

**Inspiring Athletes Through Mentorship: A Case Study of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program**

by

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## Abstract

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) was founded in the 1950s to aid in the spiritual development of middle and high school student athletes. During the late 1990s a paradigm shift occurred when intercollegiate football coaches started to hire full-time team chaplains to become the spiritual coordinators for their student athletes.

Athletes across the nation and abroad are recruited by colleges and universities for a variety of sports ranging from football to hockey. These student athletes have basic developmental needs that have to be addressed while they attend college (Hamilton & Sina, Pascarella, 1999). When student athletes arrive on campus, they are often assigned a coordinator to assist with their academic achievement (academic coordinator), life skills development (social, emotional, mental coordinator) and athletic participation (defensive and offensive coordinator). All of these areas aid in meeting their developmental needs. However, the one area that is often neglected is their spiritual development. College is a time when students are searching to find meaning and purpose in their lives (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Parks, 2000). FCA believes that the journey of finding this meaning and purpose can be facilitated by a team chaplain (spiritual coordinator) who works with student athletes and can also help student athletes with the constant battle they face in balancing their roles, in dealing with competitive success, and in coping with other life responsibilities (Hyatt, 2003). This assistance helps to facilitate the development of the whole student athlete with emphasis on their spiritual development.

Due to the limited research on this topic this study looked to document the participants of an FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program strengths, weaknesses and outcomes in order to improve it and advance the literature in the field. The research also aimed at bringing awareness of the role of the team chaplain and how lessons learned might be applied when developing or seeking to improve similar programs in other settings.

The FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program was established to aid in the spiritual and personal development of football student athletes. The factors that facilitated its development and implementation were attributes of the chaplain, spiritual needs of college students and institutional support and expansion. Secondly, the primary barriers to developing and sustaining the program were separation of church and state, financial issues and time and commitment of student athletes. Lastly the individual and program outcomes consisted of six themes, which were enhanced spirituality, personal development, mentorship, attitude toward academics, athletic performance and team camaraderie. The findings from this qualitative study revealed that the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program meets a need that is often forgotten on college campuses which is spiritual and faith development.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“We believe that we must minister to each coach and each athlete,*

*ONE HEART at a TIME.” — FCA*

Traditionally, sports have been viewed as a way to overcome aggressive behavior and instill good character and moral values in participants (Baker, 2007). At the collegiate level, sports continue to become more popularized and commercialized (Hamilton & Sina, 2001). This growing interest in intercollegiate sports has been accompanied with both praise and criticism. Criticisms tend to deal with issues regarding the way athletic departments recruit high school student athletes, the large sums of money involved and whether student athletes should get paid. The questionable ethical behaviors which sometimes surround university athletics has led to a growing number of accusations made against programs, players, coaches and boosters and an increase in fines, suspensions and bans placed upon student athletes, coaches and their corresponding athletic departments (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). This, in turn, has led some athletic departments to develop programs and initiatives to support students in becoming well developed, successful and productive students, athletes and citizens. One such initiative is the hiring of full-time Chaplains in intercollegiate football programs to provide spiritual motivation, encouragement and wisdom for student athletes (Williams, 2007). One such group is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

According to a legendary coach, FCA is “America’s best-kept secret” (Dunn, 2010). American society is very involved in intercollegiate athletics, however what goes on behind the

scenes is often overlooked (Baker, 2007). Since the early 1950s FCA has been operating within intercollegiate athletics impacting the lives of student athletes and coaches by giving them something that “stretches beyond sports” (Baker, 2007; Dunn, 2010). There is a general belief that this has had a positive impact on students and programs (Chizik, 2011). However, research on the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program and its affects on student athletes and others involved in the program appear sparse. This study sought to investigate an FCA program in one university setting as a means of determining its, strengths, weaknesses and impact.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to describe a FCA campus ministry program for athletes in a Southern University. It sought to uncover the factors that hinder and facilitate its success and personal and program outcomes. It is believed that these purposes will also result in a set of lessons learned, which might be applied when developing or seeking to improve similar programs in other settings.

### **Background**

The integration of religion and sports has a long history (Baker, 2007; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010; Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). Sports became a powerful force in American society in the late 1800s and early-mid 1900s and this led to the development of sport ministries. The marriage between religion and sports would become a partnership dedicated to using the platform of sports as an avenue to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Baker, 2007; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010; Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). The Fellowship of Christian Athletes Sports Ministry (FCA) was born in the early 1950s. Founder Don McClanen, a former football player and high school coach, had a vision to form a ministry that consisted of a “cooperative

grouping of athletes to embrace and have others embrace Jesus as the Christ” (Baker, 2007, p. 200).

FCA is considered a type of Para church, which means to work “beside or beyond the church” (Willmer & Schmidt, 1998, p.xii). Willmer and Schmidt (1998) state that most Para churches are “a subset of the larger nonprofit sector” and “are typically organized under IRS section 501(c)3” (1998, p. xiii). Para churches vary in size and have created a paradigm shift on how people spread the Christian message outside the traditional church setting.

There are many different types of Para church ministries. FCA is geared toward athletics, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association mission focuses on evangelism, and Campus Crusade for Christ (Athletes in Actions) is an international college and sports campus ministry (Wilmer & Schmidt, 1998). With the changing of society, Para church organizations are continuing to grow, flourish and seeking to impact the world and university and college campuses with the message of Jesus Christ.

FCA has become the “largest and most influential of all” sports ministries (Baker, 2007, p.199). These ministries were initially aimed at having a strong impact on middle and high school athletes and then started to become more influential within intercollegiate and professional sports (FCA, 2004). FCA began ministering on college campuses in the 1960s through the huddle program. In March of 1959, FCA sent out its first newsletter, *The Christian Athlete*, which included four weeks of Bible studies. These Bible studies were designed for middle and high school students that attended FCA summer camps “so they could keep the momentum going and eventually increase it on their campuses” (FCA, 2004, p. 8). Groups of athletes began to meet for Bible studies, which led to the development of the huddle program. The huddle program, at the collegiate level, started at University of Alabama in September of

1964 and consisted of nine athletes and a pastor (FCA, 2004). Currently, there are over 8,000 huddles across the country that serve middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities. These huddle meetings are usually held once a week and last for about one hour. The meetings are for all sports and are geared toward strengthening the spiritual lives of student-athletes.

### **Fellowship of Christian Athletes on University Campuses**

At its inception, FCA chaplains and local clergymen voluntarily participated as spiritual leaders for athletic programs. It was not until the late 1990s that a paradigm shift occurred. This shift focused on college head coaches hiring full-time chaplains to serve as spiritual coordinators alongside the coaches and athletic staff. In taking this action, these coaches made a “commitment to building the spiritual lives of young men” (Williams, 2007 p. 162). This full time commitment has led many high school, college and professional athletes to credit their Christian faith conversion to having a relationship with an FCA chaplain and/or participating in the sports ministry program (Hoffman, 2010).

FCA defines a chaplain as a “representative of God” (FCA Chaplain Training Manual, p. 1). Chaplains are counselors who confidentially serve students with on and off the field issues. Athletes are given the opportunity to voluntarily participate in services such as prayer meeting, chapel, Bible studies and retreats to establish a foundational and sustainable relationship with the chaplain. Athletes are given the opportunity to meet personally with the chaplain or participate in group or team activities. Since the team chaplain is very visible and accessible, there are endless possibilities for students to establish a sense of trust and accountability that can foster a strong mentoring relationship.

Even though FCA works with female and male athletes that participate in all sports, full-time chaplains at the university level are hired primarily to work for football teams. There are

over 25 chaplains serving at universities nationwide. Currently nationwide FCA has only one full-time chaplain for Men's Basketball (Interview, Benson, 2011). Chaplains serve as mentors by having one-on-one meetings with players assisting them in character development, life management skills, spiritual development and outreach opportunities (FCA Chaplain Packet, n.d.). Those involved provide many activities for the players who participate in a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry. Among them are giving spiritual direction and growth; providing a father figure role model and someone to talk to who is not their coach; offering students opportunities to serve in leadership roles; fostering student participation in retreats/camps, small groups and Bible studies; providing for one-on-one meetings with the chaplain; mentorship; and receiving help with the highs and lows of life (FCA, 2004). All these services are provided to assist in the holistic development of student athletes.

FCA Chaplains are usually invited onto college campuses by coaches with the support of their athletic administration. Currently, most chaplains are financially supported through the sports Para-ministries of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Athletes in Action (AIA). According to Jurgen Herbst (1976), historically religion and higher education operated as one unit: "the secular government and the established church jointly exercised authority over each college" (p. 33). The founding institutions of Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary were all considered sectarian colleges (Herbst, 1976). However, over the years spirituality and religious matters have become taboo on some college and university campuses (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Parks, 2000).

One of the reasons that higher education institutions, particularly those that are publically funded, avoid issues of religion is due to the doctrine of separation of church which is under the First Amendment Establishment Clause. This Clause declares, "Congress shall make no law



respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (Audi, 1989, p. 260). This clause also affirms according to Audi (1989) that, “state institutions should not interfere with the church and the church should not interfere with the state” (p. 260). Therefore, athletic departments that allow chaplains to work with their student athletes do not financially support the chaplain. This means that the chaplains cannot receive state benefits, such as retirement, social security and medical insurance from the university (Interview, Smith, 2011).

In the fall of 1999, Rickman University, a pseudonym for the institution in which this study occurred, became one of the first universities in the nation to incorporate a full-time FCA chaplain into their football program. Throughout the years, the football team was very successful and the coach made a public statement that one of the reasons for this success was the chaplaincy ministry program. The success of the football program as reflected on the field and through student athletes led to other universities wanting to implement similar FCA chaplaincy programs. This helped to create greater interest and a demand in other universities for football team chaplains to be hired on a full-time basis and fulfill the role of spiritual coach. Schools from different conferences recognized the impact this ministry was having on the athletic department, football program and university. This trend led to Rickman University implementing a Chaplaincy training internship program and also providing a model for other universities with similar ministries. The chaplaincy training internship program lasted 2 years and participants in that program currently serve at various universities in the capacity of Football Chaplain, Men’s Basketball Chaplain and Olympic sports Chaplain. Also, Rickman University has student athletes who participated in FCA and interned who are chaplains at other universities. The start of this chaplaincy ministry years ago has impacted intercollegiate chaplaincy considerably. Although this successful nationally recognized program has expanded,

there has been no research conducted to document the program and its outcomes. This study is focused on addressing that issue and providing information about the program's strengths and weakness and its level of success.

### **Statement of Problem**

Students attend college to gain an education, to gain social, personal and professional experiences and to become productive citizens (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Every college student has needs upon arriving on campus (Watt & Moore III, 2001). With the changes in the culture and demands of a growing and diverse student undergraduate population, these students are operating on a new terrain with challenges that may have been previously unknown. Such challenges may be particularly difficult for student athletes who are considered a unique population (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Geer & Robinson, 2006; Hamilton & Sina, 2001; Watt & Moore III, 2001). These athletes have to shuffle between several different roles. They have to attend class, practice, attend team meetings and travel. All of these responsibilities create pressure upon student athletes to be successful both in their sport and in the classroom. Some student athletes have trouble coping with the demands of this lifestyle. As a result, they experience setbacks academically, socially and athletically (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Geer & Robinson, 2006). This is particularly true with large NCAA Division I programs in the national limelight (Geer & Robinson, 2006).

Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplains have been used as agents to combat some of the problems these students face. Football team chaplains are often used as a voluntary support system for these players. They are there to serve and meet the needs of the coaches, players and athletic department staff. In the past, most chaplains were pastors or ministers who worked part-time as a team chaplain. FCA employs hundreds of Chaplains that work at colleges and

universities across the country; however, there are only 28 universities that have full-time Chaplains (FCA Chaplain Training Manual, p. 1). Sixteen of these institutions have FCA chaplains and are mainly large Division I universities. The program being examined has been in place for almost 13 years. Others view it as being highly successful. Many other institutions have expressed an interest in the program and some have developed similar programs, based on their belief in its value. However, to date, no research has been done to document the operation or value of the program.

### **Significance of the Study**

Athletes across the nation and abroad are recruited by colleges and universities for a variety of sports ranging from football to hockey. These student athletes have basic developmental needs that have to be addressed while they attend college (Hamilton & Sina, Pascarella, 1999). When student athletes arrive on campus, they are often assigned a coordinator to assist with their academic achievement (academic coordinator), life skills development (social, emotional, mental coordinator) and athletic participation (defensive and offensive coordinator). All of these areas aid in meeting their developmental needs. However, the one area that is often neglected is their spiritual development. College is a time when students are searching to find meaning and purpose in their lives (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Parks, 2000). FCA believes that the journey of finding this meaning and purpose can be facilitated by a team chaplain (spiritual coordinator) who works with student athletes and that the coordinator can also help student athletes with the constant battle they face in balancing their roles, in dealing with competitive success and in coping with other life responsibilities (Hyatt, 2003). The presence of a team chaplain may also help to build and balance team camaraderie by helping student's establish a sense of purpose and unity (Williams, 2007). The

FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program aims to serve the student athlete in a variety of capacities. Character development, life management skills, leadership development, establishing accountable relationships, spiritual counseling, and mentoring are some of the components of the program. These components seek to facilitate the development of the whole student athlete with emphasis on their spiritual development. The chaplain's role can range from mentoring an athlete to providing counseling to an athlete who has loss a parent or loved one. FCA chaplains also have a unique role in the lives of the student athletes they minister to by attending all practices, games, meetings and constantly being available to serve in whatever capacity is needed. The aforementioned responsibilities of a chaplain seek to establish a platform that shows students that the chaplain genuinely cares about their well-being and success (FCA, 2004). This can help create and build relationships that become an outlet for student athletes to express their emotional, physical, personal, social, athletic and spiritual needs to someone they can trust and confide in.

There is a belief that these programs work and are beneficial for the students and the team, yet there is not research validating this belief. Since these programs appear to be growing in number, it is important to assess their value by identifying program strengths weaknesses and outcomes in order to improve it and advance the literature in the field. Research in this area is also needed to bring awareness of the role, purposes and outcomes of a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program.

The findings should be helpful to the organizers, chaplains and leaders of this program and assist them in enhancing and improving the program for the future. It may also enable other schools and colleges to determine whether implementing such a program would be beneficial to

them and to their student athletes. It should also initiate interest in further research into this important area.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The primary conceptual framework used in this study was Student Development Theory, which is illustrated in Figure 1. Student Development Theory investigates how students learn, grow and develop. The use of theory helps colleges and universities better serve the developmental needs of their students. Theorists such as Erikson (1963), Piaget (1970), Chickering and Reisser (1993), Chickering (1969), Kohlberg (1976) and Perry (1970) have contributed to the development and evolution of the three main college development theories. They include psychosocial, cognitive and identity.

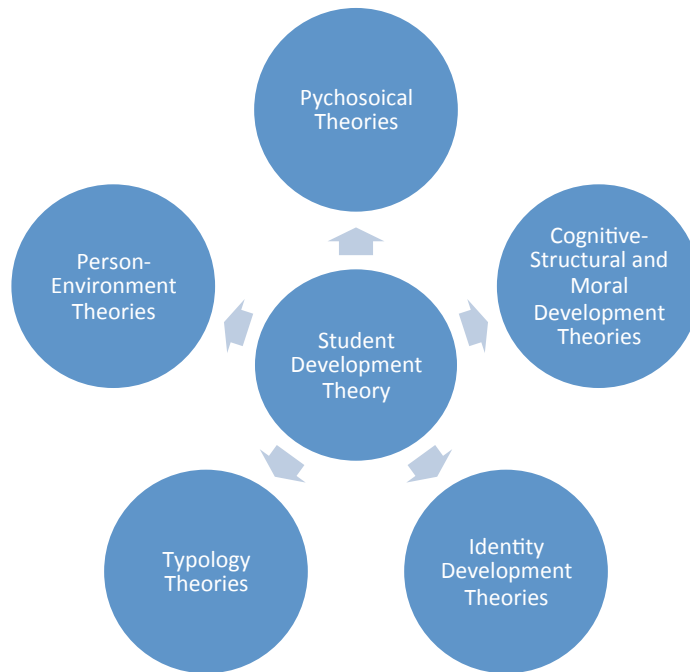
Another idea that has its roots in Student Development Theory is Faith Development Theory. James Fowler (1981) work on faith development helps to understand and lays a foundation to have a better understanding of spiritual development within student athletes. As a foundation of his research, Fowler used the influences of great theories such as Kohlberg (1976), Erikson (1963), and Piaget (1970) to develop his stage theory of faith development. Although the faith development model is not considered a student development theory, it is applicable to undergraduate college students and can be examined within the context of higher education (Andrade, 2014). According to Nash and Murray (2010) students come to college with spiritual needs, “whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, or Hindu, or whether theist, agnostic, atheist, or polytheist, students come to college with all shapes and sizes of spirituality” (p. 53). In this study the spiritual development of student athletes was investigated and guided by these frameworks.

College is a time when students' navigate through different development processes. The use of student development theory alongside faith development can provide a lens on how to better serve students in exploring, developing and enhancing their spiritual development. Over the years, colleges and universities have done a great job providing opportunities for students to develop in the following areas: psychosocially, cognitively, environmentally and personal identity. However, there are still limited opportunities for student to experience positive spiritual development. In the book *Finding Meaning in Religion and Spirituality* (Nash & Murray, 2010), a student notes,

I am very comfortable with my religious background. Yet I don't have many opportunities to discuss this with professors, student affairs folks, or even my friends. Whenever I bring up my faith in casual conversation, people look at me as if I'm brainwashed...I really find higher education to be elitist and dismissive when it comes to matters of religious faith. (p. 53)

This quote shows that college students have spiritual needs that need to be met and addressed.

Therefore, these frameworks along side the FCA values model were use to create questions and to develop a focus to examine the Rickman University FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program. The FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program is a resource that the athletic department provides to assess students in their spiritual and personal development. This resource is very important to assist student athletes in their stages of development that affect the way they process life, relationships, school, their identity, their moral compass and their spirituality.



*Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Student Development Theory*

### **Research Questions**

Three research questions were addressed:

1. What are the primary factors that facilitate the development and implementation of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
2. What are the primary barriers to developing and sustaining a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
3. What are the individual and program outcomes of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?

### **Methods**

A qualitative case study was used to address the research questions. Qualitative research investigates research questions dealing with the how, what, and why in situations calling for in-depth exploration to provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). A

case study approach was used because it examines “contemporary events, uses direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events” (Yin, 2009, p. 11).

### **Setting**

This study was conducted at a Land-grant Historically White University (HWU) located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. According to the university’s institutional research website, the university had a population of 25,469 reported for the fall of 2011 when the first participants were interviewed. The athletic program is a NCAA Division I institution that consist of 19 sports (Women’s basketball, softball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, cross country, gymnastics, soccer, equestrian and volleyball, Men’s basketball, football, baseball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, and cross country). Rickman University is historically known for its strong athletic and academic excellence. Their football program is a member of one of the top Football Bowl Series (FBS) leagues, and they have been awarded several national championship titles. Rickman University football team rooster averages approximately 100 student athletes per year.

### **Population and Sample**

The sample for this study was generated from a list of all former and current coaches, athletic directors, FCA staff members and student athletes who participated or worked with the football program at the selected university during the years 1999–2011. A list of all student athletes who were on the FCA leadership team from fall 1999–2011 was provided by the key informant (team chaplain). The team chaplain emailed potential participants with an email script prepared by the researcher as approved by Auburn University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix 1). The Chaplain informed participants that the study was voluntary and if they



decided to participate they could contact the researcher by email or phone. Thirteen people responded to the email invitation. Creswell (2002) suggests that a case study requires 3–5 participants for data saturation. Based on the literature and the nature of this program, 13 interviewees were considered an adequate sample size for this study.

