Winning at the College Level is a gold mine of resources for student-athletes. It provides numerous “Ah-ha” moments for not only the students, but the support staff members as well. The book covers relevant topics and issues that today’s student-athletes face. As a learning specialist, I thoroughly enjoyed the templates and tip sheets. Overall, I highly recommend this book.

*Dixie Wingler, Learning Specialist & Academic Advisor*
*Athletic Academic Achievement*
*Towson University*

Overall I think *Winning at the College Level* definitely touches on all of the issues, topics and concerns that student-athletes go through from depression to talking to an instructor. This book would be a great tool to use in freshmen orientation classes for student-athletes because of the encompassing topics and the interactive workbook. It is a very good resource for both student-athletes and academic support units.

*Megan Albidrez, Associate Director*
*Academic Support Program for Student Athletes*
*North Carolina State University*

Dr. Tyrance and Dr. NiiLampti both have first-hand knowledge of what it takes to succeed as a student-athlete. Both also have worked extensively with student-athletes in various roles and at multiple levels. Their understanding of today’s student-athlete is evident throughout the book. This is the rare book that includes sound advice on virtually all types of challenges, issues and opportunities that our student-athletes face today. As an instructor I love the end of section reflections and the various worksheets which are ready for classroom use.

*Mark Verburg, Associate Director & Tutor Coordinator*
*Athletics Academic Center*
*University of North Carolina at Charlotte*
Winning at the College Level is a road map for all first-year student-athletes. This book helps student-athletes identify campus resources, effectively manage their time and provides them with the tools and confidence to reach their personnel and professional goals. This book takes a holistic approach in developing student-athletes to be leaders on their teams, within the Athletic Department and on campus. I truly believe this book will enhance the student-athlete experience.

Jason Cable,
Associate Athletic Director
Alcorn State University

Winning at the College Level: Thriving as a First-Year Student-Athlete is an excellent and well-written manual for any incoming collegiate student-athlete. The practical and applied nature of this book provides student-athletes, coaches, and staff with great “tools” to enhance the adjustment success for any first year student-athlete. Shaun and Nyaka have created a unique and “user-friendly” guide for readers and instructors; this text can be easily incorporated into current transitional classes, workshops, and academic services for the collegiate student-athlete.

Chris Carr, Ph.D.
Sport & Performance Psychologist
St. Vincent Sports Performance
WINNING AT THE
COLLEGE LEVEL
Thriving as a First-Year Student-Athlete

SHAUN TYRANCE, PH.D.
&
NYAKA NIILAMPTI, PH.D.
Foreword

Every year, for nearly twenty years, I have had the pleasure of working with a new class of first-year student-athletes as they navigate the challenges of a new campus community. Because each of them brings their own individual history, values, and perspective to the equation, and because every campus has its own unique environment, it is impossible to predict who will struggle to succeed. I have seen student-athletes with terrific transcripts, test scores, and grade point averages struggle to survive their first year for reasons that have nothing to do with academic preparation. Conversely, I have seen just as many students with little or no preparation experience incredible success in their first year.

Despite the incalculable variables individuals and institutions bring to the equation for success, it still amazes me how constant the solution remains. No matter what circumstances led you to your first-year, the fact is, there is a template for a successful transition, and Shaun and Nyaka have provided it in plain and relatable terms. Winning at the College Level reads like a clearly defined map identifying every challenge and opportunity first-year student-athletes will encounter along their journey. Whether you are a freshman right out of high school, a transfer student, an international student, a parent, a coach, or an academic advisor, you’ll find helpful advice to navigate the obstacles to academic, athletic, social, and personal success.

Like Shaun and Nyaka, I was a student-athlete in college. I actually struggled through a first-year transition three times; once as a freshman and twice as a transfer. I learned the hard way that you have to leave your comfort zone to be successful and that you need other people to succeed. At the University of Georgia, we like to say that we put the first year first, because it establishes the foundation, or what we call the launching pad, for the future trajectory of each student-athlete.

I wish I had access to this text when I was a freshman and a transfer. I am certainly glad it’s available to today’s student-athletes! More than just a book that describes the campus landscape,
WINNING AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

dthis work blends relevant statistics and quotes from actual student-athletes with thoughtful discussion points and reflection questions. Used by an individual or applied in a classroom setting, the worksheets and activities provide readers with the knowledge of self that is absolutely critical to goal-setting and overcoming adversity along the path.

Ted White
Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services
University of Georgia
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Welcome to college! You’ve officially made it. You have survived the stress of being a high school senior, you’ve successfully navigated the process of finding the right college for you, and you have walked across the graduation stage. Congratulations! Those are all very difficult tasks, and you should be proud of your accomplishments. You are one of the few privileged high school student-athletes to have the opportunity to play in college. According to recent National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) stats, only between 3 and 11% of high school athletes in your sport get the chance to play on a college campus (Probability of Competing, 2013). In your new role as a college student-athlete, you will have the opportunity and pleasure to travel, meet new people, and experience competition at one of your sport’s highest levels.

