



GOPHER STUDENT-ATHLETE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Project Report Submitted by:

Alex Johnson, Benjamin Parks, Antonio Shenault

Project Report Submitted to:

Student-Athlete Development

University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

December 2018



Student Athlete Experience

Student Athletes separate themselves from students through characteristics such as increased levels of exercise, less sleep, and less free time (Driller 2017). Additionally, due to their unique responsibilities and activities, Kamusoko and Pemberton (2013) discussed that student-athletes report experiencing conflict between their student and athlete roles on campus. This gives a distinction between regular students, and student athletes and makes it necessary to study student athletes separately.

One source notes that student-athletes are engaging outside of their immediate networks, participating amongst their non-athlete peers in educational activities that are producing positive development outcomes unaccompanied by restrictions from diversity in student-athlete background. (Gayles & Hu, 2009). By looking into perceptions and the benefits that athletes get from volunteering, more conclusions can be drawn on what drives student-athletes to volunteer (Petr, Paskus, & Miranda, 2011).

Student-Athlete Community Engagement

First, and importantly, research has proven that student-athletes are willing community service participants (Cruce & Moore, 2007; Jarvie & Paule-Koba, 2013). Athletic departments wanting to build high quality relationships with their student-athletes and benefit long term, should provide student-athletes the opportunity to be actively involved in planning community service initiatives (VanSickle & Schaumleffel, 2016; Czekanski & Brown, 2015). Furthermore, the relatedness level that student-athletes perceive is a motivating factor for promoting active engagement, for student-athletes prefer to perceive a connection to the populations that they are engaging with (Deal & Camiré, 2016). Burani and Palestini (2016) more recently portrayed how individuals who are intrinsically motivated to volunteer are rooted by their enjoyment of personal contribution and will accept lower compensation in return (Finkelstien, 2009; Burani & Palestini, 2016). Additional data showed that as age increased, motivation became more intrinsic in nature (Ledford et al., 2018). Lastly, athletes were recorded as reporting that they were more driven in athletics and academics after participating in volunteering (Jarvie & Paule-Koba, 2013)

Support & Connection

Francis (2011) found that the level of volunteering for university students was highly dependent on the volunteering behaviors of surrounding reference groups such as peers, siblings, and parents. For instance, athletes reported they were more likely to volunteer if their coach was an advocate, as well as a facilitator of a wide range

of volunteer options. In regard to retention, research has shown that being involved in a strong volunteer community is critical to retaining volunteers a high rate (Johnson et al., 2017).

Boulianne's research takes a deep look into the aspects of community attachment and how one's feeling about their city influence their likelihood to be volunteer. Students often answered that they cared about the city, and the people in it, and used this as motivation for volunteering. Conversely, few students answered that they were making a long-term investment because they planned to stay in the city after graduation (Boulianne et al., 2014).

Limitations to Participation

In regard to limitations, a lack of knowledge about potential events can also lead to lack of involvement (Van Den Berg & Cuskelly 2016). An additional limitation to student-athlete community engagement exposed within the literature was the perceptions held by student-athletes on campus climate. According to Rankin et al. (2016), positive aspects of climate led to increases in outcomes in almost every relationship, such as connection felt within the community and a resulting willingness to volunteer (Rankin et al., 2016).

Further Research

Two studies cited in Gayles (2009) suggest that, holistically, intercollegiate athletics have a positive impact on the development of cultural values. Wolniak, Pierson, and Pascarella (2001), however, "found that participating in male non-revenue sports had a negative impact on openness to diversity and challenge" (as cited in Gayles, 2009, p. 36). These citations lack current context and present a gap in the existing, current literature surrounding enhanced cultural and diversity awareness as a specific outcome from student-athlete community engagement, which, therefore, presents the opportunity for future research.

On a similar note, Deal & Camiré (2016) point out that the surveys and studies conducted do not represent all university student-athletes, suggesting that other profiles and perspectives likely exist. They outline that this may, in part, be "indicative of a self-selection bias whereby individuals who do not self-identify as contributors (i.e., non- or limited- contributors) are unlikely to volunteer to participate in a study on contribution" (Deal & Camiré, 2016, p. 2099). Within future research, effort should be made to broaden the populations of the studies and recruit university sport participants who may or may not identify as contributors towards community service activities.