The FCA Football team Chaplain, two FCA staff members (one staff member is a former student-athlete in this study), five former athletes, four current student athletes, one former athletic director, and the current athlete director agreed to participate in the study. Due to time conflicts and other reasons a football coach was not available to interview for this study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection and analysis work simultaneously to create emergent data in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Although available documents were reviewed, the primary data source for this study was face-to-face interviews. An interview script, which also included open-ended questions, was used. Interviewees were also asked if they wished to add anything else, near the completion of the interviews. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were shared with interviewees to provide a member check. Throughout the data collection process, interviews were transcribed, reviewed and important facts and/or occurrences were noted. This process is recommended by Merriam (2009) who wrote, “without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed” (p. 171). Field notes, journaling, memoing, and audio taping interviews were utilized to enrich the data collection and analysis process (Yin, 2009).

The constant comparison method and open coding were the two techniques used to analyze and conceptualize the data for this qualitative study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During and after each interview and observation the researcher would record notes pertaining to

interview questions that needed to be changed or added, reactions from the participants and interesting facts and incidents that occurred during data collection. The analysis process consisted of “compiling, disassembling, reassembling, arraying, interpreting, and concluding” (Yin, 2012, p. 177) the data.

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. This study focused on a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry in one NCAA Division I institution located in the Southeastern region of the United States. Although the findings may provide insights to other programs around the nation, because of differences in institution culture, tradition, region and history this program cannot be generalizable to all FCA programs throughout the nation.
2. Only former student athletes, football team chaplain, two FCA male staff members, retired athletic director, present athletic direction and football coaches were included in this study. It was not possible to gather data from all those involved in the program during the entire period of its existence.
3. Only student athletes who were on the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program leadership team from fall 1999–2011 were invited to participate in the study

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions of this study include:

1. All participants answered interview questions honestly and completely due to their voluntarily participating in this study.
2. Participants understood and interpreted the questions as intended.

## **Definitions of Terms**

1. Case Study – “A detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or a particular event” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 271).
2. Chapel – A short devotional usually before an athletic competition (FCA, 2004).
3. Devotional – Focused message give by a person that explains spiritual ideas, thoughts or questions (FCA, 2004).
4. Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs) – colleges and universities that historically serve Caucasian American students (Vaughn, 1990).
5. Huddle program (meeting) – FCA Bible study established in 1966 for secondary grades 6–12 and college campuses (FCA, 2001).
6. Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) – Is a sports ministry founded in 1954 by Don McClanen with a mission is “to present to athletes and coaches, and all whom they influence, the challenge and adventure of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, serving Him in their relationships and in the fellowship of the church” (FCA, 2004, p. 116).
7. Land-grant university – Universities created by the Morrill Act of 1862 to “serve society by educating and training professionals, providing educational access to many, and working to improve the well-being and social status of farmers and industrial workers” (Aronson & Webster, 2007, p. 266).
8. National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NCAA) – The governing body of intercollegiate athletics founded in 1906 (Zimbalist, 1999).
9. Spirituality – The values we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here – the meaning and purpose that we see in our

work and our life – and our sense of connectedness to each other and the world around us (Astin, 2004, p. 34). In addition, personal faith or spirituality is a person’s discovery of their meaning and purpose in life. This can include student-athletes of all faiths.

10. Sports Ministry – A Christian organization with the goal of using sports as a vehicle to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Baker, 2007).
11. Team Chaplain – A person usually male, who serves the sports teams, coaches and athletic staff, “the term chaplain comes from the French word chapel that means church” and “the representative of God” (The Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplain Training Manuel, p. 1).

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of relevant literature; Chapter 3 details the research methods, which includes the research design, qualitative methods rationale, setting, participants, data collection and analysis. The final chapters consists of Chapter 4 the studies findings and Chapter 5 summarizes major findings, presents implications for practice, and discusses findings that aided in the development of a new conceptual framework along with recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*“Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions.” — James Fowler*

### **Historical Context of Intercollegiate Athletics**

Intercollegiate athletics and higher education have a long and profound history. In the Colonial era, Harvard College was the first institution of higher education founded in 1636. Harvard College was geared toward male students between the ages of 12 and 15. These young men were being prepared to serve as Puritan ministers with a curriculum that consisted of the basic classics of Greek, Latin, Mathematics, and Philosophy that were originally derived from English universities. The majority of students came from prominent families, due to the high cost of attendance (Thelin, 2004). Higher education was known to service the American wealthy.

With the rise of the industrial revolution and countless agriculture opportunities in American during the 1800s a paradigm shift in the American higher education leadership structure occurred. College governing boards that were traditionally dominated by the clergy and professional educators were beginning replaced with businessmen (Chu, 1989). This evolution in higher education led to the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 and 1890 to educate middle and lower class families (working class) at land-grant universities in the Southern and northern states. This federal land grant system provided states with land owned by the federal

government to finance schools that taught the classics in addition to an agricultural and engineering curriculum (Chu, 1989; Grant, Leadley & Zygmunt, 2008). This act would help give educational opportunities to the changing social class of America and those affected by the civil war.

During the mid to late nineteenth century with the end of the civil war and the Industrial Revolution people had more leisure time and an athletic revolution was birth. This revolution was found inside and outside of college sports. Sports such as baseball, basketball, football, ice hockey, track and field, golf, and tennis were virtually unknown or did not exist prior to this time (Grant, Leadley & Zygmunt, 2008). Americans used their spare time to participate in leisure and recreational sporting events. Also at this time, attending sporting events became very popular.

Due to the religious background of much of the original American higher education institutions, faculty actively discouraged physical activity. Physical activity was not appropriate for the American elite only the ignorant working class. Therefore, prior to the Civil War there were little or no organized college sports. Most college activities that involved sports were student run and involved contest between classes and fraternities. Faculty members viewed rowing as a more suitable sport than football. Football was too violent. In the 1840's Harvard and Yale participated in a rowing contest. This contest became very popular and started to draw a crowd of college student spectators. These contest led to the first intercollegiate competition on record in 1852 with a crew race between Harvard and Yale. That race opened the door for sports to be recognized as a fixture on college campuses, and other intercollegiate sports activities began forming (Noverr & Zieuacz, 1983).

In 1882 at Yale, school officials issued fines and suspensions to students for playing football games (Noverr & Zieuacz, 1983). During this time football, rowing and crew were very

popular sports for college student participation. Students at Ivy Leagues schools would play these games for fun around campus. Also, during this time the muscular Christian Movement has been credited for revolutionizing how college students viewed athletics. Now athletic competition could be viewed as combination of building Christian character and physical prowess.

### **Initiation of Organized College Sports and the NCAA**

This first athletic competition changed the way people and college administrators viewed sports. Now sports would become an integral part of the college community. At first, the students were the coaches and administrators over the sports teams. Students administered everything from developing the teams to scheduling travel for games, this latest until the late 1890s (Smith, 2000). Intercollegiate sports for men were on most college campus by the 1890s. According to Spears and Swanson (1995):

Colleges and universities began to move “away from the volunteer student-run athletic associations to college-controlled administration.” The rise of football played a significant role in this move. Its increasing popularity and financial complexity required administrative and faculty control. Hired coaches and larger stadiums represented major investments, and the colleges saw a need to appoint “athletic directors” to supervise their interest. (p. 188–189)

The first intercollegiate football game was played between students from Princeton and Rutgers on November 6, 1869 (Grant, Leadley & Zygmunt, 2008). Through the years football became the most popular sport on college campuses. Every university wanted to have a football team because it attracted a huge crowd, which equated more revenue for the university. This legacy of football continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Even though football was increasing universities revenue across the nation, there was one problem. The sport of football was very dangerous and caused a significant amount of injuries and fatalities, especially during the 1905 season. In 1905, President Roosevelt, an avid football fan, told college officials to either control the game of football or it would be outlawed (Spears & Swanson, 1995). Thelin (2004) writes, “President Theodore Roosevelt was so upset by newspaper photographs of brutality on the college football field that he summoned college and university presidents to the White House to discuss reforms college sports” (p. 189). That same year colleges from around the nation came together to decide what they were going to do regarding the sport of football. Later that year the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States was created to govern the rules and regulations of football and to make it a safer sport for all participants. On December 28, 1905 sixty-two member institutions formed the first association, which later changed its name to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA; Crowley, Pickle & Clarkson, 2006).

After the formation of this new athletic association to regulate the rules of college sports, athletic administrators started to direct men’s athletic programs. However, the NCAA, university presidents and faculty decided to house intercollegiate athletics in the department of Physical Education. This gave programs more stability, prominence and validity among the academic community (Spears & Swanson, 1995). The Physical Education department would teach wellness and instruction of physical activities and also act as the athletic department. Faculty would have the double role of teaching and coaching. This progress lasted until intercollegiate sports began to generate large amounts of revenue from their sports program. The sports program did not want to share their revenues with the department of physical education.



Also, the demand for the faculty to coach and teach was becoming too hard to do and most faculty spent more time coaching than teaching (Pestolesi & Sinclair, 1978).

This brought about a need for intercollegiate sports to have its own department. Developing this new athletic department would be a little challenging at first. The first athletic directors were either physical education directors, head football coaches or an appointed administrator (Myles, 2005). This stand-alone department would transform intercollegiate sports. Winning would become the model of the newly developed athletic department as shown by Myles: “Winning was the essential ingredient in the success of the newly formed athletic department. The department was charged with creating teams that would win championships and beat rival institutions” (p. 21).

The NCAA wanted to prove that their athletes were students first and contributed to the academic community. Therefore, in 1953 the title “student-athlete” was established. This title was to emphasize that all college athletes were students first. Administrators wanted their coaches to recruit the best athletes that could achieve well academically and athletically. However, most coaches wanted to recruit good students but overall they wanted to recruit the best athletes. Myles (2005) comments, “Much of the talent recruited in sports, such as football, basketball, and track and field, were recruited from Black communities. The integration of these Black students into predominantly White institutions showed the commitment that athletic departments were making to recruiting the best talent in the world and winning” (p. 22).

Division I athletic departments have several positions they are the following: Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, Assistant Athletic Director, Senior Woman Administrator, Business Manager, Compliance Coordinator, Equipment Manager, Fundraising/ Development Manager, Facility Manager, Promotions/ Marketing Manager, Sports Information/ Media

Relations Director, and Ticket Manager (Grant, Leadley & Zygmunt, 2008). There are other positions in the athletic department such as Athletic Trainer, Strength & Conditioning Coach, Faculty Athletic Representative and Academic Counselors. According to Myles (2005), these positions do not play a significant role in the actual administration of the department but are crucial to the everyday operation of the department.

### **Gender in Sport**

Another issue that affected the history of higher education and intercollegiate athletics was the exclusion of women athletics and the passing of Title IX. In the 1960s girls were not given the same opportunities as boys to attend college and participate in sports. This was due to the fact that most girls were not allowed to play sports and, if they did, they could not continue through college. Female athletes with scholarships were rare before 1972. Gender-equity in collegiate sports did not exist. However, Title IX legislation brought about a paradigm shift that would change woman sports for decades to come. Prior to 1972 and Title IX, there were people who felt that there was no need for gender equity in education and sports. For example, in 1971, a Connecticut judge contends, “Athletic competition builds character in our boys. We do not need that kind of character in our girls” (US Department of Education, 1997).

Title IX says that, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (US Department of Education, 1997). This law was enacted by Congress on June 23, 1972 and signed by President Richard Nixon on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Before Title IX, women relied on the civil rights laws as a means of social change. Title IX was modeled after Title VI of Civil Rights Acts of 1964, which “prohibits race, color, and national origin discrimination” and later propelled the development

and implementation of three other legislative civil rights acts. The other three pieces of supporting legislation enacted due to Title IX are: The Women's Educational Equity Act 1974, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (US Department of Education, 1997).

Title IX's role and purpose reaches far beyond sports, to include an emphasis in equity and improvements in higher education, career education, employment, learning environments, math, science, standardized testing, sexual harassment and the treatment of pregnant and parenting teens (Women's Sport Foundation, 2001). Title IX has been instrumental in establishing change in athletics by increasing female participation in interscholastic and intercollegiate sports. Moreover, girls and women were encouraged to participate in sports that were typically for males such as ice hockey, lacrosse, wrestling, soccer and rugby (Thelin, 2000). According to Nancy Struna (2001), "Even before 1800, women were seen as morally superior but physically inferior to men. This characterization lasted for more than a century and a half" (p. 1). If women participated in sports at all it was very limited, and they were looked at as moral supporters at sporting events at best. In a sense, Title IX revolutionized gender-equity. Girls and women were no longer viewed as second-class citizens; they were trailblazers creating a legacy of superior performance, academic excellence and moral integrity within intercollegiate athletics (Women's Sport Foundation, 2001).

Intercollegiate athletics has had many struggles and triumphs throughout the years, from the formation or participation of the first football game to the establishment of the NCAA and the passing of Title IX. Currently university/college athletic departments are businesses that produce millions of dollars in revenue every year, therefore making intercollegiate athletics a dominant presence in the fabric of American society. Thus, university and colleges are in

control of providing student athletes with the best academic and athletic opportunities and services during their college career.

## **Student Athletes in Higher Education**

### **Student Athletes**

Student-athletes have very complex lives. Broughton and Neyer (2001) notes, “College student athletes are a special population requiring support for their academic, personal, and athletic needs and issues. Unlike other college students, student athletes face an additional set of complex demands, stresses, and challenges arising from their involvement in a competitive sport” (p. 47). These students have to balance their roles as student and athlete. Historically, student-athletes have been viewed as being privileged because of special accommodations given to them, “and whose primary motivation to attend school is to participate in sports” (Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 1996, p. 4). In addition, student athletes have special NCAA guidelines to follow, team practice, team meeting, athletic competition and several other demands to meet daily (Broughton & Neyer, 2001).

To assist this unique population, athletic departments have their own student support services with academic counselors and other support staff. Unlike campus counselors and advisors, athletic academic counselors specialize in all the NCAA guidelines, from eligibility to compliance issues (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). These professionals service the unique needs of student athletes. Parham lists six demands or challenges that college student athletes experience,

Balancing athletic and academic endeavors; balancing social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits; balancing athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium; balancing physical health and injuries with the need to keep playing;

balancing the demands of various relationships, including coaches, parents, family, and friends; and dealing with the termination of an athletic collegiate career. (p. 48)

These challenges clearly demonstrate the need for student athletes to have special student services support. Unlike non-athletes, student-athletes have the aforementioned challenges in addition to maintaining NCAA degree-progress, which is having a certain amount of courses completed in their major each academic year (NCAA, 2015). Student affairs administrators, athletic administrators and faculty have great opportunities to reach out to this special population (Watt & Moore, 2001). Also, collaboration between student affairs and the athletic department contributes to a better experience for student athletes (Coakley, 2007).

College is a time when student athletes are developing, experiencing new things and extra pressures. To insure that student athletes have the best collegiate experience, student services professionals and athletic professionals should work as a team. Student athletes have to adjust to the academic side of a college campus. This is often hard since they spend a majority of their time in the athletic department and practice field (Greer & Robinson, 2006). Athletes often feel alienated from the campus because of their stressful lives. They are very busy and rarely have time to be involved with anything other than school and participation in their sport (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). Coakley (2007) states that, student athletes should be encouraged to become involved with different campus activities, and that student affairs personnel could work with athletic staff to arrange opportunities for student athletes to interact with other non-athletics and other campus organizations and programs.

### **Big Time Sports**

With college sports growing every year and being a means of entertainment, demands on student athletes have increased (Hill, Burch-Ragan & Yates, 2001). From the foundation of

intercollegiate sports the business-minded aspect has been very important. NCAA Division I athletics generates the most revenue from the sports of football and basketball (Coakley, 2007). In 1998 the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) was created. Only Division I Football Bowl Subdivision schools can compete in the BCS; “Appearing in one of the BCS bowls is important for the status, television exposure, and money it brings the participants; the eight teams appearing in the BCS bowls were paid more than US\$117 million in 2003” (Grant, Leadly & Zygmunt, 2008, p. 59). There are other minor bowl games that yield significantly less revenues for the athletic departments and universities. The income from these games usually benefits the institutions athletic department and university. Research shows that enrollment increases for schools that win BCS bowl games and national championships. Also, extensive media coverage contributes to school revenue, exposure and in some cases sandal. This increase of media coverage and pressures to compete on the highest level adds stress to student athletes, especially football athletes (Grant, Leadly & Zygmunt, 2008)

### **Academic Reform**

Athletes at big-time programs unusually receive some form of athletic scholarship aid; they are expected to commit time to their sport, academics and social life (Coakley, 2007). Patricia and Peter Adler (1991, 1999) conducted a study on the everyday lives of young men participating in big-time intercollegiate sports. They looked at how these young men made choices related to sports, school and social life. They found that the student athletes were optimist about their coursework until, “after one or two semesters, the demands of playing basketball, the social isolation that goes along with being an athlete, and the powerful influence of the athletic subculture in the big-time program drew them away from academic life” (Coakley, 2007, p. 496). The study also found that students that had good high school preparation, positive

relationships with faculty, and relationships outside of sport helped to facilitate academic and athletic success.

Due to these issues of low academic performance among certain groups of student-athletes, the National Collegiate Athletic Association has developed several programs to increase the standards for academic performance of prospective student-athletes, as well as current student-athletes. According to the NCAA (2007):

The Association believes that its members should be held accountable for educating the student-athletes they recruit. Maintaining the value and integrity of intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the academic mission is paramount. Academic reform—the reconnecting of intercollegiate athletics with higher education—has been an ongoing concern for the NCAA for nearly two decades. (History of Academic Reform, para. 1)

The NCAA academic reform encompasses several components. In 2004, the Academic Progress Rate (APR) was developed (NCAA, 2007). This system tracks academic success on a yearly basis. An APR score of 925 corresponds to an anticipated graduation rate of about 50% (NCAA, 2012). If a team has a score lower than 925 they can be subject to penalties that could be a loss of scholarships for that particular sport (NCAA, 2012). NCAA academic reform has made great strides to improve the academic performance of their student athletes over the years. Gary Brown's article, *NCAA Graduation Rates: A Quarter-Century of Tracking Academic Success*, explains this journey. Brown (2014) summarizes the role of NCAA reform:

In the quarter-century since, the NCAA has refined collection methods and in fact improved the methodology by which the rates are calculated in order to provide leaders in higher education more accurate information on which to base academic policy. Graduation rates have not only supplied data reflecting student-athlete academic

performance over time—they have added insight into how to positively affect that very performance. In that way, grad rates aren't just ends to a mean, but a means to an end.

(p. 1)

### **African American Male Student Athletes**

All undergraduate students who are enrolled in a full-time program of study for a degree are documented in the NCAA graduation rates report (NCAA, 2012). Prior research has shown that African American and White football student-athletes graduate at higher rates than male non-athletes in the student body (Lapchick, Bustamate & Ruiz 2006). The measures that the NCAA have taken over the years to increase student-athlete academic success have been very successful great. However, African American males continue to lag behind White males athletes.

This is true, especially in the sports of football and basketball. Studies show that African American student-athletes face many challenges, such as positive and negative stereotypes, being a first-time college student, being a highly solicited scholarship athlete, and coming from a low socioeconomic environment (Person & LeNoir, 1997). Edwards (1990) also reminds us that these athletes have to practice and participate in their sport. After they are done, these athletes often are suffering from a combination of mental, physical and emotional exhaustion resulting in a lack of motivation to study. Also, some African American student athletes struggle to have a sense of belonging at the institution they are attending. Coakley (2007) contends that a student-athlete will be more attached and involved at in institution if they are shown attention, feel appreciated and believe that they play a vital part in the community. This sense of belonging can and should come from athletic administrators, campus administrators, faculty, staff, coaches, parents and the community.