There are multiple benefits both on and off the field that accompany participating in collegiate athletics. Athletes who compete at this level have access to a high quality educational experience, state of the art training resources, chances for national and international travel, exposure to new cultures, and opportunities to develop skills that translate to life beyond college. Most importantly, athletes have a greater chance of attaining with a degree in comparison to other college students (NCAA, 2013). Your new life as a first-year college student-athlete has just begun. While the benefits are many, there are also many challenges inherent in your role as a college athlete. Not only do first-year student-athletes have to manage all that encompasses the completely unfamiliar environment of college, there are also new coaches and teammates to add to that adjustment. Some of you may also be experiencing other firsts—you may be the first in your family to attend college, or this may be the first time you have ever been away from home for an extended period of time. You may have left a small town where you have grown up surrounded by the same familiar faces, and everyone knows who you are. Or you may have spent the last 18 years of your life in a major city with millions of people, and are now living in a small town where not many people share your background or culture.
These are all variables that can impact how happy and successful you are during your first-year as a college athlete, as research indicates that students who are successful their first-year have a greater likelihood of returning and eventually graduating from college (Ishitani & DesJardins, 2002). Our goal is to help you persist through the ups and downs of college athletics and successfully manage the inevitable challenges in a way that results in a rewarding college experience and degree completion. While we know that many student-athletes enter college with the hope of playing professional sports, statistics published by the NCAA remind us that for the majority of sports there is a less than 2% chance of being drafted by a professional sports organization (Probability of Competing, 2013). This book was created to serve as a resource for first-year student-athletes looking to excel in their sport and in the classroom. The information included in this text is designed to guide you toward degree completion while simultaneously experiencing great athletic success. And since studies indicate that college graduates can earn more than a million dollars more than someone with a high school diploma over the course of their lifetime, we believe that successfully managing your first year of college puts you securely on that path (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Although some universities suggest student-athletes are no different from the non-athlete students on campus, the truth is that student-athletes are part of a “special population” and are faced with the unique challenge of balancing academic requirements with the physically demanding and time draining schedule of college athletics. All first-year students (athletes and non-athletes) face a number of challenges that may contribute to adjustment difficulties. Specifically, first-year college students are required to adjust in two primary areas: academic and social. The struggle to navigate these two worlds is so demanding that recent studies indicate almost 35% of college students drop out between their first and second year (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). In addition to the social and academic demands that most first-year college students experience, student-athletes are faced with navigating the additional world of college athletics. As a result, your transition during this time may be more challenging than non-athletes. You will want to be strategic about how you negotiate your first year, and proactively manage each of the domains that pose a potential threat to your success on and off the field.

As former Division I student-athletes who have worked with thousands of college athletes as sport psychology consultants, this book is a result of discussions about our own first-year experiences, both on the field and in the classroom. We have both experienced interactions with other students (and sometimes faculty) who did not believe that student-athletes held as much
INTRODUCTION

value as non-athletes. We have personally experienced the challenges of balancing study sessions with sports practice, and sometimes missed out on opportunities to create informal relationships with faculty members. In addition to our own experiences, many of the college student-athletes we work with as clinicians, sport performance consultants, and faculty members have also had similar experiences. What has become evident is that several student-athletes continue to struggle in these areas and are unable to take full advantage of the opportunities associated with being a student-athlete. These missed opportunities can result in academic or athletic ineligibility, poor decision making, and in extreme cases, early dismissal or voluntary withdrawal. The continued struggles we witness among college athletes across the country indicate there is a strong need for additional support and resources.

As you begin and progress through your first year of college, you will undoubtedly encounter numerous experiences that could alter—positively or negatively—how successful you are in your sport or in the classroom. In fact, many universities have created courses for first-year student-athletes to assist you as you navigate this transition. We hope this text will serve as an additional resource for you and supplement transition courses that have been designed specifically to support your adjustment. As mentioned previously, statistics indicate that going from college athletics to professional or Olympic sports is highly unlikely; however, the possibility of this progression decreases—or becomes virtually impossible—if you are dismissed or leave prematurely (Probability of Competing, 2013). This book is structured to inform you, prepare you, and provide you with the tools you will need throughout your athletic and academic college career.

Winning at the College Level is different from any first-year transition book you will encounter, as it is written from a student-athlete’s perspective. It presents a practical and straightforward approach to addressing the challenges and benefits of the first-year student-athlete experience. We understand that a successful student-athlete excels in both adjusting to the athletic demands of college sports and managing academics. It is with that balance in mind that this book has been structured. This book is divided into two major parts: Part I provides content rich information on the first-year transition for student-athletes, and Part II, the “College Survival Guide”, is comprised of worksheets that allow student-athletes to learn useful skills that will enable them to discover themselves and develop the necessary tools that will be helpful in college and beyond.
Part I is organized into three chapters structured around the central domains you, as a student-athlete, will navigate: athletic, academic, and social transitions. Each chapter will present information on several important topics within each domain, pointers that provide insight into the most common concerns student-athletes have expressed in each area, and suggestions to aid in successfully navigating them. While each of these chapters covers information specific to the primary domain, there are three additional elements that we found important to address in each chapter: mental health issues within student-athlete populations and the unique experiences of international and transfer student-athletes.