SURVEY STUDY

Participants

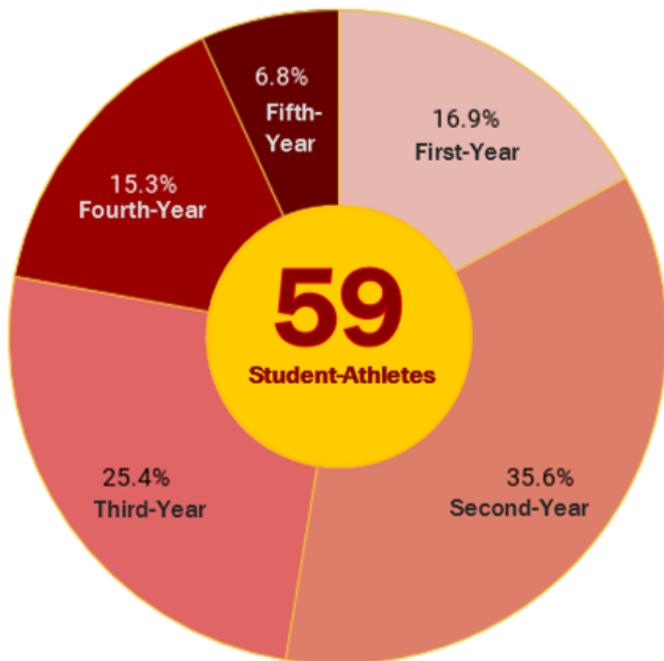
506 University of Minnesota student-athletes' emails were gathered by cross referencing University athletic team rosters and the University email database and received 59 responses across multiple ages in 18 of the Division I sport teams.

Materials

A self-compiled survey was sent out to student-athletes utilizing Qualtrics. The survey consisted of 22 questions aimed to determine trends within student-athlete volunteering and community outreach. The survey included four demographic questions, and then sections on volunteer motivations, barriers, and areas for suggestions. The survey was prefaced with a section detailing the purpose of the survey and ensuring anonymity for their answers.

Over **33** Different Academic Majors Reported

18 Athletic Teams Represented



Women's Cross Country	8
Women's Rowing	7
Women's Track & Field	7
Men's Track & Field	6
Women's Hockey	4
Men's Football	3
Women's Gymnastics	3
Women's Soccer	3
Women's Softball	3
Women's Swim & Dive	3
Men's Baseball	2
Men's Gymnastics	2
Men's Swim & Dive	2
Men's Wrestling	2
Men's Cross Country	1
Men's Golf	1
Men's Tennis	1
Women's Tennis	1

11.67% TOTAL RESPONSE RATE

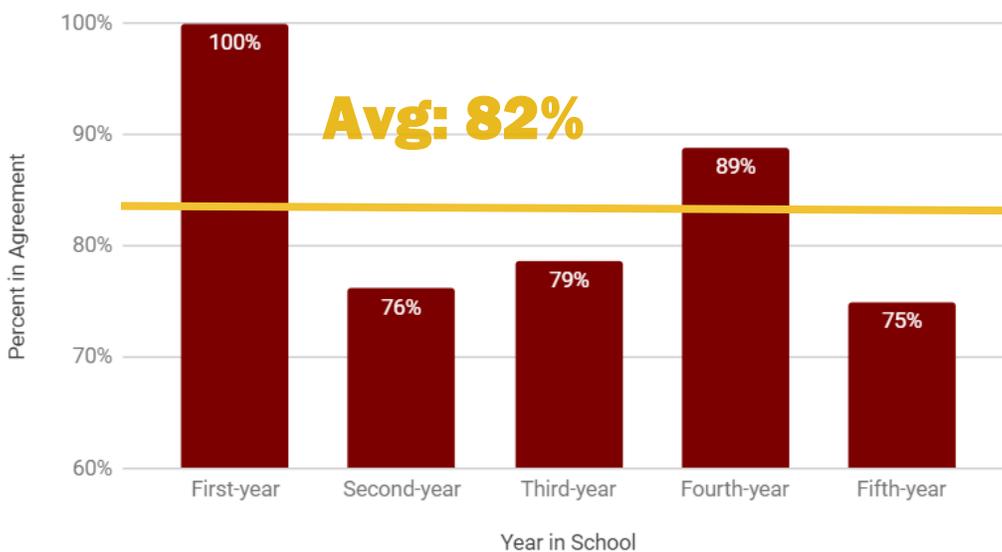


RESULTS

Significant Findings

Results were analyzed through the participants, as well as divided by current year in school. The demographic questions regarding sport and academic major were negated due to a lack of survey response. The first portion of results pertained to current community service and development as a student-athlete. **Over 82% of all respondents said that they agree (either definitely or somewhat) that volunteering through community service is an important part of development as a Gopher student-athlete.**