Academically, some Black student athletes may enter college at a disadvantage and look at sports as a way out of poverty (Lapchick, Bustamate & Ruiz 2006). These students do not make their academics a priority. Kirsten Benson (2000) gives a great illustration of this in her article *Constructing Academic Inadequacy: African American Athlete's Stories of schooling*, offering the following response from an African American male student athlete interviewed at a predominantly White, public southeastern Division I institution with a very highly ranked football program. Derek comments,

School is just something you gotta do to play pro ball. It's like people tell you that's what you can do, go play pro football...and that just puts your schoolwork down, you gotta get eligible to get there... No one's interested in academics they're just trying to get it over with. (Benson, 2000, p. 224)

There are several factors that affect African American males' graduation rates and graduation success rates; nonetheless, research suggests that this issue can be improved with early intervention. Person and LeNoir (1997) mention several strategies and initiatives that can help increase the academic success of African American male student-athletes. The first initiative is mentorship. Good mentoring can play a huge role in developing and retaining these student-athletes' academically. A second strategy is identifying student's needs early and implementing a life skills programs. The NCAA has a life skills program called Challenging Athletes' Minds and Personal Success (CHAMPS). This program was designed to address specific needs of the student athlete academically, personally, and socially (Broughton & Neyer, 2001). The third strategy or initiative is to hire more staff of color to serve as role models. Division I intercollegiate athletics is represented very well by African American male athletes, but leaves much to be desired regarding African Americans male and female administrators,

coaches, faculty and staff (Benson, 2000). This marginality often leaves students with limited mentors.

Student athletes play a very important role on college campuses. Universities assist students in pursuing their athletic dreams and prepare them to obtain a degree. When students are not graduating, a university is perceived as being incapable of meeting their students' educational, social, and emotional needs (Mangold, Bean & Adams, 2003). Improving African American student-athletes' graduation rates and graduation success rates contributes to their holistic development while in college. The above literature shows how the NCAA academic reform has drastically increased student-athletes academic success. Moreover, the literature also shows that African American male student-athletes still lack behind White male student-athletes and that university administration, faculty, and professional staff can help increase the academic success of these athletes through programs and awareness (Coakley, 2007).

Usually, athletic departments that have good orientation and advising programs have higher graduation rates than those who have less efficient orientation and advising programs (Forrest, 1985). Early intervention, extensive orientation, and advising programs can benefit students and aid their overall retention. A research study by Person and LeNoir (1997) showed,

Almost all of these student athletes' persisted through this five-year study. These programs demonstrate that African American male student athletes can be retained with the proper support system in place, including demonstrated institutional commitment reflected in program services, caring faculty, and campus climates conducive to development of the African American male student athlete. ( p. 88)

## College Student Development Theory

Development is the process of becoming a more complex person (more complex cognition, identity and values) and experiencing a positive change of self. It is usually orderly, sequential and hierarchal in developing higher and more complex and age-related processes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Development can change due to biological maturation, the environment and social interactions. The process of development can be illustrated in the acronym DEPC: Describe what occurs, Explain what occurs; Predict what will occur and may happen; and Control (intervene) as needed. Four goals of student development are:

- 1) Who is the student in terms of development?
- 2) How does development occur in college?
- 3) How does the environment influence student development?
- 4) Toward what ends should development be directed?

Student affairs professionals cannot fully understand the complexity of their students without the use of theory and “must practice the appropriate theories” (Komives, 2003, p. 174).

Student Development Theory has evolved since the 1960s and investigates how students learn, grow and develop. Developmental growth is typically valued and pursued as a desirable psychological or educational end, perhaps even as a moral end (Perry, 1970). Historically, theory has been looked upon as only being relevant to academic scholars. However, with the advancements within higher education, there is a great need for theory to be used by student affair professionals (Hamilton & Sina, 2001). The use of theory helps transition student affairs professionals from practitioner to expert-practitioner. Also, the understanding of these theories is very important in helping assist college students in their development (Komives, 2003). Theorists such as Erikson (1963), Piaget (1970), Chickering and Reisser (1993), Chickering

(1969), Kohlberg (1976) and Perry (1970) have contributed to the development and evolution of the three main college development theories. They include psychosocial, cognitive and identity.

### **Psychosocial Development Theories**

Psychosocial development is the process of a series of developmental task being accomplished by an individual. The development of these task cause several development challenges throughout a person's lifetime (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These tasks are usually completed in sequential order. Psychosocial development is twofold which includes the individual (personality) and the environment (social) and looks at content and what concerns students. Psychosocial theorists try to investigate, understand and explain the following questions an undergraduate student experiences during their college matriculation: How do these students learn? Where are they in their development? How is the campus environment (academic and non academic) affecting them? Psychosocial theory helps to understand the many challenges college students experience during their college years (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2009).

Erik Erikson's (1963) research was influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud (1930), which led to Erikson establishing a foundation for the study of psychosocial development theory. Erikson believed that students development is affected both biological and socially by stimuli and response. His theory is composed of eight stages that starts at birth and covers a person's life span (Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Each stage is characterized by a different conflict that has to be resolved by the individual. When the environment causes a new demand, conflict arises. Like Freud, each stage is defined by resolving the conflict positively or negatively, in part, which is dependent upon progression into the next stage. If a conflict is not resolved the person will

struggle with it later in life. Erikson (1963) suggests that stages can be revisited through the years. Erikson's psychosocial theory has been expanded and revised.

Marcia (1966) contends that not all student's progress through identity resolution similarly and they need different types of interventions to assist them in their progression through the stages (Evans et al., 2009). Chickering (1969) is well known for his study in the late 1960s of thirteen small colleges. His research showed that identity was the most important developmental issue for college students. In the 1990s Chickering partnered with Reisser to revise his previous study. Chickering and Reisser (1993) developed seven stages or "vectors" of psychosocial development that are typically experienced sequentially (or in grouping) in the formation of identity. This research states that the college environment has an essential role in assisting students through the different vectors which are: Development of Competence, Managing emotions, Development of Autonomy to Interdependence, Development of Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishment of Identity, Development of Purpose and Development of Integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

### **Cognitive-Structural Development Theories**

College is a time when student are expected to learn and acquire a plethora of knowledge. Jean Piaget's (1970) cognitive-structural development theory explained how students' learn and the processes that take place while knowledge is being constructed (Evans et al., 2009). Piaget perceived cognitive development to evolve through four stages. The movement in the stages has to be orderly and sequential, and advancement through stages is dependent upon completion of the prior stage. As a person progresses through the stages, development of structures and processes become more complex. Assimilation and accommodation occurs when students encounter ideas that they can integrate into their current structures, and new ideas they have to

create new structures and integrate new qualitative information into their schema (Hamilton & Sina, 2001).

Kohlberg's (1976) moral development theory gives great insight for student affairs professionals to understand the dilemmas and development of students. Kohlberg's theory is divided into three phases with six stages and is based on the works of Piaget's moral development of adolescences. The phases are Preconventional, Conventional and Postconventional. Preconventional is the phase where the person views moral decisions as "right and wrong"; everything is centered around them (Kohlberg, 1984). The second phase is conventional; a student is more likely to look at moral decisions in the lens of social order and are influenced by others. In phase 3, Postconventional, students have shared ideas and make universal decisions (encompassing everyone). Gilligan has scrutinized Kohlberg's theory because his study only involved boys (Evans, et al., 2009). Gilligan (1979) contends that girls have a care orientation and boys have a justice orientation. Therefore, moral development needs to be viewed from two perspectives (Gilligan, 1979).

### **Identity Development Theory**

"Who am I?" and "What is my purpose?" are often questions college students ask themselves. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), identity is the most important aspect of development in college. Identity could be defined as a person's sense of self and the way others view them. Identity development has several membership categories such as, race, gender, sexual orientation, geographic region, ability/disability, social class and spirituality. Jones and McEwen research on multiple identities revealed that a person cannot be limited with just one identity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Their research also showed that women are

concerned more with their personal identity (kind, caring, respectable) than their social identity (the way they look physically).

## **The Role of Spirituality in Higher Education**

### **Spirituality**

Conceptually, spiritual development is grounded in the works of Fowler (1981) and Parks (2000). For years higher education has made great strides in facilitating the different aspects of student development in their students. However, there is one aspect that is essential and is often ignored and that is spiritual development (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011). There has been an extraordinary amount of research done on the development of college students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, very little empirical research has been done on students' spiritual development. In recent years there have been a surge of scholars and practitioners in higher education with research focus on the spiritual development needs of college students (Chickering et al., 2006; Love, 2001; Love & Talbot, 1999).

Astin (2004) gives the best illustration of how spirituality is defined in this study as, “The values we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here—the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life—and our sense of connectedness to each other and the world around us” (p. 34). In addition, personal faith or spirituality is a person's discovery of their meaning and purpose in life. This can include student-athletes of all faiths.

With the growing development needs of student athletes it is important to meet the academic, social, personal, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of students. Colleges and universities have to make spirituality a priority. Astin, Astin and Lindholm (2011) research

shows that higher education has to improve how they deal with the spiritual development of college students.

This lack of interest in spirituality within the research community is likewise evident in our community is likewise evident in our colleges and universities. While higher education continues to put a lot of emphasis on test scores, grades, credits, and degrees, it has increasingly come to neglect its students' "inner" development-the sphere of values and beliefs, emotional maturity, moral development, spirituality, and self-understanding. (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011, p. 2)

Clarke (2011) investigated the spiritual development of college student athletes using Astin's (2007) CSBV survey. The results from Clarke's study revealed,

This particular finding is critical to this study, in that it solidifies the fact that student-athletes are developing spiritually and reporting higher mean scores than the average student body. Implications resulting from this finding include a need for higher education administrators to provide opportunities for spiritual development to collegiate student-athletes and to monitor this developmental process throughout student-athletes careers.

James Fowler's (1981) work on faith development helps to understand and lays a foundation to have a better understanding of spiritual development within student athletes. As a foundation of his research, Fowler use the influences of great theories such as Kohlberg (1976), Erikson (1963), and Piaget (1970) to development his stage theory of faith development. Although the faith development model is not considered a student development theory it is applicable to undergraduate college students and can be examined within the context of higher education (Andrade, 2014).



College is a time when students' navigate through different development processes. The use of student development theory along side of faith development can provide a lens on how to better serve students in exploring, developing and enhancing their spiritual development. Over the years, colleges and universities have done a great job providing opportunities for students to develop in the following areas: psychosocially, cognitively and identity. However, there are still limited opportunities for student to experience positive spiritual development. In the book *Finding Meaning in Religion and Spirituality* a student notes,

I am very comfortable with my religious background. Yet I don't have many opportunities to discuss this with professors, student affairs folks, or even my friends. Whenever I bring up my faith in casual conversation, people look at me as if I'm brainwashed...I really find higher education to be elitist and dismissive when it comes to matters of religious faith. (Nash & Murray, 2010, p. 53)

This quote shows that college students have spiritual needs that need to be met and addressed.

In the context of higher education, spirituality can be defined as the values ones lives by, an understanding of where one comes from and one's purpose for existence, and the experience of connecting to others (Astin, 2004). Spirituality can also refer to a person's search for meaning and purpose in life (Fowler, 1981). Johnson, Kristeller, and Sheets (2004) state, "Spirituality is often connected to things like meaning in life, which can be an entirely secular affair, or mediation, which can also be divorced from any specific religious context" (p. 3). Nevertheless, Hart (2003) emphasizes that the relational aspect of spirituality is a, "very personal and intimate expression of [one's] relationship with the Divine" ( p. 173).

## **Sports Ministry FCA**

The integration of religion and sports has a long history (Baker, 2007; Hoffman, 2010; Krattenmaker, 2010; Ladd & Mathisen, 1999). Sports became a powerful force in American society in the late 1800s and early-mid 1900s and this led to the development of sport ministries. The marriage between religion and sports would become a partnership dedicated to using the platform of sports as an avenue to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Baker, 2007; Hoffman, 2010; Ladd & Mathisen, 1999; Krattenmaker, 2010). *The Fellowship of Christian Athletes Sports* (FCA) ministry was born in the early 1950s. Founder Don McClanen, a former football player and high school coach, had a vision to form a ministry that consisted of a “cooperative grouping of athletes to embrace and have others embrace Jesus as the Christ” (Baker, 2007, p. 200).

FCA is considered a type of Para church, which means to work “beside or beyond the church” (Willmer & Schmidt, 1998, p. xii). Willmer and Schmidt (1998) state that most Para churches are “a subset of the larger nonprofit sector” and “are typically organized under IRS section 501(c)3” (1998, p. xiii). Para churches vary in size and have created a paradigm shift on how people spread the Christian message outside the traditional church setting.

There are many different types of Para church ministries. FCA is geared toward athletics, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association mission focuses on evangelism, and Campus Crusade for Christ (Athletes in Action) is an international college and sports campus ministry (Wilmer & Schmidt, 1998). With the changing of society, Para church organizations are continuing to grow, flourish and impact the world and university and college campuses with the message of Jesus Christ. FCA values are serving, teamwork, excellence and Integrity. Figure 2 illustrates the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Values Model.



*Figure 2.* Fellowship of Christian Athletes Values Model

FCA has become the “largest and most influential of all” sports ministries (Baker, 2007, p. 199). These ministries were initially aimed at having a strong impact on middle and high school athletes and then started to become more influential within intercollegiate and professional sports (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2004). FCA began ministering on college campuses in the 1960s through the huddle program. In March of 1959 FCA sent out its first newsletter *The Christian Athlete*, which included four weeks of Bible studies. These Bible studies were designed for middle and high school students that attended FCA summer camps “so they could keep the momentum going and eventually increase it on their campuses” (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2004, p. 8). Groups of athletes began to meet for Bible studies which led to the development of the huddle program. The huddle program, at the collegiate level, started at University of Alabama in September of 1964 and consisted of nine athletes and a pastor (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2004). Currently there are over 8,000 huddles across the country that serve middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities. These huddle

meetings are usually held once a week and last for about one hour. The meetings are for all sports and are geared toward strengthening the spiritual lives of student-athletes.

### **Fellowship of Christian Athletes on University Campuses**

At its inception, FCA chaplains and local clergymen voluntarily participated as spiritual leaders for athletic programs. It was not until the late 1990s that a paradigm shift occurred. This shift focused on college head coaches hiring full-time chaplains to serve as spiritual coordinators alongside the coaches and athletic staff. In taking this action, these coaches made a “commitment to building the spiritual lives of young men” (Williams, 2007 p. 162). This full time commitment has led many high school, college and professional athletes to credit their Christian faith conversion to having a relationship with an FCA chaplain and/or participating in the sports ministry program (Hoffman, 2010).

FCA defines a chaplain as a “representative of God” (FCA Chaplain Training Manual, p. 1). Chaplains are counselors who confidentially serve students with on and off the field issues. Athletes are given the opportunity to voluntarily participate in services such as prayer meeting, chapel, Bible studies and retreats to establish a foundational and sustainable relationship with the chaplain. Athletes are given the opportunity to meet personally with the chaplain or participate in group or team activities. Since the team chaplain is very visible and accessible, there are endless possibilities for students to establish a sense of trust and accountability that can foster a strong mentoring relationship.

Even though FCA works with female and male athletes that participate in all sports, full-time chaplains at the university level are hired primarily to work for football teams. There are over 25 chaplains serving at universities nationwide. Currently nationwide FCA has only one full-time chaplain for Men’s Basketball (Interview, Benson, 2011). Chaplains serve as mentors

by having one-on-one meeting with players assisting them in character development, life management skills, spiritual development and outreach opportunities (FCA Chaplain Packet, n.d.). Those involved provide many activities for the players who participate in a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry. Among them are; giving spiritual direction and growth; providing a father figure role model and someone to talk to who is not their coach; offering students opportunities to serve in leadership roles; student participation in retreats/camps, small groups and Bible studies; one-on-one meetings with the chaplain; mentorship; receiving help with the highs and lows of life (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2004). All these services are provided to assist in the holistic development of student athletes.

FCA Chaplains are usually invited onto college campuses by coaches with the support of their athletic administration. Currently, most chaplains are financially supported through the sports Para-ministries of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Athletes in Action (AIA). According to Jurgen Herbst (1976), historically, religion and higher education operated as one unit “the secular government and the established church jointly exercised authority over each college” (p. 33). The founding institutions of Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary were all considered sectarian colleges (Herbst, 1976). However, over the years spirituality and religious matters have become taboo on some college and university campuses (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Parks, 2000).

One of the reasons that higher education institutions, particularly those that are publically funded, avoid issues of religion is due to the doctrine of separation of church which is under the First Amendment Establishment Clause. This Clause declares, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (Audi, 1989). This clause also affirms that, “state institutions should not interfere with the church and the

church should not interfere with the state” (Audi, 1989). Therefore, athletic departments that allow chaplains to work with their student athletes do not financially support the chaplain. This means that the chaplains cannot receive state benefits, such as retirement, social security and medical insurance from the university (Interview, Smith, 2011).

### **Rickman University FCA History**

The historical formation of Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Rickman University has long roots. Rickman University had long lasting ties with FCA on campus starting in the late 1960s to the present. Initially FCA was student led, and then it transitioned to being led by part-time ministers and currently led by a full-time football chaplain.

With the changing of the needs of student athletes Rickman University head football coach was the person that spark the development of a new paradigm shift. To incorporate a full-time football chaplain in the football program that would serve the spiritual and personal needs of student athletes. This coach had a chaplain at his pervious school and saw the positive results of having a person full-time who could build a foundation of consistency and trust that would help student athletes in their spiritual and person development. This format would allow students to perform better on the football field and to become better human begins.

However to make this dream a reality the head coach needed the support of the athletic director, university president and board of trustees. Along with a man that would be qualified to work along side of Rickman University football team as a spiritual mentor and coach. . Therefore, the athletic director, university President and Board of Trustees approved for a team chaplain to be hired and operate through a Para-ministry due to separation of church and state. When the football team chaplain was hired he had no job description and became a trailblazer in the arena of full-time football chaplains within intercollegiate athletes.

Therefore, in the fall of 1999 Rickman University embarked on a journey to foster the spiritual needs of their students by incorporating a full-time team chaplain. This chaplain would be available to serve students athletes with their different spiritual and personal needs. Unlike previous chaplains, he would serve as a spiritual coach and invest in creating lasting relationships. This team chaplain would attend practices and be easy to assess for meeting with student athletes. Student athletes had a place to explore, express, develop and enhance their faith.

With the addition of the team chaplain, Rickman University experience success on and off the field of play. This success would open up the door for other schools to request information on how to start FCA chaplaincy programs at other universities. Rickman University started a Chaplaincy training program. They train men and women to become team chaplains at other universities. According to the team chaplain, he still is asked to assist universities in starting programs or enhancing the programs that already exist (Interview, RU team chaplain).

The movement of team chaplains in college football has grown from being very rare in 1999 to very common now. Most Division I football programs have a team chaplain for their football programs. These chaplains meet the spiritual need of student athletes. A need that is often overlooked in higher education. Rickman University's chaplaincy program has assisted many student athletes over the years in a powerful and impactful way.

### **Conclusion**

Spirituality is a very important aspect of student athletes lives. The spiritual quest is integral to the developmental process; it is common work that generations young and old must share in today's world (Parks, 2000, p. 198).

Student athletes are a unique population and have many different stress of life to deal with. Athletic departments hiring team chaplains for their football team meets the spiritual development needs of student athletes. Spiritual development is just as important as student development. Colleges and universities' have the responsibility of providing a holistic education for student athletes. Parks (2000) notes,

Higher education is intended to serve as the primary site of inquiry, reflection, and cultivation of knowledge and understanding on behalf of the wider culture. As such, institutions of higher education hold a special place in the story of human development, particularly in the process of becoming a young adult in faith. (p. 10)

Student athletes enter college with the expectation that their developmental needs are going to be met by the university. However, even though spiritual development has roots in student development theory its role in higher education is still being determined. Rickman University athletic program are trail blazers in that fact that service the spiritual needs of their student athletes. The team chaplain's role is to help student athletes explore, discovery, understand and enhance their spirituality. This role is priceless and helps students to become well-rounded productive citizens. It is imperative that colleges and universities provide spiritual development resources for students and student athletes.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

*“Sometimes the most ordinary thing could be made extraordinary, simply by doing them with the right people.” — Nicholas Sparks*

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data and investigate answers to the research questions generated for this study. The purposes and significance of the study, research design, rationale for qualitative research, research questions, setting, recruitment of participants, data collection, analysis and study limitations are described in this chapter. In addition, concerns of validity, reliability and credibility are addressed.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to describe a FCA campus ministry program for athletes in a Southern University. It sought to uncover the factors that hinder and facilitate its success and personal and program outcomes. It is believed that these purposes will also result in a set of lessons learned, which might be applied when developing or seeking to improve similar programs in other settings.