Studies tell us that although the benefits of participating in sports are countless, student-athletes often struggle with some mental health issues at a higher rate than non-athletes, particularly depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (Watson & Kissinger, 2007; Storch, Storch, Killiany, & Roberti, 2005; Pinkerton, Hinz & Barrow, 1989). While we do not often discuss these issues among athletes, if signs and symptoms of these challenges are ignored, they can negatively impact performance and if continually left untreated, can have life-long consequences. From a developmental perspective, we know that college age is the time at which many mental health issues begin to present themselves (Burke, Burke, Regier & Rae, 1990; Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, Merikangas & Walters, 2005). Additionally, the stressors associated with the process of navigating such a significant transition can increase the likelihood of onset of emotional difficulties. There is often reluctance among student-athletes around seeking support or asking for help, especially for concerns related to mental health issues (Watson, 2005; Martin, Wrisberg, & Lousbury, 1996). This text provides information about the most common mental health issues experienced by student-athletes, as well as signs and symptoms to help you recognize when there may be need for concern. The information provided in each chapter is based on the criteria listed in the most commonly used mental health diagnostic manual (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). We would encourage you to seek support from a licensed mental health professional, your athletic department sport psychologist, or the university counseling center if you recognize these symptoms either in friends, teammates, or yourself.

Each chapter also includes a section that speaks specifically to experiences of international and transfer student-athletes, who again, are required to navigate more responsibilities than non-athlete students in both populations. While many of the experiences of these two groups of student-athletes will parallel those of other first-year student-athletes, there are some areas in which their experiences will differ. For example, transfer students are at an advantage in many ways when compared to first-year athletes—they have already experienced the higher level of
INTRODUCTION

preparation and competition, the demands of balancing academics, sports, and social life, as well as the adjustment related to being away from home. While research indicates that student-athletes who transfer from junior colleges to four year institutions have a greater difficulty in making this adjustment, all transfer students will benefit from following the suggestions outlined in this text to ensure their academic, athletic and social success (McGuire, S.P. & Belcheir, M., 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2008).

Though there are advantages, disadvantages are also possible—some transfer student-athletes may feel increased pressure to perform resulting from limited time to accomplish athletic and academic goals. Depending on previous experiences, some may have to unlearn bad habits or expectations, or may struggle to connect socially with teammates, coaches, or faculty. International student-athletes may face challenges as a result of the cultural shifts between their home country and their new environment, including language, expectations, and building relationships. As a result, each chapter discusses additional challenges that these two populations may face and provides suggestions to assist them in navigating the concerns that may be specific to them.

Part II of this text is the College Survival Guide, a workbook intended to help you learn more about yourself in areas such as values, athletic identity, learning preferences, and study skills. The worksheets and activities in this section will guide you in developing skills in each of these areas and provide tools that we have learned are essential to success in higher education. We know that many students come to college lacking strong time management and study skills. Not only will the College Survival Guide support you as you learn many of these skills, it is also structured to allow you to learn about yourself as a student and as a person. For example, knowing your particular learning style—Are you auditory or visual? Do you learn by teaching or doing?—will help you both in the classroom and on the field. Surprisingly, many students do not learn this important information about themselves until later in their college career. This book will allow you to gain this knowledge in your first-year and therefore you will be able to maximize your potential from the beginning.

This comprehensive resource guide is based on surveys, interviews, and focus groups we conducted with upper class student-athletes to gain insight into their first-year experiences. You will see their voices and suggestions woven throughout the book. Each of the first three chapters concludes with discussion

“I probably made some of my lowest grades as a freshman because I was studying the same way I did in high school...and not working as hard, not reading the theory or reading the book as much or understanding the information. And not getting the help because I thought I could do it myself.”

—Senior, Women’s Cross Country
WINNING AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

questions that will help generate classroom dialogue as well as journal space for you to jot down your thoughts or additional questions.

The purpose of this text is to ease your transition into higher education; to help you balance your academic, athletic, and social demands and increase your ability to have both a fulfilling athletic career and earn a college degree. It is our hope that as you work your way through this book, you will find yourself learning these skills and applying the techniques both in the classroom and on the field. We believe (and the research indicates) that if you put these skills into practice, you will find some aspects of your first year less overwhelming and increase your chances of success. As two individuals who have gone from student-athletes in college to working with student-athletes in our post-collegiate lives, our goal is to help you make your college experience and beyond enjoyable and successful!
PART I
The Student-Athlete Transition

- CHAPTER 1: The Academic Transition
- CHAPTER 2: The Athletic Transition
- CHAPTER 3: The Social/Cultural Transition
CHAPTER 1
The Academic Transition

One of the most significant challenges all first-year students will face is the higher level of academic rigor that exists at the collegiate level. All students must contend with increased levels of academic pressure and the elevated expectations that college professors have for their students. Couple this greater academic demand with the increased amount of personal freedom students have and the college classroom can be a daunting place for first-year students. While it can be easy to allow your athletic responsibilities (practice, rehab, and competition) to interfere with your studies, it’s important to keep in mind that the term student-athlete is stressed for a reason. For many of you, it may be the first time you have to organize your schedule and manage your time by yourself. It may be the first time you’re handed a syllabus and simply told when assignments are due, meaning it is your responsibility to make sure that work is completed on time and you are adequately prepared for quizzes and exams. While there are a number of factors that contribute to the academic experience of student-athletes, you can prepare yourself by knowing what to expect and setting yourself up for success from the very beginning.

On some college campuses, student-athletes face various stereotypes when it comes to classroom performance. While these stereotypes are often inaccurate, they can nonetheless influence the perspective of your professors and your peers.