Agreement of Importance of Volunteering:
Year-by-Year Comparison



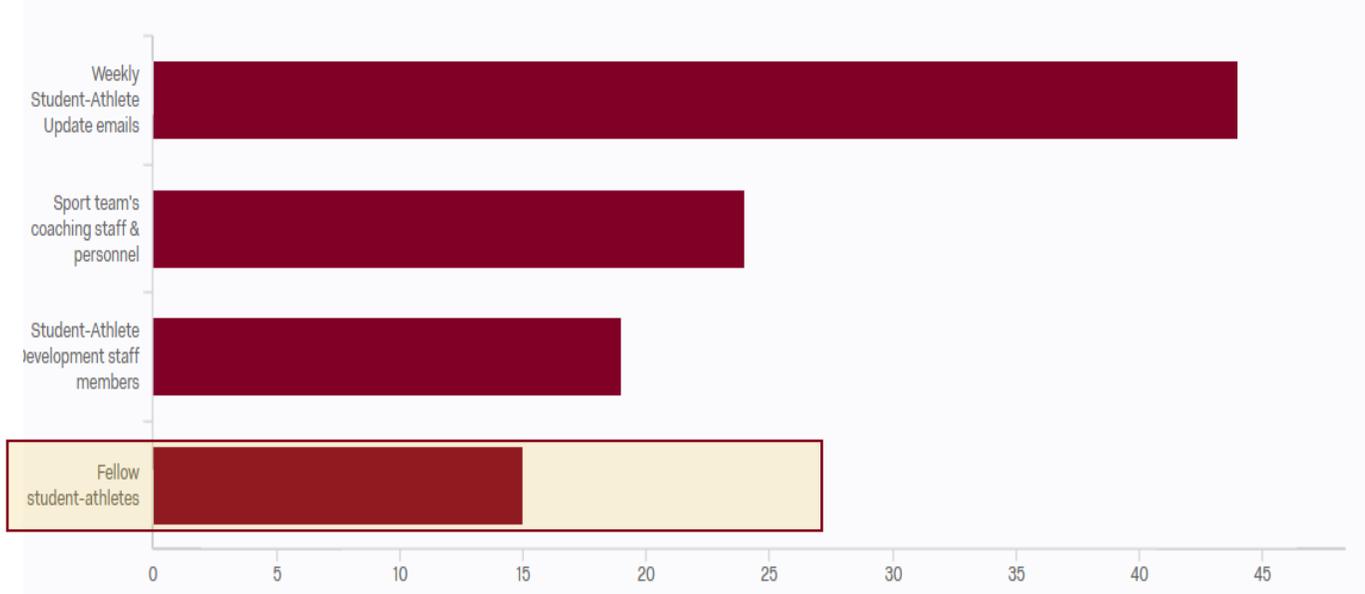
Also, nearly 50% of all respondents self-reported between 1 and 4 for their level of involvement within volunteering activities. **In terms of enjoyment, over 68% of all respondents gave a score of 8 or higher for the level of enjoyment engaging in volunteering activities.** In addition to enjoyment, 60% of participants said it was 8-10 level of beneficial; 32% said it was 5-7 level.