### **Significance**

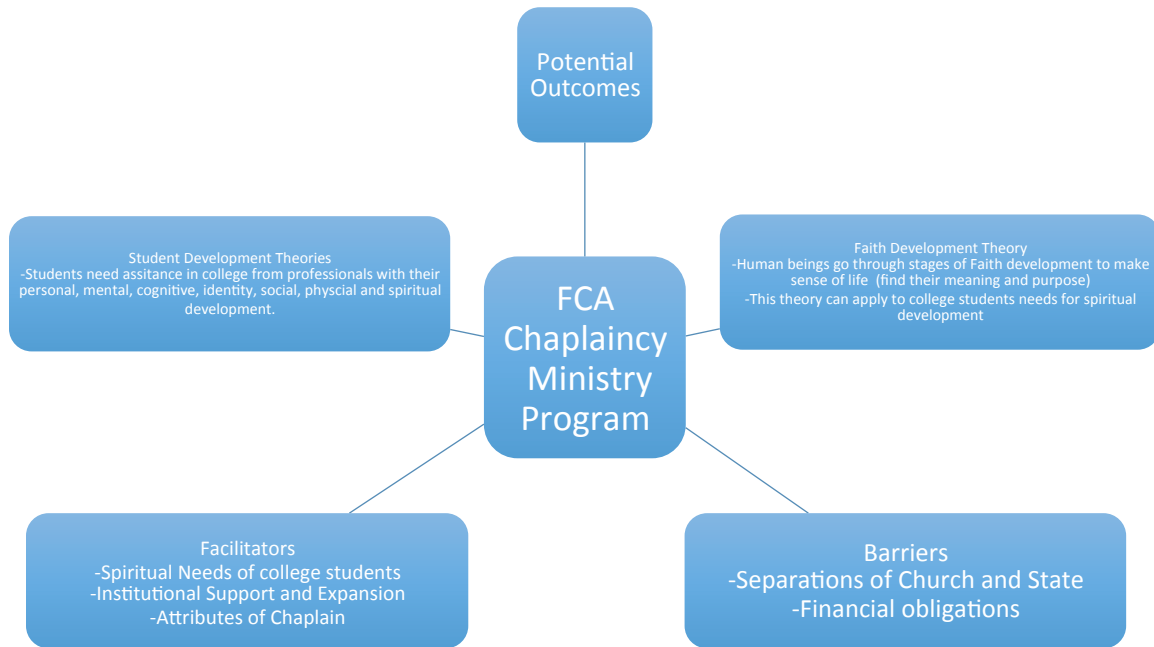
Athletes across the nation and abroad are recruited by colleges and universities for a variety of sports ranging from football to hockey. These student athletes have basic developmental needs that have to be addressed while they attend college (Hamilton & Sina, Pascarella, 1999). When student athletes arrive on campus, they are often assigned a coordinator

to assist with their academic achievement (academic coordinator), life skills development (social, emotional, mental coordinator) and athletic participation (defensive and offensive coordinator). All of these areas aid in meeting their developmental needs. However, the one area that is often neglected is their spiritual development. College is a time when students are searching to find meaning and purpose in their lives (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2010; Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006; Parks, 2000). FCA believes that the journey of finding this meaning and purpose can be facilitated by a team chaplain (spiritual coordinator) who works with student athletes and that the coordinator can also help student athletes with the constant battle they face in balancing their roles, in dealing with competitive success and in coping with other life responsibilities (Hyatt, 2003). The presence of a team chaplain may also help to build and balance team camaraderie by helping student's establish a sense of purpose and unity (Williams, 2007).

The FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program aims to serve the student athlete in a variety of capacities. Character development, life management skills, leadership development, establishing accountable relationships, spiritual counseling, and mentoring are some of the components of the program. These components seek to facilitate the development of the whole student athlete with emphasis on their spiritual development. The chaplain's role can range from mentoring an athlete to providing counseling to an athlete who has loss a parent or loved one. FCA chaplains also have a unique role in the lives of the student athletes they minister to by attending all practices, games, meetings and constantly being available to serve in whatever capacity is needed. The aforementioned responsibilities of a chaplain seek to establish a platform that shows students that the chaplain genuinely cares about their well-being and success (Fellowship of Christian Athletes, 2004). This can help create and build relationships that become an outlet

for student athletes to express their emotional, physical, personal, social, athletic and spiritual needs to someone they can trust and confide in.

Based on the review of literature, a new framework (see Figure 3) was developed that expounds upon the four factors that affect an FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program. These factors include the program facilitators, programs barriers to success and the relationship between student development theory and faith development theory. Student development theory states that students have developmental needs that need to be met while they attend college. However, one of the needs that college students struggle with is their search for meaning and purpose. This meaning and purpose can be understood through faith development theory that draws from the works of student development theory psychosocial theorists. Faith development states that human beings go through stages in life to make sense and discover their meaning and purpose of life. These two theories combined help to understand the spiritual developmental needs of college students, specifically college student athletes. Lastly, the framework shows the facilitators and barriers that affect and are imbedded into a FCA chaplaincy program as revealed in the literature. All these components are imbedded together for the development, implementation and successful operation of a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program.



*Figure 3.* New Conceptual Framework based on Review of Literature

There is a belief that these programs can work; yet there is not research validating this belief. Since these programs appear to be growing in number, it is important to assess their value by identifying program strengths, weaknesses and outcomes in order to improve it and advance the literature in the field. Research in this area is needed to bring awareness to the role, purposes and outcomes of a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program. The findings should be helpful to the organizers, chaplains and leaders of this program and assist them in enhancing and improving the program for the future. It may also enable other schools and colleges to determine whether implementing such a program would be beneficial to them and to their student athletes. It should also initiate interest in further research into this important area.

### **Qualitative Method Rationale**

Qualitative methodology was selected for this study. Qualitative research investigates research questions of how, what, and why in situations calling for in-depth exploration to provide

a greater understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). This study aimed to understand the lived experiences of a Football Team FCA Chaplain, former and current student athletes, athletic administrators and FCA staff members, to gain a deeper understanding of the program.

A qualitative methodology was chosen due to the fact that quantitative data would not be able to generate the real essence of the participants lived experiences. Qualitative aims at studying “issues in depth and detail” (Patton, 2002), whereas quantitative research looks at numbers. Rich description of people, places, programs and conversations cannot be easily managed with statistical research or procedures (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Within qualitative research there are several strategies or methods, a case study research strategy was used to explore the in-depth realities of a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program at a division I institution.

### **Case Study Methodology**

This study explored the dynamics that comprise a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program at Rickman University using a case study research method. This method aims at understanding the complexity of a single case within its particular circumstances (Stake, 1995). It also produces deep understanding and insightfulness that will result “in new learning about the real-world behavior and its meaning” (Yin, 2012, p. 4). Schwandt (2007) defines a case as a concrete and specific phenomenon being study and is often used interchangeably with the phase unit of analysis. Creswell (2007) added that a bounded system is the heart or focus of the case study and contains the setting, sample, size, location and time. Having a bounded system and understanding the behaviors of that system are influential components in understanding a case (Stake, 1988). In this study the bounded case is a FCA

chaplaincy program with the context being comprised of the team chaplain and all others involved (Merriam, 2009).

Case studies tell a story and give meaning to the lived experiences of people's lives. These untold stories allow for the reader to grasp a more profound understanding of the realities of the phenomenon being researched. Contemporary events were examined using multiple data sources such as interviews, appropriate documents (news papers, books and magazine articles) and observations to assist in gaining in-depth thick description on the phenomenon and to provide naturalistic generalizations (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

### **Research Questions**

Marshall and Rossman (1994) suggest that research questions of such studies should aim at structures, attitudes, beliefs, events and behaviors and processes occurring in this phenomenon. The research questions in this study were developed and designed to be descriptive in nature to understand the experiences of those involved in the program. There were three questions that guided the study.

1. What are the primary factors that facilitate the development and implementation of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
2. What are the primary barriers to developing and sustaining a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
3. What are the individual and program outcomes of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?

## **Research Methods**

Research methods are the specific tools for conducting the exploration of a particular phenomenon. In qualitative research there are several ways a researcher can choose a sample. Using a guide or criterion gives the researcher the greatest potential to yield good data. Marshall and Rossman (1994) list the following characteristics for choosing a research site:

- 1) Entry is possible;
- 2) There is a high probability that a rich mix of the processes, people, program, interactions, and structures of interest are present;
- 3) The researcher is likely to be able to build trusting relations with the participants in the study; and
- 4) Data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured. (p. 51)

As a qualitative researcher you view the world with a different set of lenses and have to acknowledge your bias. During the research process the researcher had to remove any bias and remain neutral. The researcher used the investigative technique of empathic neutrality (Patton, 2002). This technique allowed the researcher to not be too involved or distant during the interviews with the participants. It also assisted in the researchers' ability to relate and empathize with the participants while remaining neutral regarding particular perspectives and data. Qualitative research procedures were followed and triangulation was used to assist in validating the study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

When researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members this is considered insider research (Kanuha, 2000). The insider shares an identity, language and experiential base with the study participants (Asselin, 2003), which frequently allows researchers

more rapid and more complete acceptance by their participants. Acceptance through this insider role is one of the greatest advantages of one's membership in the group. This acceptance automatically provides a level of trust and openness in the study's participants that would likely not have been present otherwise. Participants also might feel that they are similar to the researcher due to shared experiences and backgrounds; this shared distinctiveness allows for a greater depth and openness to the data collected through the interview process.

As the researcher of this study, my connection to Fellowship of Christian Athletes stems from my father being a participant of FCA when he was a high school football player in Miami, FL. At 15 years old my father participated in a FCA sports camp at Black Mountain, NC and became a Christian. He would receive a full athletic scholarship to play football at a Division I institution and later play in the National Football League (NFL). Years later he returned to Miami, FL where he coached High School football and led a FCA huddle at his former high school and was very active with FCA events in the metropolitan Miami area. This is when I was first exposed to FCA; my father would take me to FCA huddle meetings, lunches, dinners and events. As a young child I did not know the significance of the organization. I was just having fun with my father and his student athletes. I can truly say that every event I attended as a young child was filled with lots of fun and laughter. I really never knew it was a spiritual event. To me it was just my dad hanging out and talking to his student athletes who he treated like his own sons and daughters.

When I entered college I attended FCA on a regular basis during my sophomore year when it was adult-led. My junior and senior years it was student-led and I really didn't feel a connection with the group. My next FCA encounter would not occur until I was 24 years old while finishing my masters and working as an intern within the athletic department at Rickman



University. I would have student athletes' invite me to FCA huddle meetings and people would talk about the greatness of the FCA chaplain. They would tell me I needed to meet Barry Smith because he was such a cool and awesome man of God. At the time, my life was not one that morally was in line with Christian principles, so I would avoid Barry. I attended a couple FCA huddle meetings (primarily because the athletes kept asking me). Then Barry hired another chaplain, William Yorks, to work with him to start a chaplaincy-training program. I met William and found out that he was a good friend of my father's and they had worked together with FCA in Miami, FL. For me this connection gave me the motivation I needed to meet Barry and his family and I decided to participate in FCA.

Later that year I finished my Internship and graduated with my master's in Sport Administration. I moved back home to Miami, FL and became a Christian. A year later I moved back to the city Rickman University is located and, with the assistance of William Yorks and Barry Smith, I became a member of FCA at Rickman University. I also worked in the athletic department. These experiences and my life-long passion for sports led me to conducting research on the organization that I was exposed to as a young child, ran from as a college student, finally embraced the latter part of my graduate studies, and became an avid participant, volunteer and staff member as an adult.

My personal connection with FCA and the football team chaplain, his staff and the athletic administration and staff provided me with a very complex and unique role as a researcher within this study. Conducting a qualitative study methodology would also challenge me with the responsibility of reducing any personal biases that I might of had and establish objectivity in my study. Moreover, due to the fact that I had worked in the athletic department for years and had established relationships provided accessibility to the research site. In

addition, the knowledge of the researchers work on a dissertation research study established a partnership with this selected population. The chaplain and athletic department trusted that the researcher would conduct a study that displayed integrity and confidentiality. All the participants in the study had an established trust with the team chaplain and/or the researcher. This contributed to the rapport the researcher had with future participants of the research study. Rapport, as defined by Berg (2009), is “the positive feelings that develop between the interviewer and the subject” which helps to facilitate the conversation that is taking place during the interview (p. 130). I was not working in this department when I completed the dissertation, having left two years before.

Rickman University is considered to have one of the premier chaplaincy programs in the nation. This scholarly research has the potential to benefit not just the athletic department but also the university and higher education as a whole. Therefore, a meaningful research topic was identified, suitable research questions were formulated that would deeply investigate the research topic and clarify different aspects of the program being studied. Lastly, an inclusive research plan was developed that would provide rich, thick descriptions for data analysis. Results from this study will also help to establish material that details an FCA intercollegiate sports chaplaincy program.

### **Setting**

This study was conducted at a Land-grant Historically White University (HWU) located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. According to the university’s institutional research website, the university had a population of 25,469 reported for the fall of 2011 when the first participants were interviewed. The athletic program is a NCAA Division I institution that consist of 19 sports (Women’s basketball, softball, golf, tennis, swimming and

diving, track and field, cross country, gymnastics, soccer, equestrian and volleyball, Men's basketball, football, baseball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field and cross country). Rickman University is historically known for its strong athletic and academic excellence. Their football program is a member of one of the top Football Bowl Series (FBS) leagues, and they have been awarded several national championship titles. Rickman University football team rooster averages approximately 100 student athletes per year.

### **Population and Sample Procedures**

The FCA Chaplain was selected based on the location of the university, NCCA Division I affiliation, experience and program type and the researcher's ability to have access to the research site and participants, in addition to the following criterion: 1) Full time FCA football Chaplain, 2) NCAA (FBS) Division I Institution in the Southern region of the United States, and 3) Was hired to start a FCA chaplaincy program at the university.

For this study, one Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football team chaplain, two FCA staff members (one staff member is also a former student athlete in this study), five former student athletes, four current student athletes, one current athletic director and one former athletic director agreed to participate in the study. Due to time conflicts and other reasons the football coaches who are involved in the program were not available to interview for this study. According to Creswell (2002), a case study requests 3-5 participants for data saturation. Based on the literature 13 interviewees were considered an adequate sample size for this study.

After the selection of the chaplain, the researcher contacted him to ask for his participation in the study. The purpose and plan of the research was explained. The chaplain agreed to write a letter of support to Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university. After the study was approved by IRB the chaplain was contacted again as a key informant. Bogdan

and Biklen (2007) define a key informants as “subjects with whom the researcher has especially rapport and are particularly helpful, insightful, and articulate in providing data” (p. 273).

The sample for this study was generated from a list of all former and current coaches, athletic directors, FCA staff members and student athletes who participated or worked with the football program at the selected university during the years of 1999–2011. A list of all student athletes who were on the FCA leadership team from fall 1999–2011 was provided by the key informant. The team chaplain emailed potential participants with an email script prepared by the researcher as approved by Auburn University’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix 1). The Chaplain informed participants that the study was voluntary and if they decided to participate they could contact the researcher by email or phone.

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program, team chaplain and student athletes who participate in FCA. To understand how the program was developed and implemented on campus the athletic director that approved the hiring of the team chaplain was interviewed. The current athletic director was interviewed to understand the longevity of the program, hindrances, outcomes and support of the program. There are several football coaches and staff members who participate in the FCA program through coach's Bible studies and other activities. Several interview times were arranged with coaches however they were all cancelled. Because of the dynamics of the FCA program the researcher wanted to gather as much information rich data as possible. According to Patton (2002),

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Nathan Edwards	2010–Present	20	Yes-Leadership team	Student-Athlete
Sam Adams	2010–Present	20	Yes-Leadership team	Student-Athlete
Anthony James	2009–Present	22	Yes-Team Leader	Student-Athlete

**Data Collection****Interview Process**

Qualitative research requires that the researcher maintains flexibility during the research process. In the interview process the researcher is the key instrument use for inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All interviews were conducted in a natural setting to maintain a sense of normality for the participants (Merriam, 2009). These interviews aimed to trace the involvement

and development of student athletes, coaches, administrator and all involved in the FCA chaplaincy program.

All interviews were face-to-face and lasted from 60–90 minutes. The researcher used a tape recorder to record all interviews. Participants were given an informed consent form to complete and were explained the purpose of the study and that participation was voluntary and they could remove themselves from the study at any time. To better understand their personal experiences with FCA at Rickman University and their relationship with the chaplain semi-structure and open-ended interview questions were asked. Participants were given an opportunity to reflect on their time at Rickman University and their involvement with the FCA program, chaplain and all others involved.

Documents such as books, news articles, media guides, team media pages and brochures were used for document review. Yin (2011) notes that document review can be invaluable in a qualitative study. These documents provide contextual information, clarify information, and can assist in the interviewing process.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis work simultaneous to create emergent data (Merriam, 2009). Throughout the data collection process interviews were transcribed, reviewed and important facts and/or occurrences were noted. This process is illustrated by Merriam (2009) “without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed” (p. 171). To verify the data results multiple sources such as field notes, journaling, memoing, and audio taping interviews were utilized (Yin, 2009).

Constant comparative and open coding were the two techniques used to analyze and conceptualize the data for this qualitative study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During and after each



interview and observation the researcher would record notes pertaining to interview questions that needed to be changed or added, reactions from the participants and interesting facts and incidents that occurred during data collection. The analysis process consisted of “compiling, disassembling, reassembling (and Arraying), interpreting, and concluding” (Yin, 2012, p. 177) the data.

Documents can help the researcher learned more about the program, the administrative structure, and other aspects of the organization (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study documents reviewed consisted of two books, news articles, media guides, team media pages and brochures. All the documents were external because of the easy access and provided a wealth of information that enriched the study and provided the following:

1. Information regarding the history and development of a sports chaplaincy program at Rickman University
2. The purpose and values of the FCA chaplaincy program on a university campus
3. Understand the role and personal characteristics of the football team chaplain
4. Organizational culture of the program
5. Experiences of coaches, administrators and players experiences
6. History of the program
7. Past and current purpose of the program
8. Participant demographic data

### **Constant Comparative**

Constant comparative is a method of “joint coding and analysis” and comparing incident with incident which was devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method includes the use of varies kinds of qualitative data in the form of interviews, documents, articles, books and field

notes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Schwandt, 2007). Interviews were transcribed and read to identify themes and patterns within the phenomenon being studied. The researcher looked for “similarities and dissimilarities among the items” in the data and questioned why the items were similar or dissimilar (Yin, 2012, p. 197). This process tests for emerging themes and creates “new analytic categories as well as new relationships between categories may be discovered” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 37). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) there are categories that emerge from the construction of the researcher and those that come from the research situation (the participants’ interviews, field notes and observations).