“I think it’s very important for people to know that high school is a lot easier than college. If I knew how hard college was going to be, I would have done a lot better in high school. Because you don’t get to hand work in late. Teachers expect you to read the syllabus, and to know what’s going on. You need to put in way more hours. You need to become the library’s best friend. Especially during exams. And it’s so much more demanding. Teachers expect more of you.”
—Sophomore, Men’s Basketball
Concern about those negative stereotypes may even impact your performance ... both inside and outside the classroom (Yopyk, & Prentince, 2005; Stone, Harrison, & Mottley, 2012; Dee, 2014). It is important that you don’t fall victim to these stereotypes! Prepare yourself for the academic challenge, and attack it with the same vigor and intensity that you do your sport. Remember, less than two percent of college student-athletes make it in professional sports (Probability of Competing, 2013). You are the one who suffers if you do not take advantage of your academic opportunity.

**Academic Expectations**

There are a few fundamental academic tasks that will require a greater level of attention than you may be used to. College courses are typically designed very differently from high school classes; they are structured to assess your ability to understand and apply learned information, rather than simply memorize and repeat facts. As a result, strong study skills, test taking knowledge, the ability to engage in critical thought, and the capability to express your views and understanding in writing are vital to your success. While you have done each of these to some degree in high school, college success requires you to bring these abilities to another level.

One of the most effective ways to learn how to manage academic expectations is to develop a good relationship with your advisor. If you are lucky enough to have an advisor in your major and an advisor in the athletic department, make sure you connect with both individuals. Understand that each advisor is different; you will have to be a strong advocate for yourself to ensure you get the academic information needed to guarantee your overall success. Understand both the NCAA’s and your institutions continuing eligibility requirements. There are a lot of rules (i.e. number of hours completed in each semester, percentage toward degree, total hours passed). Do not rely solely on your advisors, as they sometimes make mistakes. Take responsibility for your own success and don’t put your athletic and academic career in the hands of others.
Writing Skills

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for students—athletes and non-athletes—to enter college with limited experience and skills in formal writing. Most high school classes do not require extensive writing assignments where developing a thesis statement and integrating supporting ideas in a structured format are necessary (Mosley, 2006). As a result, many students have limited experiences organizing their thoughts in a coherent manner and putting them down on paper.

Performing well in college courses will require you to express yourself clearly through writing, in papers as well as essay and short answer questions on exams. It is a common misperception that you are only graded on your writing abilities in your English class. Your Political Science professor is equally interested in your ability to clearly express your ideas on paper, and your grade will be impacted by that skill.

Writing effectively is often seen as an intimidating task to students of all academic backgrounds and strengths. While it can be a challenge to develop and strengthen this skill, it is not a challenge student-athletes need to embark upon alone. Almost all universities have an Academic Support Center of some kind that provides students with a variety of services to contribute to academic success. In some university athletic programs, there are academic support programs embedded within the department; and others may be a part of the larger university. Despite the location on campus, these centers typically have a resource that specifically focuses on providing writing support. Writing centers provide support for each component of the writing process, from idea generation and organization to proofreading and editing a final product. In most cases, using this resource is not a requirement, and unfortunately lots of students miss out on the opportunity to not only increase their grade on an individual assignment but also to further develop writing skills and improve future outcomes as well. Make sure you utilize this support!

In the College Survival Guide, Section 7 is dedicated to helping you develop your writing skills and manage the writing process. Worksheet 7.1 and the Writing Skills Tip-sheet will be particularly useful for your early writing assignments, but will also provide writing support throughout your college experience. Worksheet 7.1 gives you a format to outline and structure writing assignments, while the Tipsheet highlights common writing errors to avoid. The Journaling worksheet in the stress management section (Section 10.3) can also be used to help further develop your writing skills.
Reflection Time:

- What part of the writing process is the biggest challenge for you?
- What are factors that would prevent you from using the resources in the Academic Support Center?

Study Skills

Another skill that is essential in college is your ability to take in information, take notes, and study effectively. First-year students often think they are well informed in this area, and find it surprising when they do not perform well on tests or exams. Effective test taking requires you to be well prepared, aware of what content needs to be studied, and knowledgeable about your most effective study method. It is important that you understand not everyone studies in the same manner; a method that may be effective for a roommate or teammate may not necessarily work for you. Additionally, your study approach may vary depending on the course, content, or type of exam or test.

Successfully navigating your first year academically will require you to gain some awareness about the quality of your current study skills, and ways that you may need to strengthen these skills. For example, simply reading through your notes in preparation for an exam that is designed to assess your application of information (instead of simply defining terms) may not allow you to achieve the results you desire. Similarly, you may need to alter your current method of note taking. For some classes, taking notes during class based on what your professor discusses may be ample preparation for the exam. In other courses you will find that much of the exam is based on information you learn from reading the textbook and taking good notes, while in some classes you may find that exams are based on a combination of both. The College Survival Guide, will provide you with several tools that allow you to assess your skill set in this area and give you a few pointers that will enable you to be more successful.

“In high school, I could just sit in class and daydream really, and not worry about the material being taught or anything like that. So then when I got here to college, I still kind of had that attitude. I’d just sit there and take a few notes, not really worry too much. And then I was realizing that my workload was too big when it was time for exams.”