Among those who found no benefit from volunteer activities, they were asked to provide their reasoning; some examples include:

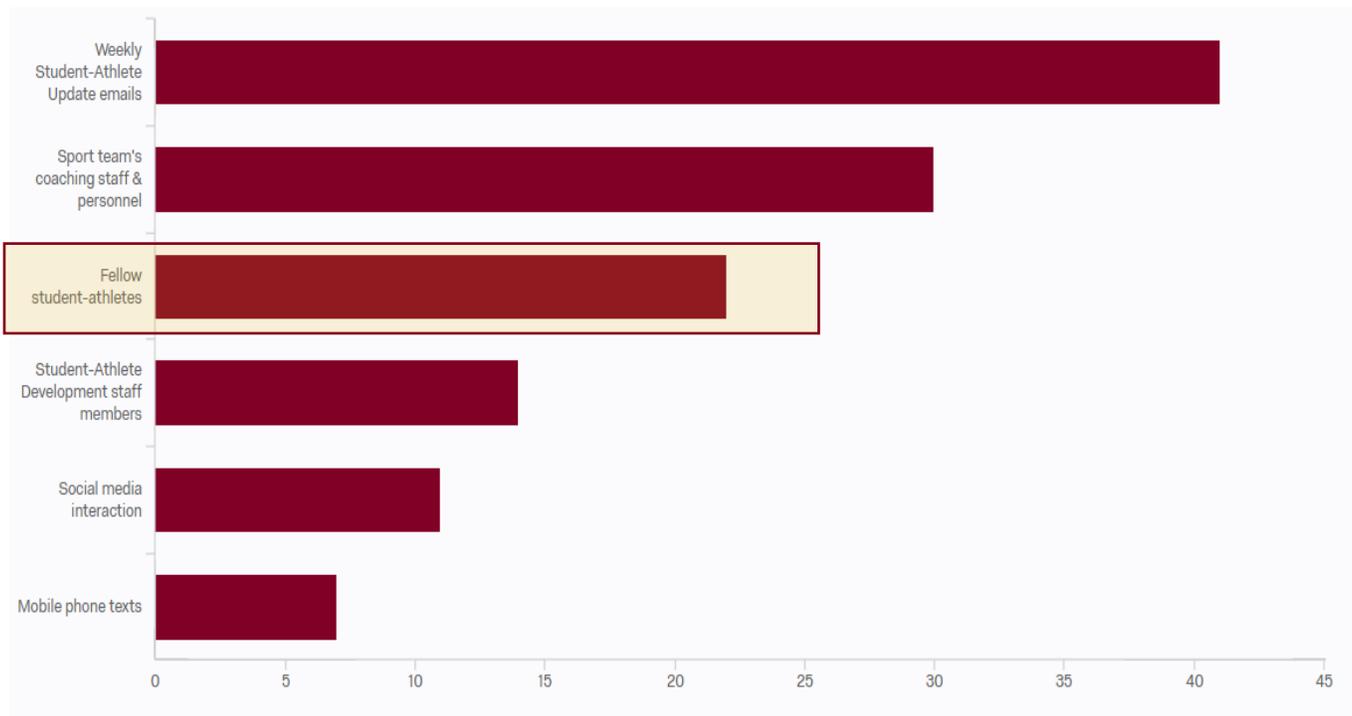
- “I work a lot and my time is better spent working and making money. As an athlete not on scholarship, my priority is producing income.”
- “I just don’t do it often enough to really see any benefit.”

Communication Tools

When asked about how they receive information on volunteer opportunities, weekly Student-Athlete Update emails found to be the **most effective communication tool** for promoting volunteer opportunities.



This aligned with **student preferences**, as weekly Student-Athlete Update emails was also the top result for preferred communication platform, which is shown in the chart below with similar trends from above.



The growth of responses in favor of fellow student-athletes as a communication tool for volunteer opportunities from what is deemed most effective and what is preferred provides an area for potential growth within reaching student-athletes via their peers in order to increase volunteering.

