, 40% Latinx, 38% Other
- Felt overwhelming anxiety: 3% White, 17% Black, 15% Latinx, 16% Other
- Felt things were hopeless: 9% White, 15% Black, 16% Latinx, 14% Other
- Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function: 5% White, 11% Black, 10% Latinx, 9% Other

**Women**

- Experienced sleep difficulties: 40% White, 50% Black, 51% Latinx, 45% Other
- Felt overwhelming anxiety: 27% White, 28% Black, 31% Latinx, 29% Other
- Felt things were hopeless: 15% White, 20% Black, 20% Latinx, 17% Other
- Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function: 8% White, 14% Black, 13% Latinx, 12% Other
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Current Living Environment

• Nine out of ten respondents reported being in a stable housing situation and having access to enough food each day. While 80% reported knowing how to access a medical provider for physical health needs, 60% of men and 55% of women reported that they know how to access mental health support in their area. Respondents living alone reported lower levels of food and housing stability than those living with others.

• Racial disparities were reported in housing and food stability and access to medical care, with white participants indicating higher levels of agreement on all items as compared to participants of color.

• Of note, 75% of Black male respondents, compared to 92% of white males, reported that they have had access to enough food, and 61% reported that healthy food options are readily available to them, as compared to 81% of white males.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to Training</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latinx</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local regulations (travel, facility closures, etc.)</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to appropriate facilities</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to appropriate equipment</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to training partners</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to coaches</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of exposure to COVID-19</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation to train</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/personal responsibilities</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too stressed or anxious to train</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too sad or depressed to train</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Top 2 points on a 6-point scale. Those unable to train due to injury were excluded from this item. “Other” includes American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Other, and those who selected multiple racial identities.
Tools for Support

• Engaging with campus Student Athlete Advisory Committee
• Remember student-athletes are students first
• Foster education, engagement and empowerment
• Recognize how biases (conscious and unconscious) impact thoughts and behaviors
• Connect with diversity-related departments on campus
• Refer student-athletes to mental health providers
• Maintain virtual communication
• Help student-athletes remember their “why”
• Be a resource and source of support
NCAA-Related Support/Resources

- Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designation (ADID)
- Sport Science Institute
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Review
- MOIC/SAAC Diversity and Inclusion Social Media Campaign
- NCAA Office of Inclusion-Inclusion Forum
Personal Responsibility
References


THANK YOU

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