—Junior, Women’s Field Hockey
Academic Integrity

Academic integrity covers a fairly wide range of concepts, including honor codes and plagiarism. This is a term that is being addressed more frequently in higher education today. Maintaining a certain standard and level of honesty in all course related activities is the foundation of academic integrity. While every institution varies in the level of emphasis they place on promoting this concept, students everywhere are held responsible for upholding academic integrity. What exactly does the term “academic integrity” mean? In brief, the word “integrity” speaks to honesty and the following of a high ethical and moral standard (Mish, 2004). Academic integrity means applying that same high ethical standard in and out of the classroom. The violation of academic integrity is most commonly associated with cheating and/or plagiarism, resulting in an unfair academic advantage over other students.

Studies have shown that anywhere between 50% and 90% of high school students admit to cheating in some form (Strom & Strom, 2007; Galloway, 2012; Bacha, Bahous & Nabhani, 2012). This could be anything from providing classmates information about what is on an upcoming exam, to circulating correct answers by Facebook or email, to using the Internet as a resource, or collaborating on assignments when it is not allowed. Many high school students feel that cheating is just “part of the culture,” and often do not express feelings of guilt or wrong doing for their actions. Additionally, they feel there are limited consequences in the unlikely case they get caught. Some high school students admit that they have become so desensitized to cheating and academic dishonesty that they sometimes are able to convince themselves that they are not behaving immorally (Cheating Fact Sheet, 2013).

Making the transition from high school, where these behaviors may not come with a significant cost or consequence, into college, where expulsion or other serious punishments are a consequence of cheating, requires a very large shift in thinking. Many schools have a well-established Honor Code System that attaches a heavy penalty to acts of academic dishonesty. Unfortunately, at many institutions, student-athletes have a higher profile than their non-athletes counterparts and are sometimes held to a higher standard. As a result, they may be used as “the example” when rules are broken. Honor Code Systems vary by university; generally, they are used as a means of providing structure and formality around the theme of academic integrity that without clarification can be misinterpreted or misunderstood.

Honor Code Systems define what academic integrity means for that institution, describe the roles and responsibility of each student in upholding the honor code, explain the process that
occurs when a violation occurs, and describe the range of consequences that may follow. Honor code violations can vary—they might include knowing that someone in your class has cheated or acted dishonestly and failing to inform your professor/faculty, or providing assistance to someone, despite knowing that assistance on a particular task is not allowed. More egregious acts would include actions such as copying a writing assignment straight from Wikipedia.

Many institutions have a committee that is tasked with the specific responsibility of listening to Honor Code violations and doling out consequences that are fair and equitable. For most institutions, the consequences for academic dishonesty can range from failing the assignment, to failing the course, to even expulsion. Needless to say, failing a course due to academic dishonesty can jeopardize your athletic eligibility. Therefore, it would be beneficial for you to know and understand your institution’s academic integrity policy. Each professor may interpret the policy differently, but it is your responsibility to uphold your institution’s policy and protect your academic and athletic eligibility. The following insert is an example of an institution’s Honor Code. Note the clearly outlined descriptions of unacceptable behaviors for students. Again, each institution will have its own Honor Code policy or student code of conduct; be certain that you know what is expected at your university.

“The Academic Transition

“Each Davidson student is honor bound to refrain from stealing, lying about College business, and cheating on academic work. Stealing is the intentional taking of any property without right or permission. Lying is intentional misrepresentation of any form. Cheating is any practice, method, or assistance, whether explicitly forbidden or unmentioned, that involves any degree of dishonesty, fraud, or deceit. Cheating includes plagiarism, which is representing another’s ideas or words as one’s own. Additional guidelines for each class may be determined by its professor; each Davidson student is responsible for knowing and adhering to them. Each student is responsible for learning and observing appropriate documentation of another’s work. Each Davidson student is honor bound to report immediately all violations of the Honor Code of which the student has first-hand knowledge; failure to do so is itself a violation of the Honor Code. All students, faculty, and other employees of Davidson College are responsible for familiarity with and support of the Honor Code. Any student, faculty member, administrative officer, employee, or guest of the College may charge a student with a violation of the Honor Code. Charges are presented to the Dean of Students and at the Dean’s discretion must be signed. If the Dean determines that further proceedings are warranted by the Honor Council, he or she will prepare a formal charge. Hearings, administrative conferences and other proceedings regarding alleged violations of the Honor Code shall be conducted pursuant to the Code of Disciplinary Procedures.”

—Davidson College’s Honor Code
There are some simple ways to guarantee that you maintain academic integrity at all times and avoid the possible pitfalls that can come as a result of even inadvertent violations. The first suggestion would be to communicate with professors to ensure that your understanding of the assignment matches their intent. For example, “Is collaboration acceptable?” “Is this an individual assignment?” Ask questions if there is any lack of clarity around the rules. The second suggestion would be to make sure that you utilize the resources available to you at your institution. Many of you have access to academic support staff that can provide assistance with almost any questions you have regarding what is acceptable academically, and if those support staff aren’t certain of the answer, they certainly know where to go to get the right answer. Ask questions. Seek feedback. Many students come to college with limited experiences writing papers and citing sources correctly. Use your campus Writing Center to ensure that your writing assignments include the necessary citations and avoid the possibility of plagiarism, particularly as this is often one of the most common Honor Code violations on college campuses.