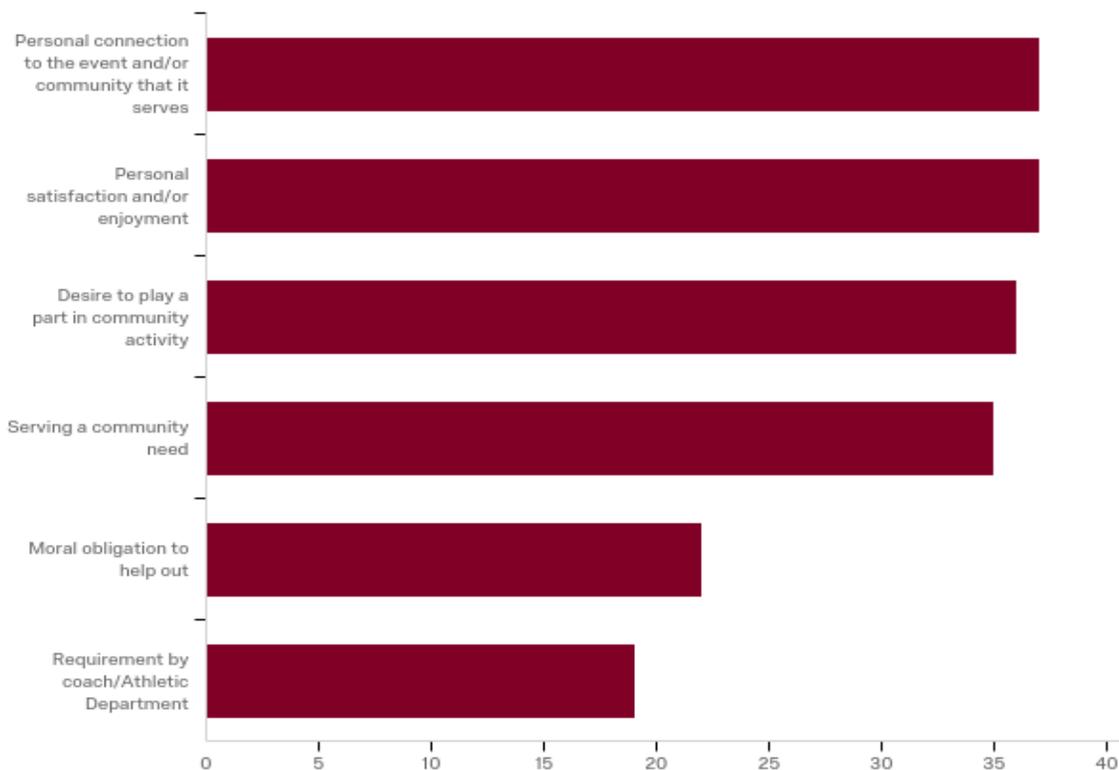
Barriers to Participation

Within the analysis, the barriers holding back student-athlete participation were determined. 96% of respondents stated that athletic responsibilities were a prominent barrier as to why they don't participate in volunteer activities. Similarly, 94% of respondents stated that academic responsibilities was also a barrier for them. When given the opportunity to express specific barriers, one of the participants said:

- 🗣️ "Many volunteer times are the same time as our practices."
- 🗣️ "A lot of the volunteering opportunities are offered during the school week during the day when I have classes and practice, and there are limited opportunities on the weekends. The summers are great for volunteering because there are many options. Also, there are a lot of volunteering opportunities that are only for football."

Motivations for Participation

Finally, the motivations of volunteers were questioned. Personal connection and personal satisfaction listed as the top two motivations for participating in volunteer-based activities (both had $37/57 = 65\%$).



This leads into the results that show 54% of respondents saying that having the opportunity to volunteer with an organization, event, and/or charity of their personal choice would increase their desire and willingness to volunteer (another 40% said maybe). However, both these statistics cannot be considered significantly confirming for solid conclusions.



SUGGESTIONS

Ⓜ Additional study completed within the Athletic Department

- Full access to student-athletes and means to promote higher response rate
- Attention placed on self-selection bias, study population size, and study population representation
- A study coming from Athletic Department staff would, hopefully, encourage more responses than the 11.67% of which was received from this study.

Ⓜ Enhance M.A.G.I.C website

- Include more accurate descriptions of opportunities
 - e.g., specifically indicate if opportunities are only for certain teams
- Provide and promote easier access to the website
 - Was mentioned that the only way student-athletes knew how to find the site was by following links through the mails
 - Higher visibility and promotion of the website was provided as an area to grow participation

Ⓜ Increase visibility of opportunities in addition to website

- Posters/Billboard inside of Athletes Village
- Locker room presence
 - Signage and conversation surrounding specific opportunities

Ⓜ Community Partnerships with individual teams/groups of student-athletes

- Establish continuing partnerships with community organizations
 - Partners could, in turn, work to promote recurring volunteering from student-athletes
- Individual sport teams or self-chosen groups to pair up with community partners to continuously volunteer with and fully engage
 - Provide programming for active service-learning within the volunteer activity

The foundation is set. Where improvement can be made is within strategic effort to instill a positive culture of community engagement within the Athletic Department to provide student-athletes with meaningful opportunities to develop.