### **Open Coding**

Coding is a process of breaking down or reducing data to manageable segments that can be used to generate themes and categories (Schwandt, 2007). Open coding was used to examine, compare, break down, conceptualize and categorize the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). All collected data, interviews, field notes and observations were used in the coding process. Interview transcriptions were re-read and audio recordings of the interviews were replayed to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Memos were made in the margins for emergent theme and ideas. Also close attention was paid to the comments and the way these comments were stated. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state:

As you read through your data, certain words, phrase, patterns of behaviors, subjects’ ways of thinking, and events repeat and stand out. Developing a coding system involves several steps: You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics and patterns. These words and phrases are coding categories. They are a means of sorting the descriptive data you have collected so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data. (p. 173)

## **Journaling**

Field notes were taken to allow the researcher to understand the whole picture of the research being conducted. These notes were personal reflections taken from the beginning of the dissertation process to the end of the study's data analysis and final written report. Notes were taken to reflect on gaining entry to research site, interviews, observations, and insights to improve data collection and researcher's emotions, passions and biases of the process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Personal notes or reflective journaling in addition to field notes allows for transparency to be created in the research process and in the arena of qualitative research is widely accepted (Ortlipp, 2008). Journaling also assists in the researcher separating their personal experiences and the collection of data which "allows the researcher to perceive the phenomenon" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) in a new and fresh way (Moustakas, 1994). Journaling allows the researcher to reflect on the research process, outcomes and interpretation, which "originates in the various choices and decisions researchers undertakes during the process of researching" (Mruck & Breuer, 2003, p. 3).

The researcher reviewed journal notes throughout the research process to grasp a better understanding of the research process and to ensure that the goals and assumptions of the study where being met. Also the reflexive process allows for objectivity and subjectivity of the researcher to be addressed and related to the reader (Ortlipp, 2008). These notes assisted in evaluating interview questions, observation notes and allowed for a better understanding of the relationship of the data and researcher.

## **Audit Trail**

An audit trail is a strategy used by researchers to ensure consistency and dependability or reliability (Merriam, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an audit trail, which is a systematic way of detailing or logging the research process. The journey of qualitative research is one that leaves trails of “your reflections, your questions and the decisions you make with regard to problems, issues, or ideas you encounter in collecting data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). The audit trail allowed the researcher to document data collection, analysis and interpretation through field notes, journaling and memoing. The audit trail was kept in a journal and then transferred to a Microsoft Word document.

## **Validity and Reliability**

Qualitative research contains several elements of rigor that help to merge the understanding of the reality of the phenomenon and the research. Triangulation combines different methods that are viewing the same incident from a different point of view. Berg (2009) writes, “By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements” (p. 5). There are four different types of triangulation: Using multiple data sources, multiple methods, more than one researcher, using multiple theories to validate findings. Triangulation in this study involved the use of multiple data sources (Denzin, 1978).

Also, to ensure internal validity member checking was utilized. All participants were given a copy of their interview transcriptions to validate their responses. They were able to make any changes to clarify their perceptions and individualized meaning of events via email and one-on-one member checking in the follow-up interviews.

In addition to internal validity, it is important in qualitative research that “results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam, 2009). Reliability in qualitative research is not concern that someone gets the same results as your study, but that the results from your study is what actually occurred. In this study triangulation and member checking was use to foster reliability.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Case study research has several limitations. This study focused on a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy ministry program at one land-grant NCAA Division I institution located in the southeastern region of the United States and cannot be generalized to other programs. Not all FCA participants could be included in the study. Only football student athletes who were on the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program Leadership team from 1999–2011 were contacted to become participants in this study. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes football team chaplain, two FCA staff members, four former student athletes, five current student athletes, one former athletic director, and the current athlete director agreed to participate in the study. Due to time conflicts and other reasons a football coach was not available to interview for this study. The narrative from this Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program can provide insight to other programs around the nation. However, because of differences in institution culture, tradition, region and history this program cannot be generalized to all Fellowship of Christian Athletes campus ministry programs.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a comprehensive summary of the research methods used and described the research questions that guided the research. The findings from this study will outline what facilitates a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program as well as, the barriers and

outcomes. It will expand the knowledge about these programs and should be of value to practitioners and researchers who have an interest in this topic. The following chapters consist of Chapter 4 which describes the study findings, and Chapter 5 presents the findings, implications, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

*“As you grow older the call comes from your intuition and your deepest sense of self to search for a spiritual identity and find meaning in life.” — Lynne Namka*

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of this study of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry. A qualitative case study was used to address the research questions. The sample for this study consisted of a Southern University FCA Campus Director and Football Chaplain, one FCA staff member, current athletic director, former athletic director, four former athletes and four current athletes at the time of the research, and one FCA staff member who is also a former athlete at the sample university. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the university, program and participants in this study.

### **Population and Sample**

#### **Setting**

This study was conducted at a Land-grant Historically White University (HWU) located in the Southeastern region of the United States of America. According to the university's institutional research website, the university had a population of 25,469 reported for the fall of 2011 when the first participants were interviewed. The athletic program is a NCAA Division I institution that consist of 19 sports (Women's basketball, softball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, cross country, gymnastics, soccer, equestrian and volleyball, Men's

basketball, football, baseball, golf, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field, and cross country). Rickman University is historically known for its strong athletic and academic excellence. Their football program is a member of one of the top Football Bowl Series (FBS) leagues, and they have been awarded several national championship titles. Rickman University football team rooster averages approximately 100 student athletes per year.

### **Population and Sample Procedures**

The FCA Chaplain was selected based on the location of the university, NCCA Division I affiliation, experience and program type and the researcher's ability to have access to the research site and participants, in addition to the following criterion: 1) Full time FCA football Chaplain, 2) NCAA (FBS) Division I Institution in the Southern region of the United States, and 3) Was hired to start a FCA chaplaincy program at the university.

For this study, one Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football team chaplain, two FCA staff members (one staff member is also a former student athlete in this study), five former student athletes, four current student athletes, one current athletic director and one former athletic director agreed to participate in the study. Due to time conflicts and other reasons the football coaches who are involved in the program were not available to interview for this study. According to Creswell (2002), a case study requests 3-5 participants for data saturation. Based on the literature 13 interviewees were considered an adequate sample size for this study.

After the selection of the chaplain, the researcher contacted him to ask for his participation in the study. The purpose and plan of the research was explained. The chaplain agreed to write a letter of support to Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the university. After the study was approved by IRB the chaplain was contacted again as a key informant. Bogdan



and Biklen (2007) define a key informants as “subjects with whom the researcher has especially rapport and are particularly helpful, insightful, and articulate in providing data” (p. 273).

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**Research Questions**

Marshall and Rossman (1994) suggest that research questions of such studies should aim at structures, attitudes, beliefs, events and behaviors and processes occurring in this phenomenon. The research questions in this study were developed and designed to be descriptive in nature to understand the experiences of those involved in the program. There were three questions that guided the study.

1. What are the primary factors that facilitate the development and implementation of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
2. What are the primary barriers to developing and sustaining a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?
3. What are the individual and program outcomes of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program?

### **Findings**

The findings are organized into three sections, which relate to each of the three research questions. Each section then presents the major themes found which relate to each of these questions.

### **Facilitating Factors**

Findings indicate that there were three factors that facilitated program success. These factors were: Attributes of the chaplain, Spiritual needs of the students, and Institutional support and Willingness to expand. They are described in the sections that follow.

#### **Attributes of the Chaplain**

Barry stated how God had prepared him to work as a Fellowship of Christian Athlete's Football Chaplain at Rickman University. He attributed being a pioneer in starting up different ministries as God preparing him for his current position. Barry believed that everything he had done in life was preparation for him becoming a chaplain.

Well of course I think it is a God thing [being chaplain at Rickman University]. I think God fixes us for His particular tasks that He has for us I mean.... because before I was a chaplain, I had done ministry in other areas. I enjoyed them, I really believe that everything I've done or everything that God has allowed me to do up until the point I became Chaplain was preparing me for this job. All the other ministries and all the other task everything I've done. I think it was to prepare me for what I am doing now and I think what I am doing now is preparing me for whatever next He [God] has me to do if

there is anything next. So I really believe that and the way it came about for me to be able to come here [Rickman University].

Barry explained how some of the attributes of a team chaplain is having a background in ministry education and athletics.

I think that an individual has to have some type of ministry education, some type of athletic education. I don't think you have to have a seminary degree, I don't think you have to have a doctorate or masters to be a chaplain. I think it has everything to do with the call on your life [purpose]. And if that's something you feel like the Lord has called [wants you to do] you too.

Fred stated that some of the attributes of the chaplain are consistency, reliability, accountability, transparency and his welcoming personality. Student athletes can seek him freely to express their trial, tribulations and successes. These attributes and the chaplain's leadership contribute to the success of the chaplaincy program. Fred shared,

I think it's the dedication, the vision and the mission of what Barry is doing there [Rickman University] today. He is consistent and he's reliable. He's accountable and he is a confidante to so many of our student athletes. And the openness, the transparency of the program, and the welcoming of the student athletes, regardless of what trials and tribulations they may have, or the successes they have in their life. It's just his personality, God has called him to do this and equipped him and his personality is so inviting. So I think his leadership and his willingness to use the ministry that God has put him here for is the number one reason [programs success].

Jason explained how the team chaplain is a man of faith who is not judgmental. He looks for opportunities to help and serve students.

I think who he is, what he is, how he manifests his faith, has been a key factor in Barry's ability to build what I would consider one of the strongest FCA relationships in the country. Barry is a good man. He is a man of faith. He is a man of action. He is a man of love. I don't think Barry enters into a situation judging. I think he enters into a situation, 'How can I help?'

Jason also mentioned that Barry being African American and a former football student athlete at Rickman University provides him with the ability to relate to the student athletes. Many of the life situations the team chaplain experienced could help him relate to and serve the young men

on Rickman University football team. The chaplain being available full-time also has more opportunities to build relationships with students athletes and walk the journey of life with them.

I think being a former athlete helps. And I think him being an African American male helps, because the football team is primarily African American males. How can that 50 year-old White guy relate to the experience of an African American male? They are all good people, all well-meaning people, but his frame of life references are so different from the frame of life references of a Black African American male, especially a guy who is a former football player. Barry has been there. He knows it. He has lived it. And he has been able to work his way through some of the pitfalls that face all young people. And Barry doesn't deal with student athletes from the pulpit of how it ought to be like once-a-week chaplains had to be. Barry deals with them on how it is and where you are. He's there with them at ground zero, on the ground for them. Part-time chaplains are not. It doesn't mean they are not good people. It doesn't mean they don't want to assist, but they are not living the life with the athletes. And, yes, I think the fact that Barry is African American is a tremendous asset. I think the fact that [former athletic administrator, name omitted] was African American was a tremendous asset because they can relate. They speak the same language from life's experiences. I think it's important to remember a Black chaplain can relate just as strongly to a White player or a White coach as a White chaplain.

When asked what attributes contributed to his being a chaplain and his ability to relate and serve student athletes, Barry shared,

I know life itself was my teacher. Growing up in a large family (6–7 boys) I think that had a lot to do with it. Not being the first to get something and growing up in a very humble home environment I think it's taught me a lot about just what I'm doing now [football team chaplain]. A lot of the kids that are on this football team grew up the way I grew up. Its just life itself is a great teacher experience. My education of course, my degree is from Rickman University in adult education and I think that has a lot to do with what I'm doing now; and this is kind of a continuing education for me in adulthood with adults and young adults.

Jason also expressed how Barry being available 24 hours a day for all student athletes is a very valuable asset to student athletes. Jason noted,

Other men served as chaplain, but they didn't live, eat and breathe with the players. They would get on the bus on Saturday or Friday, go to the game, and they were available if you wanted to talk to them. You could go to a Methodist church in [city that Rickman University is located, name omitted], the Baptist church and they would meet you for counseling and all that. But Barry lives life with the student athletes. He is on the practice field. He is in the weight room. He lives — he is available to them 24 hours a day, in their world. And Barry was the first chaplain we had that way.

## Spiritual Needs of Students

Jason explained that hiring a team chaplain helped to provide student athletes with the opportunity to experience spiritual development and coaching.

I thought it was the right thing to do [hiring a team chaplain]. I thought it was the right thing to do because you can't just educate somebody's mind. You can't just help somebody develop their body... You have got body, mind and soul. So I think you had to give them, can't force them, but you have got to give them the opportunity for some spiritual development and coaching. But if you do that, you can't force it on them. You have to make it available.

Providing a voluntary service to enhance student athletes' spiritual development would open up the door of criticism. However, Jason was prepared to not just let FCA work on campus, but to provide opportunities for student athletes that were not of the Christian faith. Jason stated,

You had the choice. I think that's what we, as Christians, have to do. That's what I, as an athletic director, make a choice available. Make the service available. Don't beat them over the head. Don't impose it. And you can't really affect peer pressure, but you have to be careful about that. If you don't do it from the Christian faith, and I knew when we had Barry come on, I knew full well that we were opening ourselves to some criticism, which is fine. If you do anything in the world, you are going to get criticized. The only fellow who doesn't get criticized is somebody who doesn't do anything. I knew full well that if somebody from a different faith wanted to do the same thing, we would have to let them. Not only that, it would not be right if we didn't let them and if we didn't provide them with the same opportunities. You have to be. Number one, it's the law and number two, it's the right thing to do. You have to be open. You have to be open if you are wanting to help people grow spiritually. If you want to impose your belief system on them that makes it impossible for a guy like Barry in the FCA chaplains' program to be available.

Fred talked about one of the reasons that Rickman University brought FCA and Barry Smith full-time was to provide their student athletes with an opportunity to be able to have a safe place to explore their meaning and purpose in life. To have someone to talk to, listen and help them on this journey of life.

Well, in going through the struggles that everybody goes through in life, and particularly a student, the first time away from home, it's always good to have somebody to go and talk to. Our own students that aren't even athletes, they need people they can go talk to, counsel with. We are a really great institution and, you know, started out of the Methodist



Church and part of our creed talks about, Christianity and God and believing in God. So it's a real natural theme for us here to talk about Christianity as much as we do.

Fred also explained how FCA helps to fill a void that many college students experience. Student athletes have coaches, academic counselors, trainers and athletic administrators. Nevertheless, FCA is an outlet where these student athletes can open up concerning the struggles of life and their spirituality.

The reason was to fill that void that young people have in their lives because you are always around coaches, and academic counselors, and trainers, and strength coaches and all those other people that you are under their supervision. It just promotes a healthy environment to have somebody you can go talk to about life. And not that you can't do that with your coaches but, we have always thought it was important to provide an opportunity for our student athletes to not only grow physically and mentally, but also spiritually. And that's where Brother Barry and the FCA come in for us.

Participation in FCA is not for everybody. It is available for any student athlete that wants to take advantage of the service. Fred noted,

It's not necessarily for everybody, but for those students or student athletes that are in search of some counsel, instead of going to a qualified or paying a counselor, Brother Barry is there and talks of things not just on this earth, but also eternal. So it's a blessing to have that resource...that support for them [student athletes} here.

Jason explained reasons that students need to explore their spirituality in college. They are making the transition from young adults to adulthood. There are so many questions that students are searching for the answers. What is their purpose in life, how do they deal with changing relationships and other life issues? Having Barry as a team Chaplain allowed student athletes to have someone to help them search and find the answers to some of these questions of life and purpose.

I think we also have a spiritual dimension...I think if you are going to deal with the total person, you have to be able to recognize and deal with the spiritual aspect, too. I think you are talking about spiritual needs. The time in college, that's a tough time. It's a time of change and the growth spiritually is part of that. It's a time of physical change and that type thing, too. But the Fellowship of Christian Athletes addresses the spiritual side of it in particular. I think that as an athletic administrator you have to be very, very, very

careful that you provide for spiritual growth opportunities, but you don't impose those opportunities on your student athletes. You don't make the FCA and a belief in Christianity, or any other religion, mandatory. You can't do that by rule or by law. You can't require somebody to go to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, but you can have an equal problem if peer pressure gets to be at the point where guys feel like they are not fitting in if they don't go. I think the spiritual aspect of it can help you learn how to handle the game, the pressures of the game. Certainly the spiritual aspect of it can help you, the athlete, handle things that are going on in your life. What's life all about? What am I going to do with my life? Changing relationships with your friends, your parents, your family, and all the things that somebody goes through as they are moving from young adult to adulthood. I think the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, especially as Barry has done, can help people bridge those dangerous waters. I think that's what Barry has done. He has done it magnificently, and I think he should be commended to the highest degree.

Fred also showed that FCA is an organization that helps to support student athletes regardless of their beliefs concerning religion. That one of the purposes is to be there to help student athletes in different situations they face while attending the university.

I believe part of that mission and a part of that vision is to be there and support our student athletes regardless of where they are and what they think about religion, what they think about Christianity. Be there to be a soft heart, an open ear, to hear and feel what they are going through, so that they can provide support for whatever the situation may be.

No matter a person's faith Jason believed that Barry has been a tremendous asset to Rickman University. He has provided students of all faiths and situations an opportunity to share their fears, frustration and uncertainties in a safe loving environment.

I think Barry has been a tremendous asset to us in that area [helping with athletes that experience troubles]. I think a good chaplain, be it FCA or of any other faith, helps people to live on a higher plane. I think Barry has done that. Has it been perfect? No. But is it ever perfect? No. I think it lets having someone like Barry, no matter what the faith, provide an outlet for people to deal with their fears, their frustrations and their uncertainties, and that keeps the lid from blowing off. Not just athletes, but human beings.

Jason also wanted to create the FCA chaplaincy program because he saw the spiritual needs of students.

Recognizing the spiritual nature of humanity and recognizing the trying times that people of college age can go through spiritually.

Jason added that college students need to find peace with who they are, where they, and where they are going. Establishing an FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program provided students and coaches with an opportunity to explore and enhance their spirituality/faith.

Happiness is a state of mind. Joy is a way of living. You don't think about joy in terms of college students and coaches, so I think of peace and acceptance of who you are, where you are, confidence in where you are going and knowing that the past is not going to haunt you.

Barry explained how he served student athletes and coaches,

During football season that's really a time that I enjoy because I go to practice, I go out of town with the players or we go to the games on weekends. I have discipleship one-on-one meetings with players and coaches; I have my Bible studies and discipleship with them. I have to include FCA meetings and things of that nature too so that is kind of what I do.

### **Institutional Support**

The Chaplaincy program, which began at Rickman University, in its present form, was initiated in 1999 with the hiring of Chaplain Barry Smith. However, it appears that part of the reason that this program succeeded is because there was a long history of support for FCA and its principles. Jason shared,

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes has been in Rickman since around 1969.

FCA was student-led when it first became an organization on the campus of Rickman University. Later, ministers were chaplains for the football team on a part-time basis. Chaplains' duties were very limited and forming lasting relationships with student athletes was not a priority.

Jason stated that when he hired Barry to become the football team chaplain in 1999, he was among the first to be considered full-time in college football.

Well, as I say, I think we were among the first [to have a full-time football chaplain].

Barry also mentioned that Rickman University was a part of the paradigm shift of intercollegiate football programs hiring full-time chaplains.

We [Rickman University] were the beginning of it, a 12-year history. Now we have gone from one full-time chaplain to as many as six people on full-time FCA staff, including myself.

Although the program is not state supported, it did require the approval of those outside of the athletic department. Once again, it appeared that institutional support was present and was a factor in program initiation. Jason shared that even though James Grant wanted to hire a full-time chaplain for the football team, he had to have the approval not only of the athletic director, but also the President of the University and Board of Trustees. Jason shared,

Well, if you work for a university, yes, it goes higher. You have the coach. You have the athletic director. You have the President and the Board of Trustees, the governing body. And if I had said no, it wouldn't have happened. If the president was not okay with it, it wouldn't have happened. If the president is okay with it, the board is usually going to stay out of it and they should.

Barry shared how his role as football team chaplain is supported institutionally by the Head football coach, Athletic Director, President and Board of Trustees. The Fellowship of Christian Athlete's Chaplaincy Ministry Program at Rickman University is very unique compared to other programs. The head coach at Rickman University was the one who had the vision to have a "spiritual coach". Also because of the institutional culture, this university is located in the Southern region. The university supports the program. This kind of support is not exhibited within all chaplaincy programs at other colleges and universities.

Well I mean we have tremendous support and we have a strong support group from the Athletic Director [AD] to the head coach to the coaches. I think in that area we are very unique. Where some schools don't have any of that, they just have the head coach maybe but not the AD and you know we have the Board of Trustees are very supportive to what we do. I think it has a lot to do with just success [of the program], proven success and not bragging but let me change that, the favor of God being on this program that is a better term.