**Reflection Time:**

- Identify four actions that would be considered violations of your institution’s honor code.
- What would be the procedure and/or consequences if you committed an honor code violation at your institution?

**Navigating the Classroom**

For most of you, the largest classrooms you might have experienced have 35-40 students. For many college classes, particularly in the first two years, lecture halls hold upwards of 200 people. This typically means that attendance is not taken, distractions abound, and to your professor, you may be nothing more than a name on a sheet of paper. Resist the temptation to blend in among your peers, tucked away safely in a seat in the back of the class. While this action doesn’t always result in poor academic performance, it is easier to become disengaged when you are so far away from the instructor. Keeping this in mind, it is essential to be actively engaged and to develop a relationship with your professors to increase your chance of success in large lecture classes.
First, take note of the office hours of your professors or Teaching Assistants (TA’s). Preferably after the first class or two, but definitely during the first week of class, approach your professor at the end of class or make the time to stop by their office. Introduce yourself and ask for their suggestions around how students can be successful in their class, share with your instructors that you are a student-athlete, and inform them—as early as possible—of the days when you will have to miss class or leave early due to a conflict with a competition. It will be extremely helpful if you have already consulted your athletic schedule and compared it to the class syllabus to identify potential scheduling conflicts. Some athletic departments provide official documentation or “travel letters” that inform your professors of class absences. You should also ask for suggestions about ways to make up the work or information you will miss during those days and times. While some professors may feel that missing class due to athletic commitments is unacceptable or annoying (unfortunately, some do feel this way), you can minimize negative impact by demonstrating your responsibility and communicating this concern as early as possible in the semester. Introducing yourself and interacting with your professors also moves you from being a name on a roster to someone they recognize both in class as well as when assignments are graded. Remember, professors are human, and they want their students to be successful. If you show them that you care and that you are willing to put forth the necessary effort to earn a good grade in their course, your chances of success increase exponentially.

Unfortunately, what often happens to first-year student-athletes (many first-year students—nonathletes included) is that they feel overwhelmed by the large class size and attempt to be as “invisible” as possible. They may automatically sit in the back of the class or in the last row, which makes it easier to become distracted by the many students in front of and around them, the thoughts about what they are going to do after class that day, or the leaves falling from the trees outside of the window! While you may not always notice the professor, keep in mind that the person in front of the class can always see you; they have a “bird’s eye view” of the entire classroom. They notice students who are texting and constantly checking their smartphones, students surfing Facebook under the guise of using their laptop to take notes, students staring out of the window, and students who may be sleeping as a result of 7am practice or late night partying.

52% of upperclass student-athletes reported that during their first year, they were intimidated to participate in class discussions due to large class size.
7 Ways to Navigate the Classroom

- Introduce yourself to the professor and/or TA.
- Compare your sport schedule to the class syllabus.
- Inform your professor/TA about the classes and days that you will have to miss due to athletic conflicts.
- Ask for suggestions around ways to make up missed assignments or gather missed Information.
- Follow through on make-up opportunities or offers of assistance.
- Utilize office hours.
- Know your professor’s attendance policy.
- Seek assistance at the FIRST sign of difficulty or lack of understanding.

Instead of heading straight to the back of a large lecture hall, try to sit in the front. This means that you must actually be on time for class. While sitting in the front seems like a minor point, there is tremendous benefit to this action: the professor gets to see you and knows that you are engaged; there are fewer people between you and the professor, minimizing distractions and making engagement much easier to maintain; you can see and hear what is being taught much easier than if you were all the way in the back; and research indicates that students who sit in the front and middle of the class perform better on exams (Mercincavage & Brooks, 1990; Rennels & Chaudhari, 1988).

Another struggle for first-year students is approaching the professor or asking questions. Many student-athletes feel uncomfortable or insecure about talking to their professors; they aren’t sure what to ask, they are concerned that the professor may not like them (or student-athletes in general), and are afraid of “looking silly.” The result is that they choose to sit silently while actually they are struggling in the class. These feelings are common and understandable; yet not communicating with your professors only hurts you as a student (and as an athlete). As a student-athlete you typically have access to multiple people who can help you prepare for conversations with your professors. Your academic advisor is a good resource to utilize in helping you brainstorm strategies.
to approach your professors or questions to ask. Your coaches are also good places to turn for assistance in communicating with professors. They often have had a lot of experience in this area, and can take time out to help you prepare for these interactions. Ultimately, building a relationship with each of your professors is going to be vital to your success throughout the course of your academic career. Professors are not in the business of failing students, and the more interaction that you have with them the more likely it is that you will be successful in their class. Remember, if you attend every class (with the exception of competition related absences), study for tests, turn in all assignments, show interest in the course, and consistently ask for help when needed, it will be almost impossible to earn a bad grade!