REFERENCES

- Boulianne, S., & Brailey, M. (2014). Attachment to Community and Civic and Political Engagement: A Case Study of Students. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne De Sociologie*, 5(4), 375-388. doi:10.1111/cars.12052
- Burani, N., & Palestini, A. (2016). What determines volunteer work? On the effects of adverse selection and intrinsic motivation. *Economics Letters*, 144, 29-32.
- Cruce, T. M., & Moore, J. V. (2007). First-year students' plans to volunteer: An examination of the predictors of community service participation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48, 655-673.
- Czekanski, A. W., & Brown, L. E. (2015). Institutional Outcomes of Student-Athlete Engagement in Athletics Department-Sponsored Community Service. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 9(2), 117-129, DOI: 10.1179/1935739715Z.00000000039
- Deal, C. J., & Camiré, M. (2016) An Examination of University Student-Athletes' Motivations to Contribute, *Journal of College and Character*, 17(2), 116-129, DOI: 10.1080/2194587X.2016.1159227
- Driller, M. W., Dixon, Z. T., & Clark, M. I. (2017). Accelerometer-based sleep behavior and activity levels in student athletes in comparison to student non-athletes. *Sport Sciences for Health*, 13(2), 411-418. doi:10.1007/s11332-017-0373-6
- Finkelstien, M. A. (2009). Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivational orientations and the volunteer process. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46(5-6), 653-658.
- Francis, J. E. (2011). The functions and norms that drive university student volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Volunteer Sector Marketing*, 16(1), 1-12. Doi: 10.1002/nvsm.390
- Gayles, J. G. (2009). The student-athlete experience. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2009(144), 33-41.
- Gayles, J. G., & Hu, S. (2009). The influence of student engagement and sport participation on college outcomes among Division I student-athletes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(3), 315-333.
- Jarvie, B. D., & Paule-Koba, A. L. (2013). The perceptions and effects of community service participation among intercollegiate men's basketball players. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 5, 283-300.
- Johnson, J. E., Giannoulakis, C., Felver, N., Judge, L. W., David, P. A., & Scott, B. F. (2017). Motivation, Satisfaction, and Retention of Sport Management Student Volunteers. *Journal of Applied Sport Management*, 9(1). doi:10.18666/jasm-2017-v9-il-7450
- Kamusoko, S. D., & Pemberton, C. A. (2013) Student-Athlete Wellbeing and Persistence: An In-depth Look at Student-Athlete Perceptions, *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 7(1), 41-61, DOI: 10.1179/1935739713Z.00000000003
- Ledford, A., Mitchell, A., & Scheadler, T. (2018). Experiencing a Super Bowl: The Motivations of Student Volunteers at a Mega-Event. *Sport Journal*, 1. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.lib.umn.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.uid&db=s3h&AN=131086744&site=ehost-live>
- Petr, T., Paskus, T., & Miranda, M. (2011). Division I Results from the NCAA GOALS Study on the Student-Athlete Experience. Retrieved from https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/DI_GOALS_FARA_final_1.pdf
- Rankin, S., Merson, D., Garvey, J. C., Sorgen, C. H., Menon, I., Loya, K., & Oseguera, L. (2016) The Influence of Climate on the Academic and Athletic Success of Student-Athletes: Results from a Multi-Institutional National Study, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87(5), 701-730, DOI: 10.1080/00221546.2016.11777419
- Van Den Berg, L., & Cuskelly, G. (2016). Non-Volunteerism of University Sport Students: A Leisure Constraints Theory Approach. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education & Recreation*, 38(1), 167-177. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.lib.umn.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.uid&db=s3h&AN=114454086&site=ehost-live>
- VanSickle, J. & Schaumleffel, N. A. (2016). Developing Recreation, Leisure, and Sport Professional Competencies through Practitioner/Academic Service Engagement Partnerships, *SCHOLE: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, 31(2), 37-55, DOI: 10.18666/SCHOLE-2016-V31-I2-6867