Due to the success of Rickman University's chaplaincy program they developed an internship-training program. This program trained young men and women to become chaplains and was very successful. Barry noted,

Particularly when we won the [athletic conference, name omitted] championship and went undefeated and our head coach contributed the whole year's success to God and the ministry [FCA] that was on his team and the chaplain program. Then other people wanted to start programs and we tried to provide it and we started a chaplain training program here [Rickman University] it was very successful but then the guy who I had here doing that was called back to his alma mater. He was the chaplain at Buck University and his name was Blake Massey and ... so now he's the chaplain at Buck University. We actually had...I think we trained up to 9 people before the program left.

### **Barriers to Success**

Every program or ministry is going to have barriers or obstacles that arise. With these obstacles are opportunities to overcome and achieve greatness despite the situation. The FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program did not report many barriers, however, the participants did describe things that they felt were barriers or could be potential barriers to the ministry.

There were three primary barriers to success. They are organized into three themes: Separation of Church and State, Financial and Time and Commitment. This section discusses these barriers or hindrances to Rickman's University Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program.

#### **Separation of Church and State**

Because Rickman University is a public institution, the FCA program had to be very cautious about abiding by the separation of church and state doctrine of the United States. In recent years there have been people and organizations that have been against universities providing their students with chaplaincy programs. Not long ago, the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) — a national organization based in Madison, WI, which advocates protecting the Constitutional Principle of the separation of church and state — sent letters to universities

across the country demanding university presidents dismiss football and basketball team chaplains. This organization is a member of the Atheist Alliance International and represents the views of freethinkers (atheists, agnostics and nonbelievers). They argue that the chaplain's role with college football and basketball teams violates the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

However, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) a non-profit legal organization stated the following in a letter dated September 2, 2015:

Simply making these chaplains available does not somehow mean the schools are unconstitutionally endorsing any particular religion or even religion in general. The universities should simply ignore these unfounded demands from anti-religious groups, especially since the courts have upheld similar chaplain programs in a wide variety of contexts for decades.

They go on to say,

No court has ever said that public universities may not utilize chaplains for their athletic teams. In fact, many courts have upheld chaplaincy programs in other similar contexts: the military, prisons, police and fire departments, hospitals, airports, and legislative branches of government. These courts demonstrate that the government does not violate the Establishment Clause by accommodating the religious needs of its student athletes through a chaplain. In fact, the state may violate the First Amendment by not providing chaplains for student athletes.

Public universities have the right to provide for their students' religious accommodations with no violation of separation of church and state.

ADF explained,

Public universities have great leeway in accommodating the religious needs of their students, and providing chaplains is one time-honored and constitutionally permissible method for doing so...The Establishment Clause affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any.

FFRF demands can be viewed unconstitutional based on the fact that the FCA chaplaincy program in this study showed participation is always voluntary and the team chaplain and athletic department caters to the needs of student athletes of all faiths. Travis Barham of the

ADF added,

Chaplains are not merely pre-game prayer leaders. They are life counselors and community and family liaisons. While their viewpoints, when espoused, may share a particular religious view, the athletic team chaplains serve important secular purposes. So long as a public university does not require student athletes to participate in religious exercises provided by chaplains, and so long as those chaplains serve the various faith needs of the students, the university does not violate the Establishment Clause by coercing participation in religion or preferring some religions over others.

One of the most significant issues related to this theme is that there are groups and people who have a strong antagonism toward any religious groups being in public institutions.

Although this was not noted specifically by the interviewees, the issue has come up in other venues. As noted by the ADF in an article and letter to universities, allegations from these organizations are unfounded and obscure. Public institutions have every right to accommodate the religious and spiritual needs of their students. Furthermore, students' athletes are a special population like the military, prisons, police and fire departments, hospitals, airports, and the legislative branches of government where the courts have upheld chaplaincy programs.

While the participants did not view this as a serious hindrance, they did recognize that it had to be addressed in order to assure that the program was in compliance with the law. At times, this caused some difficulties that could be considered as problematic.

Discussing this, Jason stated that when starting the FCA ministry program at Rickman University, considerations of Separation of Church and State had to be an issue of student athletes who were of other faiths. He shared,

I don't know of any real factors that hinder its initial development. I think we had to weigh the concern about separation of church and state. I think we had to make a decision about what we would do if we had non-Christian student athletes, believers who were non-Christian student athletes. But I wouldn't say that hindered its ability because we just made the decision that's what we were going to do.

Fred further illustrates the issue when he noted that the football team chaplain is not an employee of Rickman University or athletic department. FCA employs the team chaplain and Rickman University is his appointment.

Barry is not an employee of Rickman University, Rickman Athletics. He is employed by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. His responsibility is Auburn University athletics just as another chaplain for the FCA oversees the high schools in Leon County. That's their ministry, their appointment. Rickman University is Barry's appointment.

Barry, the Chaplain, shared that since Rickman University is a state institution and that the athletic department could not legally hire him to be the football team chaplain, and it impacts his security.

I've been here 12 years and if you work for the city or work for the university you get vested into the retirement system. I work for FCA so I cannot get that benefit.

## **Financial**

The financial theme is closely related to the issue of separation of church and state. Several participants noted that because FCA is a para-church ministry and not a formal part of the university, it has to raise all of the funds to support the ministry and staff through donations. Without these donations the ministry cannot operate to help in assisting in the spiritual and personal development of student athletes

Kevin Darius stated that although money could be an issue for the FCA, the ministry had been very fortunate over the years to have enough donations to support it. He shared the following,

Money could be an issue. I think fortunately, we have been fortunate with people that make donations [to fund the ministry] to us for that.

Kevin goes on to discuss how he has viewed FCA financially,

He [Barry] has to raise money, so it's instability from year-to-year and how much he is going to raise. It could be a hundred thousand this year and it could be two hundred thousand the next or it could be sixty the next. You just don't know. And the thing is, that money isn't just his living money, he pays for you if there is a trip to go to Shocco



Springs [yearly retreat], and it's forty guys going, forty out of forty football players can be like, "Oh, Brother Barry, I don't have the money to go." And he goes, "Oh, that's all right. Don't worry. I'll get you." So he will, he will cover the trip to Shocco Springs under the FCA account, as an FCA trip.

When the FCA Football team Chaplain was asked what he felt were barriers to the ministry, he also noted that one component would be financial. Financially, the ministry has always been able to support him, his staff and the campus ministry over the years. Barry stated that the administration part of raising financial support for the ministry is very challenging and helps to build his faith.

Barry added,

I think the challenging part was the administration part raising the financial support, that wasn't really challenging, it was just kind of a faith builder. Do you know what that means? Something that causes my faith to grow. I mean to create something that does not exist...Some people ask what my job description was..... There were no job descriptions. I created the job description of FCA [at Rickman University], me and Jamie Brooks the state director [for FCA]...If it has been hindered it would be financially. But financially we've never been in a position where we had to say, 'We can't do this any longer because we don't have the financial support.'

Fred, the current athletic director at Rickman University, discussed the fact that like all philanthropic ministries, funding is always an issue because these organizations like FCA do not have a revenue source. Their entire budget is met through rising financial support.

Well, in a ministry like FCA, and all types of philanthropic ministries, or giving or support, funding is always an issue. I would imagine that FCA is no different than any other people that don't have a revenue source except for philanthropic giving.

Paul Dickerson had a unique perspective since he is a former student athlete football player at Rickman University. He described how money is a huge barrier with the ministry. The more money they can raise, the more they can do for the student athletes they serve. With a lot of other organizations raising funds to support their mission, it can become challenging.

However, the growing community and more awareness about the ministry could possible help to generate more funds.

Money. We could do a whole lot more ministry if we could have more money... Here on campus [Rickman University FCA] I would say one of them is, it may not be a barrier... With all these ministries here in town, you've got a handful of people that are going to the FCA Banquet, that are going to The Way Banquet, that are going to His Place Banquet, that are going to the Youth for Christ Banquet, and so those people can only be stretched so far. So, as the community grows and as more people are aware of what happens, hopefully the pool of donors will grow.

Derek discussed how since FCA is a non-profit ministry, they need funds to pay a staff and interns because the team chaplain needs assistance with other sports at Rickman University.

Derek shared,

One of the hardest things about a non-profit ministry is that you have to raise your support for it. Whenever you are doing something, that's exciting to be able to raise money for something you believe in. But the reality is, I have just as many female athletes as I do male athletes, so just the funding for staff and having enough people to really cover all the ends and meet the needs that need to be met. We would all love to have more people to be able to do what we do in terms of meeting all the needs. I do have a great intern, Danny and so just having somebody full time to be able to cover some other sports, I would love to see that. I think it's needed. I can't reach all these guys. Barry can't reach them all. I would love to have the opportunity, but, hey, for whatever reason, God has for us few here to do what we are called to do, and we are going to be faithful in that and do the most we can with it.

### **Time and Commitment**

The third barrier that was noted in this study, and the one that was noted the most often, was time management. Student athletes are a unique population that has a lot of demands on their time from school, practice, meetings, tutoring, games and their personal and their social lives. With all these commitments, it is often challenging to add one more activity to their busy schedules. Students reflect on this with the following statements. Alex shared his thoughts on football student athletes and their time management when it comes to FCA participation.

From my eyes I would say just time management. The hardest part is to get the guys to actually commit, you know, more than just one time every blue moon. With time being

such a big factor and guys just wanting to leave the complex [athletic facility for football] when they are free with FCA being optional that really puts up a huge barrier if you are not serious.

Alex also shared that he and other football athletes would participate in FCA, but due to long days and other activities they stopped or had limited participation at one point due to time.

It was like the time. It's what's important to you. At first, we [Alex and some of his teammates] were there [attending FCA]. But then after that we were like, man. I would go there just an hour. Then I get home. I have to study. Maybe eat again. Then I'm talking on the phone. By that time, it's time to get up in the morning. I can keep that hour. And that was our mind-set.

Antony reiterated that a lack of time in students' schedules contributes to them not participating in FCA.

The guys who don't come, sometimes it's about not having the time to come...I would say, for most people, and I don't know if this will fully answer the question. I think time. I think, as a student athlete, you already have so many obligations. Your time is pretty limited and most people either don't have the time, or when they do have some free time, they just really want to relax or do whatever they want to do. I think that is probably the biggest thing, because I know there's a lot of guys on the team, just because of the person that Brother Barry is, they will come to FCA even if they aren't necessarily mature in their faith or whatever, but a lot of them are like, 'man, you know when I get some time off from workouts and school, I just want to relax.' I think that's probably the biggest barrier. Other than that, I'm not really sure to be honest.

Nathan added that student athletes are pursuing their degree and dreams of playing football and making time for FCA meetings might not be a priority for some. However, Nathan says God does not ask for all your time just a couple of hours and that this sacrifice for him was worth the time commitment.

We have guys that are trying to get degrees. They are trying to pursue what we came here for to play football. So we have only 24 hours of the day, it's hard to fit it all in one day, but, once again it's God, and God doesn't ask for all day, He asks for His hour or two. Once again, we have to give it to Him. Sometimes it's hard to make the meeting [FCA], it's hard to be in the FCA meeting, but at the end of the day, He [Christ] died for us and it's more than worth it in the end.

Sam explained that since FCA meetings are late at night sometimes activities like sleep wins over attending FCA huddle meetings.

I think that's probably the biggest deal [barrier]. College life, it's really busy, especially with athletes. The last thing we want to be doing at 8:00 pm at night is getting out of bed and coming here [FCA huddle meeting], you know. I'm not saying that it's a bad thing. It's just you don't want to go anywhere at 8:00pm. You just want to go to sleep.

Football student athletes grow up in a wide variety of living environments and have factors on and off the field that could lead them to decide not to place participating in FCA as a priority in their lives. Kevin shared,

The biggest challenge is you are dealing with — one of the toughest, roughest bunches to corral. I mean you are dealing with kids from Little Rock, Arkansas, Dadeville. You are dealing with kids from Dade County, Miami. You are dealing with kids from Baton Rouge, or New Orleans, or Atlanta, Memphis, California, Texas, and there are so many factors outside of football and school and ministry that can affect these kids. There are so many factors. There's alcohol. There's drugs. There's the influence of, 'Oh, you play football' and all the stuff that goes on with being a Division I football student athlete. There's the media. There is your own home and background when you return and go home. There are a million things that could serve as barriers.

FCA is open to all student athletes and is voluntary. Jeff explains that one barrier could be the seriousness of student athletes toward the FCA program. Therefore, FCA participation is not a priority in their schedule. He shared,

The things that could hinder the ministry [FCA]? I'm trying to think. That's a good thing. I'm trying to think of something — I'm trying to think of something that hinders the ministry. The only thing I could think, I really can't think of anything, but if you could say something, it would probably be the seriousness of the athlete. I think that the scary thing about something like this is, you could have some people that just kind of don't take it as seriously.

### **Outcomes of the FCA Program**

There were six themes that emerged from the data related to perceptions of the outcomes of the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program: Enhanced spirituality; Personal development;

Mentorship; Positive Attitude toward academics; Improved Athletic Performance; and Team Camaraderie.

### **Enhanced Spirituality**

All nine current/former student athletes stated that their participation in the FCA ministry enhanced their spirituality in a number of ways. They talked about this in terms of their relationship to Christ and in their understanding of how this applies to their lives. It appears that this involves a closer relationship with Christ, but also includes broader insights about how to interpret Christian principles from a practical perspective.

For example, James shared how meeting with the chaplain provided student athletes with an opportunity to learn about Christ and how it was voluntary and very beneficial to their perception of the moral principles of Christianity. He explained how becoming a Christian could be enjoyable. He shared,

So the major benefit is introducing them [student-athletes] to Christ. I think another deal about it is you are not forced to do it [participate in FCA] that's a benefit for the student athletes, just to get a chance to know Christ like the right way. To understand you are not going to be perfect, man, so I think that's the biggest perception that people have about it when you go in, and when you are saved [became a Christian].

James also described how the experience broadened his understanding of Christianity and how it applies to him and the way he lives his life. He also stated how knowing Christ clarifies a sense of purpose.

Like I said, knowing Christ and just getting the idea of how God works...Because you have different religions, backgrounds, and you have people that say, 'If you don't do this, you are going here. And you have to do right.' So I think it [begin a Christian] kind of just calms you down, reform or reshape you and mold you out to what you are supposed to be.

College football, like the world, is filled with chaos, mistrust and uncertainty. Jason shared how the team chaplain Barry assisted students in finding peace to deal with the pressures of the world and college football. He added,

Helping student athletes, and everybody involved with the program, find that peace that passeth all human understanding in a world of chaos, confusion and uncertainty. The world of college football and its chaos, confusion and uncertainty. Barry and the faith can help you find the peace that passeth all understanding.

Robert explained how he was a Christian and was attending FCA meetings and yet people did not know that he was a Christian. He felt that was wrong because the way he lived his life should have reflected his faith. Robert added,

When I became a Christian I was headed to FCA... And I told someone and they asked me what I was doing. I was like, 'Well, I have to really go to FCA. I am going to FCA tonight.' And they said, 'You are going to FCA?' It was like, 'I didn't know you were a Christian.' And to me it kind of floored me. That was like a wake-up call. It wasn't like the beginning, but I think it was like Robert you really have a serious problem. It was like people shouldn't say that to you. You call yourself a Christian. It should be evident by the way you live. So I think that we take it [the Christian Faith] and apply it to our lives and let other people see it and kind of get their curiosity going about, becoming a Christian. It is very important.

Fred described how FCA provided students with a holistic experience. He saw the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program as a place where student-athletes could explore and develop spiritually. This development in turn affects other aspects of their lives and helps to produce a well-rounded student athlete. Fred shared,

The outcome of that [FCA participation] is, I think, a healthier wholesome student athlete. I think that as we look at the hierarchy of survival you have to provide the minimum thing, and I think that this takes us up another level, and it just is a more holistic approach to developing our student athletes. We are not just looking at, what are your grades and how do you perform on the field, but how are you growing and maturing spiritually, so that when you leave here and you are not playing sports anymore, what kind of a wife are you going to be, what kind of a mom are you going to be, what kind of aunt are you going to be, what kind of an uncle or dad are you going to be. They [student-athletes] have had a chance to see maybe what some would consider what good looks like, whereas maybe the places that they don't have this, they don't have

alternatives to see different models for how they can grow and what expectations are for them.

Derek, an FCA staff member, gave an example of how former student athletes contact the team Chaplain Barry years after they have graduated from Rickman University and express to him how their participation in FCA had changed their lives. Derek stated,

And so I think nine times out of ten, and I talk to Barry about this often, he sees the most from people not while they are here, but it's when they get out into the real world. And he has been here so long until he — people are calling him from ten years ago and saying, 'Barry, man you know that Bible study you had changed my life. I am where I am today because of what happened back then, you know. I really received those nuggets well. And I follow some of those scriptures to this day. I am where I am because of that.'

Several participants noted that student athletes come from different backgrounds and although many of them grew up in Christian homes, they did not understand the different fundamental Bible truths. They added that the chaplain helped clarify and explain these truths as well as guide them in how to develop a relationship with Christ and how to apply those truths to their daily lives.

Paul expressed this best when he stated,

As a youngster, I wasn't taught some of the theological and biblical truths that I should have been. I think what Barry did, as a chaplain here [Rickman University], was he helped to point me in the right direction. He really helped to encourage me. For the first time here at Rickman University I heard words like quiet time and not just going to church or making it a checklist, but having a relationship with Christ, where you spend time throughout the day praying. You spend time throughout the day studying His word. So, for me, as a player, Barry and FCA helped to make my relationship with Christ personal and I think, for me that is invaluable.

Some athletes in this study had heard of Christ or were baptized at a young age. Other athletes did not know Christ before attending Rickman University and FCA. They felt like one of the reasons for them meeting the team chaplain and participating in FCA meetings was to lead

them to give their lives to Christ, re-dedicate their lives to Christ, get baptized or all the above.

Kevin best noted this when he said,

I believe that God brought me to Rickman University so that I could meet Brother Barry so that I could be involved in FCA, so I could give my life to Christ. I believe that God brought me here, but I see that in retrospect.

Kevin also shared how the team chaplain invited him to a small group Bible study at a local restaurant.

But it was during summer, a lot of kids went home and so the football players were always here working out. And it was that summer, it was a testimony from one of my teammates that really touched me and that was the day I gave my life to the Lord...But maybe a couple weeks later he baptized me at the old Emmanuel Street Church.

After Kevin became a Christian and was baptized, he started to participate more with FCA by going to huddle meetings and different retreats and camps. During these events Kevin valued participating in FCA and meeting other Christians. He explained,

Then I really started getting more and more involved in FCA, going to the different functions, to the huddle groups and to the different off-campus functions like Black Mountain, Shocco Springs. I think we went to one in Georgia...I started to enjoy it and I was meeting new people and Christians, and so that was a big thing for me.

Participation in FCA provided environments and opportunities for student athletes to be encouraged to investigate their spirituality, to search for and find their meaning and purpose.

Nathan mentioned how the chaplain's consistency and FCA ministry was an important factor in his teammates' growing spirituality and deciding to get baptized. Nathan expressed this in the following statement,

As far as the football program goes it's just like I have been saying. It was just the consistency of Brother Barry and his ministry. You have team members who are getting baptized and really never had a relationship with God their whole lives, that's awesome. And that has happened on more than numerous occasions while I have been at Rickman University.



The chaplain's availability and FCA being located on campus appears to have provided students from all backgrounds with an opportunity to develop their spirituality. In return, these exposures allowed the student athletes to develop a personal relationship with Christ or improve their already existing relationship with Christ.

Alex noted,

A lot of people, especially athletes coming from where most of the athletes are recruited from, they really aren't deep into the LORD, or in the Bible all the time, or in to their walk [relationship with God] just because of our background. So with FCA being on campus, and Brother Barry being there everyday that's an eye opener. It's a chance for you to get to know Christ and to improve your walk [relationship] with Christ. It's available twenty-four/seven.