**Online or Hybrid Classes**
Technology advances have allowed for an expansion of the traditional “classroom,” as many institutions now offer online courses, or hybrid courses, which are a combination of the traditional classroom and the online classroom. Some students make the mistake of assuming that moving the teaching environment from the building across campus to the world of cyberspace will result in a less challenging class. Please don’t make this mistake. Often, online courses require a great deal of time, independent effort, increased motivation to remain structured and on task, and sometimes even a different learning style. Keep in mind that professors who are responsible for building online courses have to design them in a manner that enrolled students spend an equivalent amount of time on course-related work as those physically sitting in the classroom seats across campus. Online courses require a different type of interaction, preparation, and discipline as compared to traditional courses (Merisotis & Phipps, 1999; Roval & Barnum, 2003).

There are a few things students can do to increase the possibility of success in online or hybrid classes. First, do NOT wait until the last minute to complete your assignments. It is often easy to look at the due date on your syllabus and think you have more time than you really do. Online classes are designed around continuous online discussions and you often have to be logged on for a certain time and respond within a very strict time frame. Make sure you are well aware of the allowed time frame for each of your assignments—down to the minute—which may differ for daily assignments, exams, and group work.
PART II

The College Survival Guide

- SEGMENT I: Self-Awareness
- SEGMENT II: Academic Success
- SEGMENT III: Social Adjustment & Life Skills
Introduction

Winning at the College Level is a practical guide to navigating your first-year in college, preparing you for the experiences that will accompany your transition into the world of college athletics, and providing you with tools to skillfully manage the adjustment. Consistent with Part I, the College Survival Guide workbook gives you the resources to assess your values as a student-athlete, skills to increase your academic success, and the awareness to optimize your social experiences. The activities in this guide are structured to encourage self-reflection while simultaneously helping you develop concrete strategies that can be implemented on a daily basis to enhance your overall college experience.

The first section of the College Survival Guide is structured around the central theme of recognizing, understanding, and organizing your personal values. We begin with a values checklist, which allows you to identify your most important values (athletic, academic, and social). Understanding the principles you consider to be most important plays a foundational role in how you view yourself, set your goals, and manage your time. Therefore, after selecting your values, you are asked to assess your athletic identity—the level to which you identify with the athletic role. After determining your level of athletic identity, we include worksheets that allow you to set goals in each of the three areas. Regardless of the strength of your athletic identity, it is imperative that you establish and work towards goals in the academic and social arenas. Finally, the values section closes with information and practical tools that will help you develop essential time management skills, successfully manage your time requirements, gain an understanding of what is important to you (values and identity), set appropriate goals and wisely working towards achieve them.

The second segment of the College Survival Guide focuses on increasing your opportunity for academic success. One way to expand your understanding of who you are as a student is to gain insight into your preferred learning style. You are given an opportunity to reflect on your learning preference, and provided tips and study strategies associated with each learning type. Once
you gain a better understanding of your preferences, you will be more equipped to tackle the two primary forms of assessment and evaluation for most college classes—test taking and writing. The test preparation section provides guidance on note taking (reading and lecture), study skills and taking exams. Similarly, the writing skills section provides a framework for developing and organizing writing assignments.

The final segment of the workbook emphasizes techniques and provides tools to enhance your social adjustment—commonly identified as life skills. This section includes information and activities on communication styles, decision making, stress management and financial management. Having a framework for your communication style and understanding how others communicate with you is an asset in building all types of relationships (with coaches, teammates, roommates, and professors). Due to the large number of new experiences that college offers, good decision making is critical. This guide outlines a decision making model to help you analyze the way in which you make decisions, and offers you a process for approaching important choices.

A component of decision making is emotional intelligence/EQ. EQ provides a structure for understanding yourself and others. A key component of EQ is self-regulation and impulse control, and being able to recognize the situations that trigger strong emotional responses can increase your ability to make better decisions, even in the midst of difficult positions. Finally, the last two areas that we explore are stress and financial management. Building a strong foundation in both of these areas is critical to your overall happiness. Stress is a natural element of any transition, and obtaining coping skills early in your college career will build your tolerance and increase your potential for success. In addition, financial difficulties can lead to stress and poor decision making; therefore, tools have been included to help build your financial literacy. In summary, while this section is geared towards your social adjustment, the development of these skills can add to your academic and athletic success and are essential to building quality relationships in college and beyond.

This College Survival Guide is designed to give you guidance and tools to help you build the skills necessary to have a successful first-year. You will get the most out of the workbook by thoroughly completing the activities, and consistently putting the strategies into practice. You have the tools … it is your responsibility to take control of your college career. Have a GREAT first-year!
Section 1: Understanding Your Values

Do you know what your values are? What are the four or five things that are most important to you? Think about these questions in terms of your own principles or morals; what are those things that need to be present in order for you to feel that you can be successful, or enjoy yourself? If you think back to your experiences in high school—athletic, academic, or social—you will recognize that there is a consistent pattern present during those times when you felt confident, successful, or happiest. Most likely, if you can identify the common characteristics in those experiences, you have developed an understanding of your values.

This workbook begins with values because they are foundational. Your values influence and drive your motivations, behaviors and decision-making, and they can provide guidance as you navigate the new experience of college athletics. Being aware of your values allows you a more clear lens through which you can create your goals and work towards accomplishing them.

While many of your values overlap several domains—athletic, academic, and social—you may have some values that are more important in one domain than in the others. For example, you may place tremendous value on structure within your academic domain, but not at all in your social domain. Again, being able to recognize what is most important to you will help you to create the environment that you need to be successful.

