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COMM 773

Sports Communication & Culture

Activity 10A: Are Graduation Rates Too Low? (10 Points)

1. Read Chapter 14: Sports in High School and College
2. You are a newly hired researcher for ESPN. The network is planning a half hour program on graduation rates: Are Graduation Rates too low in college athletics?
3. Locate at least 3 articles online or in the NYIT electronic library that explore recent examples of the controversy.
4. Develop a 500 word paper in which you discuss the issue and possible solutions. Submit to your boss. Include citations of the research articles.
5. DUE April 22. Have Fun!

Are Graduation Rates too low in college athletics? This seems to be a major question amongst many. With regards to student graduation rates, the NCAA (National College Athletic Association) keeps a database of information regarding the graduation rates and breaks it down between different divisions. The Badger Herald printed an article, "NCAA study says college athletes finish in 4 years" which states:

- Division I student athletes who entered college in 2001 had an average 79 percent success rate of finishing their four-year degrees
- The average graduation rate for student athletes who entered college between 1998 and 2001 was 78 percent
- Both of these figures are up 1 percent from last year
- Almost 90 percent had earned their degrees within 10 years

While this study focuses on Division I athletes, another article focus on graduation rates among Black Athletes. The Associated Press article, "Grad rates for black college athletes increase" lists a different set of statistics:

- The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for black athletes is 62 percent in 2009, up from 59 percent three years ago
- The GSR for black football players in the top division rose from 54 to 58 percent. It increased from 49 to 54 percent for men's basketball players and from 71 to 76 percent in women's basketball.
- A gap remains in graduation rates between white and black athletes, but the study found it is shrinking. The federal rate for white athletes entering school in 1984 was 59 percent, 24 percentage points higher than for black athletes. The gap had decreased to 15 percentage points for students entering in 2001, when the federal rate for white athletes was 68 percent.

One more area that can be explored in the area of Graduation Success Rates is men verse women. In the article, "NCAA Graduation Rates Higher for Female Athletes" the statistics show the women seem to have higher graduation rates than men. This may be due to the fact that women have less opportunities to become professional athletes after college.

No matter what the factor...skill level, race or sex, it appears that overall the graduation success rates are increasing and that the NCAA has implemented more restrictions to ensure that student athletics focus more on their academics than ever before.

References

<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?ContentID=7721>

http://badgerherald.com/news/2008/10/17/ncaa_study_says_coll.php

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5giGjtux9zEc_NBrZdggo2pQso_IQD97D4HOG2

<http://www.e-sports.com/articles/2252/1/NCAA-Graduation-Rates-Higher-for-Female-Athletes/Page1.html>