Some students shared how they looked forward to meeting with the team chaplain. They expressed enjoying times of prayer, fellowship and learning about spiritual matters. Henry stated,

Just the way he [Barry] made me feel, I was like — it's like when I went in his office, I was always excited to know something. And it was not just because we got right into it [Faith and the Bible], it's because of the way we prayed, the way we talked about it [Faith and the Bible].

Although most of the students believed that the presence, consistency and availability of the chaplain showed his commitment to the spiritual development of student athletes, at the beginning, some of them did not seek him out. Students found that if they did not seek out the chaplain, Barry would often approach them in a way that they felt did not pressure them, but allowed them to know that he was always there if they needed him for anything. When things get tough and student athletes experience problems this is a time they would seek and see the value of the team chaplain. Speaking about this, Anthony shared,

Brother Barry does a good job of coming after us. He doesn't force himself on anybody, but he's always around. He's always willing to talk...So, I think a lot of guys, who come in as freshman, may not view Brother Barry as something they want to do right now, but I'm positive that everybody feels like, before they leave here [Rickman University],

they're going to talk to Brother Barry. Even for the guys who may not feel that way, once problems come, once they are not playing, or whatever, they run to Brother Barry...I would just say that most of them don't view him as a main priority starting off, but before they leave, they do value Brother Barry.

Sam discussed his admiration for the team chaplain and how he would visit the chaplain when he was struggling; he learned that his faith was more than religion it was personal.

I mean he's an important guy. I love him to death. But it was like they always talked about how people would come in and like hide from Barry. I didn't hide from Barry...I think once or twice over the season I talked to him. I was kind of struggling with the fact that I wasn't doing as well as I thought I should be [athletically]. And we talked about it and I kind of said what I said to you, like I had never been – I was a Christian, but I always thought that it was going to church and stuff and it was what you were suppose to do. I never really understood the fact that Christians have like a walking [personal] relationship with Christ. I never really learned that.

FCA also offered students' opportunities to participate in one-on-one meetings with the team chaplain huddle meetings, small group Bible studies and retreats and other events. These programs allowed the student athletes to have opportunities to meet athletes from other sports and schools. Nathan explained this in the following statement,

Going to devotionals and going to huddle meetings, and stuff like that, that's something that is awesome because, I have never done that before and I had that opportunity when I came here [Rickman University].

Students' felt that their experience with FCA and the team chaplain aided in them having a better understanding of their spirituality and becoming a better person. This included obtaining a greater knowledge of the Bible, prayer and understanding how to apply spiritual truths in their everyday lives. Nathan gives a statement dealing with this,

I met Brother Barry, and then I began to go to the office consistently, and it really brought the blessing side out of this whole deal [being injured] instead of it being a burden. It really, for me, helped me grow as an individual and as a person spiritually. And through everything made me just a better person.

This student also shared how learning about the Bible taught him that it was more than stories. It was a tool to help him. This assistance was especially needed being a student athlete and facing

issues on and off the field. Exploring the Bible for Nathan was food for his soul, or in other words, the Bible was his spiritual nourishment. Of this he said,

It's hectic just being at Rickman, playing football, off the field issues, whether its girlfriend or just family issues. Brother Barry and I are really getting to know the word [Bible]. I've really come to know that the Bible is just not like stories. Before I came to Rickman University, it was just about the stories in the Bible and, you know, Noah's Ark and everything like that. But I began to understand that it [the Bible] is really food for my soul. Any time I need it [the Bible] I can go in there and I can get right with the Lord.

Henry told about the foundation the team chaplain provided and how it helped him know the importance of prayer and how to apply biblical scriptures to his life.

So I had that foundation and understanding the importance of prayer and the power of prayer. But then to also get that lesson where there was Philippians 4:13 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Or it would just let me know that God wouldn't put any more on me than I could bear [handle].

One participant, Anthony, stated how the team chaplain asking to pray for him after he tore his ACL in a football game impacted his mother's faith. This experience reaffirmed his faith and opened up an opportunity to share his faith with his mother.

I think it's actually impacted my mom. Because, when I got hurt and tore my ACL, and in the locker room, it was just me and my mom. She was trying to make me feel better about the situation and she was telling me that everything was going to be all right and all of that. When Brother Barry came, he asked us if we prayed about it and, you know, we hadn't. So, he prayed with me and mom. That's the first time I've prayed with my mom. And, man, that was big. That was really big to me, because I know she's a Christian, but like I said, she's not super outgoing with her faith. So, I think that was big for her, because if caught her off guard to be asked about praying. That really caught her off guard. She goes to church now and all of that and actually has a Bible too. I think it helped her as well.

Student athlete's participation in FCA and contact with the team chaplain allowed them to experience an enhanced spirituality. They learned about exploring their own spirituality, developing a personal relationship with Christ, the power and importance of prayer, knowledge of Bible scriptures and how to apply these elements to their daily lives. This was a journey that

had developed in college for them, but had long standing benefits in other areas in their lives. In addition, student athletes also experience personal development.

### **Personal Development**

In addition to enhancing their spiritual development, students indicated that this spiritual growth through their involvement in FCA helped foster their personal development and enabled them to grow and perform at higher levels in other areas such as academics, athletics and to develop an overall more positive attitude toward life and others.

One of Rickman University's athletic administrators talked about how student athletes' participation in FCA made them accountable for what they said and did. He observed that it fostered their ability and desire to treat people with respect and this created a healthy culture for the student athletes and the university. Fred commented,

I think the benefit for all those different entities as you just mentioned [football team, FCA and the university] is that it creates a culture and a certain level of expectation of how we treat one another, and the things we do and say. I think that there is some accountability that goes along with having FCA, Brother Barry and our student athletes proclaiming that they are different, your words and your deeds have to match up. And so I think it promotes a real healthy culture that actually, I believe, matches up with our creed.

After students have finished college and enter the real world, they are able to use all the nuggets and experiences they acquired while in college. One of the major benefits that the team chaplain and FCA staff members have experienced is that many of their students/mentees call them and express how the ministry benefited them as a student athlete and now as a professional. Their personal participation in FCA allowed them to grow as a person and spiritually. Derek stated,

Well, I think probably the most important outcome of this program I think the biggest impact of FCA on student athletes is never, actually, while they are here, I think the biggest impact of this ministry takes place once the student athlete leaves and gets out in the world, the real world. The most important thing for me is, I am sitting at home in the

evening, or I am sitting at breakfast and I get a phone call. They said, 'Hey, Randy, what's up?' 'All right. What's up? Who is this?' 'It's so-and-so.' That individual is like, 'Man, I sure do appreciate the time that we spent together and the things that we learned together. I appreciate you being there for me when I went through this.' And it's when people get out into the real world and they look back, and they can take these little snapshots of life here [college and participation in FCA] and they can say, 'Man, those were times where I grew as an individual. That's when I grew spiritually. That's when I grew into a man or a woman.'

Personal development in the student athletes was exhibited in various ways. Alex experienced quite a few roadblocks in his football-playing career due to having multiple season ending injuries. He shared that FCA provided a foundation that helped him to not be overpowered by his personal, academic and athletic obligations.

Just persevering. And there were times when I was in football; school and my personal life would all come to a head. I mean it seemed like there weren't enough hours in a day. Just having that, that rooted, grounded foundation, it allowed me to just be patient and not get overwhelmed. That was the biggest thing for me... It helped me become a more well-rounded person. I don't have to be sad. Just peaceful. It just makes life a whole lot easier.

FCA enabled many students to find peace they had not had before. For example, Robert mentioned how he had experienced temper issues since he was a young child. His participation in FCA helped him develop an inner peace, which aided in improving his temper. For years he and his family tried different approaches to combat his temper, but it was his growing faith that gave him peace in times he would have exhibit temper issues.

I had a terrible attitude. I was a bad/angry child growing up. I think my mom would be the first to tell you that. I was just always mad, but I didn't know what I was mad about, but I was mad. I have always had a temper problem. Even now I still have to keep it under wraps. I kind of have the reins on it. I can feel it and when I need to. But my temper has always been a real big thing of mine, and I think it definitely, without a doubt, probably has been one of the best answers for that because, I mean, I have tried everything. I think my momma even tried to send me to like classes, and things like that, which would always make me madder because I had to go. It [FCA participation and knowing Christ] just kind of gives me a peace about myself. Most things that we worry about are either small or never happen. So I would get angry over things that didn't matter. Someone stepped on my shoes and just kid stuff. I just had a peace about it now.

It was like now it's no problem, no big deal. Now it was small potato-type stuff, that kind of took the blinders off and it helped with my anger problems.

FCA helped athletes to experience other types of personal transformations and growth in the way they treated and interacted in various relationships. Their attitudes towards people had been changed. For example, Paul shared,

With FCA we used to meet on Wednesday nights. It was for most of the guys in my crew, that was church for us and I think for us it was probably some of the only conviction [doing what is morally right] that we would have in our lives during that time. For me it really helped me to think about and change the way I treat women, and the way I treated others, and just my personal representation on campus.

Kevin also shared how his participation in FCA transformed the way he dealt with different types of relationships in his life. Through FCA he learned different ways to build respect, honesty, and communication in relationships. He stated,

The way that you deal with women, the way that you interact with women, and then the relationships, with your friends, your parents, your family and authority.

He also emphasized how FCA helped him to understand the importance of service, humility, giving back and understanding purpose in life. He presented it this way,

Giving my life to Christ and having a better perspective, outlook on life. To understand that life is more about service than it is what people do for you. It's about giving back, reaching out, doing for others, knowing where you came from, and knowing what your purpose is. I think about service and humility and understanding that for yourself.

Anthony and Robert gave their perspectives on how FCA also affects athletes personally after they graduate and enter the real world. Anthony shared,

So, Brother Barry he's helped a lot of guys, even if they don't accept everything he's saying right off, he's helped a lot of guys, in that once they get out in the real world and experience some of the things that he tries to teach about, they can always revert back to the messages he shared with us. That always helps in changing lives.

Robert showed how he had developed a foundation through FCA and had the ability to persist even when faced with personal failure in his life.

When I left here [Rickman University] and went to my first year in the NFL is when I had problems because I wasn't surrounded by those people [FCA participants/members]. I didn't have that support cast babying me, holding things and me accountable like that. So I kind of crashed and burned my first year [in the NFL]. But once I picked myself up, I realized that I had a foundation that I can build from, so that's, I think, that's when I benefited from it [FCA], after I left here [Rickman University].

Anthony expressed how his personal attitude contributed to him looking at his circumstances with a new perspective. With his faith growing, Anthony was motivated to use his experiences to reach out, led and guide his teammates.

In the way that it has helped me with my personal attitude is by really being on my teammates, to be honest. Seeing that they are dealing with a lot of things. Before I'd go to these FCA meetings, sometimes I'd be thinking, man, I just need to go, because right now I'm dealing with a lot of needs here. So I would be self summarizing, just thinking about myself, but when I heard other guys and what they were going through, it kind of humbles me. It kind of makes me think, well my situation really isn't that bad. It's kind of made me have more of an attitude of wanting to reach out to my teammates and help them in any way that I can. So, just having that common bond with guys that are going through problems just like me, it has helped me to realize that God isn't out to get me. We all go through things. So, it has helped my attitude.

Students shared how their experiences with FCA, the team chaplain and spiritual growth provided a platform of enhanced character development. They were forever changed and this change was evident in their everyday lives and how they interacted with people and responded to situations. They were developing into young men of integrity and excellence. Within this growing process the student athletes were also developing mentoring and leadership skills. Thus, the very issues that these students sought out in their team chaplain were now issues that their teammates sought out in them to provide personal, athletic and spiritual mentorship and guidance.

## **Mentorship**

The next outcome of FCA is mentorship. In this study mentorship describes a person one can look to for support and guidance. True mentorship should be a reciprocal relationship. It

appears that in many instances, mentorship was a cyclic process in which the former mentee became a mentor to their teammates as a result of their mentor experience with the team chaplain. This mentorship process also led to leadership development in the student athletes.

Kevin talked about how his faith changed his life and how he saw a felt need to encourage and mentor his teammates. This even led to him inviting his teammates and other students to FCA events.

My life changed because I gave my life to the LORD....And it opened my eyes to a lot of things. I didn't realize, before that point, I didn't really know or care who were Christians on the team and who weren't. After that, I started to kind of figure it out and I kind of wanted to talk to guys and invite them to FCA and invite even other people who weren't athletes to FCA, so it really helped develop me in terms of mentorship and encouraging my teammates, or even just friends just to come.

Kevin added how the team chaplain influence and mentorship help to guide him and his teammates into becoming leaders. This leadership gave them an opportunity to have a positive spear of influence over their teammates and others.

I think his [Barry] influence was beyond what a coach could reach out and do for you. I think it was a thing where he guided you in a way that you could lead other people, that you could be influential to other people.

Another illustration came from James. He discussed how he would meet with the team chaplain Barry and a teammate once or twice a week. These weekly meetings aided in James ability to mentor and lead his teammates. Also, with the many obstacles that student athletes faced daily these meetings provided encouragement in times of need.

The huddle experience was good because when you look at your peers and you are like man they are going through experiences like me. And we have Brother Barry. I used to meet with Brother Barry once or sometimes twice a week and we would just talk about life and he would give us a word, it was me and Nathan. He would give us a word of encouragement right before practice or right before we would go to our meetings and that helps. Because football can take you through some trails and tribulations itself. When you are looked upon – and you are 19 going on 20 – to lead young men your same age or even older this is a big deal. You need God like ASAP.



Anthony explained how older teammates' leadership on the field and off the field encouraged their younger teammates to want to participate in FCA. The older teammates led by example and were creating an atmosphere that was encouraging and positive for others to follow.

I would say seeing the older guys, who are actually out there playing and being successful, it seems like they have it somewhat together. Seeing their routine how they go to prayer meetings and everything, that definitely makes the younger guys want to go to a prayer meeting, just because even we were here, during the week practicing and preparing, we are watching the older guys. They are the ones leading practices. They are the ones kind of setting the tone for how the defense is going to play that week or how the offense is going to play. The night before the games, when they go to prayer meetings we just kind of fall in line. The other guys fall in line to what they are doing, or at least that's how it was at the national championship year. I think having influential people in the meeting does draw more players.

Robert also elaborated on how older teammates would encourage younger teammates to participate in FCA and validate the authenticity of the team chaplain.

I think the thing that kind of started it up [FCA participation] is when we all came together, the older guys kind of clung to him [team chaplain] and when young guys had questions that we would ask about, ask the older guys about them, they would say, 'You know, hey, he is a good man [Barry, football chaplain] and this here is a good thing [FCA].' Whereas they could have said, 'Oh, no, you don't want to go in there. You don't want to talk to them. Don't tell them anything. He's just about that Jesus stuff.' Who knows where we would be right now.

Peer mentorship served as a vehicle to encourage and help other teammates understand FCA and explain the purpose and role of the team chaplain. Student athletes were able to take what they had learned in FCA and through the team chaplain and apply it to their lives by mentoring their teammates. Another outcome was student athletes' attitude toward their academics. Participation in FCA assisted in student athletes having a different, more positive view of their academics. This is described in the next section.

### **Attitude toward Academics**

The fourth outcome of FCA participation was developing a more positive attitude toward academics. For example, Kevin shared that being a part of FCA helped him value his education

more because now he knew that God had given him the opportunity to attend Rickman University and pursue an excellent education. He stated,

It has helped me to value things like education because, hey.... God gave me this opportunity.

Anthony shared that his growing faith helped with his time management, and caused him to take his academic program more seriously when he stated,

The way it has helped my academics is kind of strange, but it kind of actually helped me with time management... I would feel just assured and calm. It was like I would hear the word of God and my faith would just be inspired and I would think, 'Man, my test is going to be fine and don't worry about it...I've learned you have to commit to giving time to God and everything else will work out.

Students stated that their FCA participation helped them to concentrate more on God, which led to them setting goals academically. James gives his view of this,

I mean academics, just learning you know about FCA and one of the deals is you have to focus even when you want to be with Christ and kind of learn more about Christ and that could go into the classroom. As far as being focused and having a goal and what you want to do.

Students stated that FCA helped them to focus on God more and helped them to zone out and take a lot off their minds. Thus, they were able to zone in and focus, and that focus helped them to concentrate on their academic studies. Robert discussed how his participation in FCA and learning the principles of the Bible help him to start setting goals for himself. To achieve these goals, Robert had to be successful academically.

I guess I never thought about how it actually would have affected my academics. Well, I guess indirectly because it kind of made me see my life as I started to kind of plan my life for the first time I planned my life out in five year, ten year increments, setting goals and things like that. I guess what you recall, like your elementary scriptures that you learn, everything you do you are doing for God, anything that you do. So schoolwork fell in that category if I did it. Whether I thought the work was interesting or not, it was a means to an end. I had to do this to get where I am now.

Anthony shared that he believed a lot of athletes graduated from college because of the influence and encouragement of the team chaplain.

I think a lot of guys get their degree and stick out these four years, even though it's tough and it's hard, because of the influence Brother Barry gives, I think also, it keeps a lot of people out of trouble.

Academics are a major part of the college experience. These student athletes' stories show that their participation in FCA and developing spirituality aided them in developing a positive, beneficial perspective regarding their academic experience. For most of the student athletes, the principles of the Bible and having an internal peace helped them to pursue their academics, even if they didn't want to when they started the program. They also learned that making time to enhance their spiritually had a positive affect on their academic experience. Their stories also reveal that their athletic performance was also affected by their participation in FCA, as described in the section that follows.

### **Athletic Performance**

Student athletes believed that their attitudes and understanding also enabled them to perform better athletically, and they appeared to use the basic lessons they had learned about God and faith to aid their behaviors and activities on the field. Kevin shared,

I know a game I shouldn't have even played in. I didn't practice the whole week of the game. And, really I wasn't in a physical condition to play, for real. I just remember saying, 'Well I'm going to pray my way through it.'

Robert applied his faith in a slightly different manner. Becoming a Christian and participating in FCA helped to build his character. Before, his emotions and life were guided by his football experience. Now, football was just what he did, it was not his identity. Robert was freed to experience life in a different way; his faith took unnecessary pressure off of him and he found that this actually enhanced his on-the-field athletic performance. He shared,

It definitely affected my athletic experience because all my life, up until that point, football was everything to me. I think a lot of people have problems making their self-worth according to how their careers go. I think that's very, very dangerous because especially playing football and being there to play football. I mean, one play I could break my ankle, break my leg or, I mean, anything could happen. Also emotionally, you have a good day at practice, you have a good day. You have a bad day at practice and your entire day is bad. So as far as relationships I was in, not just like dating relationships, or friendships, everything, would kind of fluctuate as far as with my football career, because I would be in a bad mood or a good mood. They had no idea who was going to open the door when they came to see you or pick up the phone and call because they didn't know if I had a good day or a bad day at practice. So as my faith got stronger, I was able to build character and I understood that [football athlete] wasn't who I was. It's just what I did or what I do. I think that definitely made it easier to go perform at practice, and things like that, knowing that no matter what happens, this doesn't define me. It kind of took the pressure off a little bit. But it made me play better, too.

Paul described how he knew he was not playing to his potential and how his relationship with God challenged him his last two years to play for a higher purpose.

My junior year was when I really buckled down and understood that I needed to: 1) walk [relationship] with the Lord, and 2) I hadn't lived up to what God had called me to be as an athlete and so it wasn't so much me letting myself down, or my coaches down, but it was letting God down for the athletic ability that He had blessed me with. So, I really challenged myself my last two years to just play for God's glory, daily.

Sam also stated how when he played it was like he was playing for God, and that he would pray and not worry about the result of this performance. God had given him the ability to play and he did not want to waste that ability.