On the next page 39 terms are listed that are often used to identify or describe values related to athletics, career, school, or your personal life. Go through the list and identify your top five values in the areas of athletics, academics, and your social life, and place them in the appropriate boxes. Each value is defined on the following pages.
Worksheet 1.1: VALUES CHECKLIST

From this list of values, identify your top five in each category and place them in the chart below. If there are some terms that come to mind that are not listed, please add them to the list in the blank spaces.

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<th>ATHLETIC VALUES</th>
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<th>SOCIAL VALUES</th>
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VALUES: DEFINITION OF TERMS

**VARIETY**: enjoying different types of activities and having an appreciation for new and different things; flexibility

**ACHIEVEMENT**: feeling a sense of mastery or sense of accomplishment

**AUTONOMY**: ability to work alone or independently, with little oversight or management; a need for freedom in work

**CREATIVITY**: ability and appreciation for tasks requiring imagination or innovation; something allowing for the development of new ideas; artistic expression

**CHALLENGE**: the desire to push yourself and stretch in order to learn and grow; enjoying the sense of accomplishment received from achieving difficult tasks

**SENSE OF COMMUNITY**: the need to feel connected and integrated into a larger group of people

**COMPETITION**: striving to be the best within a group; enjoying being put against others

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**: being surrounded by people from various backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and beliefs

**EXCITEMENT**: drama, fast-pace, sense of adventure, high stimulation

**RECOGNITION/FAME**: receiving public accolades and credit for efforts and achievements; having others admire and look up to you

**INDEPENDENCE**: flexibility and freedom; being able to have some control over the direction and details of what you do

**FRIENDSHIPS**: developing good relationships with others through working together that may be able to expand to multiple areas

**FUN**: freedom to be playful and enjoy yourself; entertaining

**HELPING OTHERS**: assisting or serving people directly, either individuals or groups

**INFLUENCE**: having the ability or opportunity to change or shape decisions, people, or organizations
IMPACT SOCIETY: contributing to the growth and development of the larger community or world

KNOWLEDGE: ability to learn, understand, and develop, either by experience or observation

LEARNING: continual acquisition of knowledge

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: opportunity to be self-reflective and integrate experiences to allow for growth

LEGACY: being able to leave a mark for others to remember you by

BALANCE: being able to provide the appropriate amount of energy to multiple areas

POWER: the ability to control or influence the behaviors of others or being able to impact the outcome of important events

LOYALTY: being able to commit or provide unwavering support to an institution or environment; feeling a sense of institutional or environmental support

STABILITY/SECURITY: consistency and predictability; an environment or situation that is likely to remain the same

RISK: sense of challenge or danger; the presence of potential for high success or failure

TEAMWORK: opportunities for collaboration or the need to work with others to accomplish a goal

EFFICIENCY: maximizing outcome with limited wasted effort or energy

EXCELLENCE: consistently creating high quality outcomes

RELATIONSHIPS: placing high value on interactions between individuals; wanting to be deeply connected to other people

REPUTATION: placing high value on how others view you and the work you do

RESPONSIBILITY: opportunities to be in charge or have control over the outcome of a situation or task

SELF-RESPECT: being able to behave in a way that is consistent with your values

TIME FREEDOM/FLEXIBILITY: having the ability to manage your time as you feel is the most effective
WEALTH: having the potential to accumulate monetary rewards or financial gain

LEADERSHIP: Guiding a group of people or a project; having the opportunity to impact or influence individuals, whether in a formal or informal manner

INTENSITY: an environment that allows for a great deal of emotion and effort

AESTHETIC: the presence of a sense of beauty or an appreciation or concern with the attractiveness of the physical surrounding

AFFILIATION: having a strong sense of belonging, connection, or identification with a group of people or institution
Section 2: Assessing Your Athletic Identity

As we mention in the chapter on Athletic Transitions, most athletes who get the opportunity to compete at the collegiate level tend to view themselves through an athletic lens. Research suggests there are both costs and benefits to having a high athletic identity, and at the extreme end there may be a greater priority for growth and development in the athletic arena with the exclusion of academic or social development. Your level of athletic identity has the potential to dictate the values you identify with as well as the decisions you make.

Take five minutes to complete the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) included below. This scale is used to evaluate how much an individual identifies with the athletic role, with higher scores on this scale indicating a higher athletic identity (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). Total scores range from 7-49; the average score for male college student-athletes is 39, and the average score for female college student-athletes is 38. A higher than average athletic identity could make you vulnerable to unhealthy practices in and out of sport, while a lower athletic identity may make it difficult to engage in the necessary actions needed to achieve athletic success.
Worksheet 2.1: ATHLETIC IDENTITY MEASUREMENT SCALE

For each statement below, please circle the number that best reflects the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement in relation to your own sports participation. Total your score for each of the seven questions to find your level of athletic identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I consider myself an athlete.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have many goals related to sport.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Most of my friends are athletes.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sport is the most important part of my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Worksheet 2.2: EXPLORING YOUR ATHLETIC IDENTITY

• What is your total score?

___________________________________

• Is your score above or below average?

___________________________________

• How does that impact the decisions you make or your behaviors?

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________

• Review your completed values checklist. How does your score on the AIMS impact your athletic, academic, and social values?

___________________________________

___________________________________

___________________________________