I just prayed that He [God] is going to take care of me. He has given me the ability to do what I do [play football]. Then I just would go out there and I try to embrace that ability and I practice to make sure that I don't waste the ability He has given me. Then every time I go out there [football game], I pray that he will give me peace and not worry about the result, and just go out there and like I'm playing for Him [God]. It's not how good a punt it is or how bad a punt it is. It's that I'm out there playing.

James also shared that FCA was a great way to help vent out the stresses of life he was experiencing which affected his athletic experience in an optimistic way.

Playing football is tough with the added stresses of school, playing time and injuries. FCA gave me an opportunity to lay all the stress of life aside and get to know myself. Sometimes as athletes' you over think things, FCA is a place where you can vent and talk

out all your problems to the team chaplain and teammates. Then when it is time to play football you are not stressed out about those things and you can perform better athletically.

James went on to say,

Being a blessing off the field helps them [football players and teammates] on the field.

Kevin also shared how Friday night prayer meetings helped him to not be as anxious on game day, which increased his athletic performance on the field.

A lot of things come out in those meetings [Friday Night prayer meetings]. One unique difference about it. It might be all of the anxiety before the game. It's like, let me get all of this off my chest so I can play tomorrow.

The ability to be a better athlete sometimes involves being able to cope with injuries.

Alex spoke about how experiencing athletic injuries and feeling hopeless motivated him to pursue a relationship with Christ. He felt like the only place he had to run was to God. This gave him the strength to continue.

God has brought me back from and through major injuries. I dislocated my knee and I wasn't supposed to play. Like I said, that was the thing that brought me to Christ. I mean, growing up, my first love was football. I have been doing it since I was five. It was probably like my idol in a sense and to have it taken away and to really feel like I was at the bottom. Growing up my parents made us clean up; remember the day I got hurt, it felt like my dreams were dishwater leaving the sink. I had nowhere to turn, but to the Lord.

Like, Alex, Nathan shared how his relationship with Christ and the team chaplain helped him through some really difficult moments during his college athletic career,

I have had injuries. And any time you play football, my thing was separating it and making sure that my attitude, my positive energy doesn't change. It isn't based so much on wins or losses because you put so much into this football. When I was growing up it was perfect. It's rosy and everything is perfect. But, when you have some of those brutal losses that you do suffer at times [athletic related injuries] not letting them get to you and not wearing it on your sleeves that's something that I became better at through Christ and through Brother Barry, he showed me different verses to help me.

Having experienced athletic injuries, Alex and Nathan questioned their future aspirations of playing football. Their participation in FCA helped them view their situations in a positive and manageable matter, ultimately having a greater understanding of their spirituality and being able to compete on the football field at a higher level.

Overall, student athletes expressed how their faith and participation in FCA helped them to become better football players on the field, and accept adversity as an athlete. Their character was built, and the tools they learned from FCA and developing relationship with Jesus influenced their character and allowed them to experience a greater quality of life and to push through difficult athletic related situations.

Student athletes FCA experience not only helped individual students perform better athletically and cope more effectively with their athletic life, it fostered a stronger bond between them. This is described more completely in the next section.

### **Team Camaraderie**

The last theme in outcomes was Team Camaraderie. Participation in FCA helped to bring the football team closer together as brothers and teammates creating a family togetherness unified atmosphere.

Student athletes indicated that they did not recognize some of the qualities of FCA participation until they graduated and were gone from the program. Kevin shared that outside of church there are not many places you can have that community of fellowship. For him and others, FCA was a place that allowed students the opportunity to fellowship with each other.

He stated,

I think fellowship, is number one. Think about it, without Fellowship of Christian Athletes this is something that once they [student athletes] graduate they realize, they say, ‘Oh, who do you get together with to talk about Jesus aside from church?’ I was like,

‘Wow, church is cool, but it would be nice to fellowship.’ So you miss it. But fellowship is big.

Jason also stated that FCA helps students have a confidence in each other,

Especially [FCA participation] helps with leadership and confidence in one another. Not confidence that you can come back when you are 24 points down on Alabama, but your confidence and your belief in one another, that’s where it helps.

Some of the participants in the study noted that participation in prayer meetings allowed them to bond with their teammates and want to fight for them. When you play a team sport you form bonds with your teammates. James shared how these bonds were translated on and off the football field,

You get to know your brothers’ struggles. You get to hear about others problems and you want to help. He’s having a bad week, listen to each other the good and the bad. First they recognize God and second God is ministering to them in their lives.

Friday night prayer for the Rickman University football team was a time where the student athletes could really pour out their hearts to their teammates. In a way, it was a time to really see and understand what each teammate might have been going through in their personal lives. Nathan discussed how this time of prayer was a time that a true brotherhood bond was formed through a spiritual experience,

Friday nights are awesome. I mean that’s where it is at. When Brother Barry speaks on Friday’s, if he’s bringing in somebody like Giglio, or other speakers, it’s always awesome. Every time, whether it be two years ago when we started singing before games, and I mean before whoever gave the devotional, whether that be Brother Barry or anybody, we began singing when we all meet. And it kind of became our battle cry in a sense. After we would win the game, we would sing ‘lean on me.’ It was just...everything about it is just awesome. Everybody is so antsy about the game. Everybody is so focused about the game. But we get in a circle and we will just open hearts to each other and share not our intimate secrets but just intimate stuff that has been weighing on our hearts that we need prayer over and we need to pray for each other and for ourselves. Any time you have two or three guys and the name [Jesus] He [God] is always there.

Friday night prayer provided the football team the opportunity to bond and to come together for a common reason. Henry shared that these meetings were a time for the team to grow together,

I think getting them to realize that they can actually grow together as a team and that they could encourage each other in the word of God. I would think in knowing that they are never going to be judged by anyone on their team. If they are judged by others on the outside, they realize it's about the team. I think that's the concept they think about as far as the impact that they have on one another.

Henry went on to state that the Friday night prayer meeting gave the players something in common and a chance to open up about their faith and learn how to pray for each other.

The Friday night prayers were outstanding for the team. It gave us a chance to open up about our faith and what it meant to be a man of God. It also gave us an opportunity to understand how to pray for one another...there were lots of guys who didn't understand prayer. Having everyone involved in FCA gave us all something in common...another way to communicate with one another.

Some of the participants in the study noted that participation in prayer meetings allowed them to bond with their teammates and want to fight for them. Alex described this in the following statement,

That bond we had. We had a tight knit bond. You couldn't break us no matter what. We got down. We just had a confidence level that we would play it till its out and at the end of the game we are going to give our all, and what happens, happens. I can't describe it, but this year was, I don't know, it was very special. It reminded me of kind of our, 06'/07' years. We were really, really close, and I think FCA has a part of that because it was another way that we got guys involved off the field. And we saw another side of our teammates. Just like Friday night meetings on the road. You can see another side of your teammates, the compassionate side, and you really grow close when those things are happening.

James shared his personal experience with the prayer meeting and how it could be a little intimidating at times for some of the athletes.

The Friday night program, it helps you understand what some of your teammates are going through. It kind of gets a lot of people over the hump. A lot of stuff they have got on their mind, they let it all out.



He also shared how having others asked about his absence from these meetings, when he did not attend, touched him and brought him closer to his teammates. He shared,

The main reason why I really don't go to be honest is because I am, like man, I am 310 pounds and I don't want to be getting emotional. I guess it's a male pride thing, like man, I am not going because that's sad and it makes me want to cry, but I am not going to sit up here with all of this. No, I'm not even going to do it [attend the prayer meetings]. So I am not even going to go. Well, I take the heat from my teammates, too. They said, 'You know, preacher man, you weren't in prayer meeting.' I said, really? You actually looked for me? Because I know I wasn't there either. So that's what my deal is. Because some of the stories would really be heartbreaking. I'm about to cry. So, a lot of the boys are going to pour their heart out and its just like every time I go to prayer meeting I kind of get the sense of urgency. Man, I am blessed. I thought I had it bad. Like, wow. I don't have it that bad. It's good to kind of know how the team feels, and you get down and you know that your brother is riding with you, and you have got him on this end and tomorrow [game day], that next day, we are going to go out and we are going to fight together [on the football field]. I am going to help you through this thing today. I am going to love you and I am going to hug on you today. And some cry. I haven't yet. The next day we are going to hook up. We are going to sing 'Lean on Me' and we are going to do it [play for each other].

Anthony shared that Friday night's prayer and devotionals were voluntary. He stated that teammates were given the opportunity to express situations they might be dealing with and a teammate would pray for them if they wanted prayer. Anthony mentioned how these meetings built unity among the team.

As far as the Fridays before game, of course, we have devotion right after dinner. Brother Barry will get up and give a message or he will have a guest speaker. That is something the whole team participates in. Other than that, we always have prayer meeting, which is voluntary, after we get done with position meetings the night before games. And that's something that is really important, because it's a time where each player can express what problems he's dealing with and one of his teammates is going to pray for him. That's how we do it. That kind of gives you some extra motivation to play for your teammates the next day out on the field. I remember the national championship year, those meetings were packed. We had an older team that year of guys who really did value Brother Barry and really knew the importance of the prayer meetings. I think that doing that brought us closer together and helped us play for each other on the field.

Friday night prayer meeting is a time where football student athletes can express what is on their hearts. There are no limits and no one to judge them. They are supported and

encouraged by teammates through prayer. Kevin stated that this is a time that helps teammates get a greater understanding of each other.

We had these meetings, these prayer meetings at night before the games. People don't really know about it. Nobody really knows about it because nobody ever talks about it. But that's when everything comes out. That's when you can be in the room, and your coach can be sitting there. 'Hey coach.' The assistant coach. And a guy will just break out and be like, 'Man, my mom was diagnosed with cancer yesterday.' Or whatever. Just like the realist, craziest things you would never expect to hear, or come out. I remember when Katrina hit. One of our team member's family was missing for ten days and we thought they were dead and gone. We were praying for them, I mean we were praying as if they were dead like for real. In those meetings, things were just, they were rough. They were difficult... But things come up that it's deep now. I mean, it's crazy the things that are said, and that people tell about their folks that are in prison, about their brother who committed a double murder. I mean anything that you could imagine comes out. You are like 'Whoa,' this is my teammate. You just never know. That is really how [Song that former teams song after every game and in prayer meetings, name omitted] came about, one night we were in there [prayer meeting] and Kenny Dennis had got up and was like, 'hey fellows, I got a song that I want to sing.' He started singing it and we kind of picked up on the words and started singing it. And then every time we would win, we would sing the fight song and then we would sing Hard Fighting Soldiers. This year they sung the fight song and then 'Lean on Me' which took me back in my mind to the [Song that former team song after every game and prayer meetings, name omitted].

Another athlete describes how Friday night prayer was student-led and the message before the prayer meeting from the team chaplain was always to challenge them in their daily lives and athletically as well. Paul shared,

The team chaplain would give a Chapel [short motivational speech], and it always was a challenge to us, for one, spiritually, but also athletically for Saturday [game day]. He always gave us something to be thinking about. Then the prayer meetings were led by the athletes and we would sit in a circle and our requests would be made known. We would kind of share what is going on and whoever was leading the Bible study, they would appoint one of the other teammates to pray for that teammate that just shared. Sometimes we would be in there 15 minutes and sometimes we would be in there an hour and a half. It all depended on what was going on in everybody's life.

Paul went on to discuss the bond of the football team,

The undefeated season was powerful. I think what we were able to do and what God was doing in our hearts, individually as players was made very evident by the way that we played. Also, the way that we loved each other and cared about each other and we

prayed for each other and prayed together. It was unique and I think without us ever taking off a helmet and saying anything, you could see it written all over that team.

Robert talked about the voluntary Friday night devotionals before the Saturday football game and how they brought the team together. The team chaplain would talk about issues that related to the situation the team was dealing with at the time and that no matter what each individual student athlete was going through, they were playing for a higher purpose. That purpose was for each other.

We would have the devotional the night before the game. It wasn't mandatory, but, I mean, every, literally every single athlete would go. A lot of times, the devotional given by Brother Barry would be related to the situation that we were in. And it would kind of carry over to [Saturday games]. Remember, you are playing for different reasons. We would play for each other.

Jason, who was the athletic director who hired the team chaplain, talked about how the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program helped students in times of triumph and chaos. When asked about FCA and how participation contributed to the football team coming together he stated,

After the chaos of 2003, we knew on the trip when it was questioned whether Billy would come back and the whole thing was just kind of chaotic. I think the Fellowship of Christian Athletes provided something they [football team] could rally around for peace and continuity. Now, do I think the fact that they were Christian helped them win, what, thirteen ball games? No. I think the fact that they were at peace and they had this rallying point with the FCA, an anchor, I think that enabled them to prepare mentally and physically and spiritually to do something exceptional. Because I think in the middle of chaos, I think the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was an oasis of peace and of strength. So to that extent, yes. But did FCA help them win the ball game? No. It helped them prepare as individuals to win a ball game. It didn't help them block. It didn't help them tackle. It didn't help them read defenses, but it helped them come together as a team. And how does it happen? I think it happens because of spirits of uncertainty and spirits of need and maybe fear. I think Barry, and the way he lives his life and the way he ministered brought it all together. Coaches and players, too.

Friday Night Devotionals and prayer meeting played a major part in the student athletes coming together as a team and competing for each other. These meetings help to build trust, understanding, togetherness, love and a determination to fight for each other through the storms

of life and football. The football team chaplain provided an environment of opportunity to allow student athletes to be able to express themselves emotionally and spiritually in an environment that was safe to share their deepest pains, struggles and joys without being judged.

### **Summary**

Through the interviews with these participants, a picture was painted of a university that is committed to serving student athletes with excellence. It is not only enough to take care of student athletes' academic and physical needs. Athletic departments and universities have a responsibility to meet the spiritual needs of student athletes to provide them with a holistic college experience. Students in this study reported that the university did so through the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program. Chapter 5, which follows, discusses these findings. It includes a summary of them, implications for practice and future research possibilities.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

*“Engage, educate, equip, encourage, empower, energize and elevate. Those are the methods for maximizing the potential of any individual, team, organization or institution for ultimate success and significance. Those are the methods of a mentor leader.” — Tony Dungy*

This chapter expounds upon the findings in Chapter 4. This study explored a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program at a Division I Southern institution. The research sought to examine elements that facilitated and hindered the program and the outcomes of its implementation. A qualitative case study approach was selected for the study as the best method to explore the phenomenon. Data sources include semi-structured interviews of 13 participants and a review of relevant literature.

Analysis categories were developed from themes that emerged using the constant comparative method of data analysis. This chapter summarizes major findings, presents implications for practice, and discusses findings that aided in the development of a new conceptual framework along with recommendations for future research.

### **Discussion**

Participants stated that Rickman University was among the first to incorporate a full-time chaplain within their football and athletic programs. This chaplain was hired to aide in the spiritual and personal development of student athletes due to the fact that student athletes have very hectic schedules and deal with social, academic, physical, mental and emotional pressures.

Students reported that having a team chaplain that was consistent and invested in their well-being was a great asset to them in college. The team chaplain served as a mentor and spiritual coach for these student athletes and was always available to them. He was there if they experienced a crisis, achievement, athletic injury or just wanted to talk about life. The chaplain was committed to walking beside student athletes in their journey of life in college and beyond.

It is interesting that participants noted that their participation in the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program affected different aspects of their lives. Students experienced enhanced spirituality and personal development. Their personal relationships were enhanced and improved due to how they viewed women, people and their current situations in life. Life was now not just about them, it had a higher meaning and purpose that caused them to treat others the way they would treat themselves. It forced them to really evaluate themselves, their character, faith and integrity. It encouraged them to address the questions “What was I created to do and be?”

Students also developed a sense of community among themselves. They fought for not just themselves, but for their teammates. Student athletes valued team success more than they valued their own success. Their teammates became their family. In FCA meetings, and prayer groups they would share some of their darkest secrets and concerns about life and their personal experiences. The question could be asked. Why would athletes want to share some of their most intimate struggles and disappointments with their teammates? What caused a team to really bond and have a connection that surpasses the field and transcended to life enriching relationships? The answer appears to be in the common bond of wanting more and desiring to do better. Seeing a teammate and what they were going through physically, socially, mentally, emotionally and spiritually and being encouraged to keep going even when they wanted to give up. These are the things that the data have shown contributed to building team unity, trust and

assisting in the enhancement of students spiritual, academic, personal and athletic development. Additionally, through their participation, students were able to mentor other teammates.

Having FCA devotionals and prayer meetings gave students a platform to share their feelings and emotions that ultimately gave them the perception of increased performance in academics and athletics. It helped them to grow spiritually and fostered mental clarity, which they reported enhance their interest, ability and success in academics and athletic performance. It appears that this cleansing of the mind is equated to their participation in FCA, thus adding to the benefits of having a FCA chaplaincy ministry program at the university level.

It appears likely that all of these changes in these students are interrelated and one change may have caused the other. How this happened is unknown. For example, increased spirituality may have increased students' abilities to care for others and to also see God's hand in their lives giving them the gift of an academic opportunity. It might be that developing close relationships with others fostered a sense of spirituality and a desire to do well so that others would view the team positively. No matter what the sequence of change might be, students were positively impacted by their participation in FCA and it changed their beliefs, their attitudes, their actions, and their concept of themselves in positive ways.

Research shows that students that are engaged in extracurricular (clubs and organizations) activities perform better, have a higher retention level and increases student graduation rates (Astin, 1999). Participation in organizations helps in forming connections that inspire students to become more engaged and to have a sense of belonging (Coakley, 2007). This sense of belonging creates an atmosphere of accomplishment and achievement and promotes a healthier learning environment. This study verified these findings as it showed that involvement in FCA helped build these connections among students, their teammates, coaches,

athletic staff and FCA staff. The weekly voluntary meetings helped to unite athletes from different sports; the individual Bible studies and prayer groups help to build team camaraderie. All of these FCA activities also taught students to excel in their sport and all aspects of their lives to live a life of integrity, service, excellence and unity.

Every year there is increasing pressure on all levels of athletic competition (middle school athletes, high school athletes, and intercollegiate athletes) to compete at the highest level that produces a winning season and championships for their respective schools. With this added pressure, it appears that FCA on this campus was an outlet for these students to keep their minds set just not on competition, but on the greater goal on graduating from school and being prepared to become productive citizens that demonstrate great character.

It also appeared that FCA was an outlet for students to be able to express themselves, their problems and fears, in ways that have no consequences. It provided a safe place/haven to openly share their faith, hopes, dreams, feelings and confusion. This also gave them an opportunity to form more meaningful relationships with teachers, coaches, administrators and other students, these opportunities extent beyond pre-existing relationships to the development of more substantial relationships. The findings suggest that students need this type of safe haven and schools and colleges should assure that they are available on campuses.

The data also showed that participation in FCA fostered a paradigm shift for some participants. They now had a clear mind to focus more on their studies and had a reason to perform at a higher level academically. This motivation factor had a lot to do with them viewing school in a way that benefited them academically and spiritually. Additionally, students that struggled with issues such as anger and aggression stated that their participation in FCA helped them to have peace, a peace that enabled them to perform better on and off the field. Similar to



the findings related to having a safe haven, it appears important for colleges to provide avenues for students to deal with these issues. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (2014), “the latest graduation success rate, 84 percent of Division I student-athletes who entered college in 2007 graduated – the highest rate ever. Division I student-athletes continue to outperformed their peers in the general student body, when compared using the federal graduation rate” (p. 1). African American males reported increased graduation rates; however, they still lagged behind their White counterparts. With African American males being highly represented on intercollegiate football teams it is imperative that colleges and universities continue to seek avenues to foster student academic success and the FCA program seems to be helping to achieve this goal.

One of the most important aspects of the chaplaincy ministry program is the team chaplain. Chaplains are truly invested in the students they serve. Their full time job is providing opportunities for students to engage and grow. Chaplains are there to form and build relationships with the students they minister to. They attend practices and games. They are called to be servants to their students, coaches and support staff. High school and college administrators can use these chaplains to have a better insight to player and coaches needs, request and comments. The research showed that students and coaches had a special trust they formed with the chaplain. A trust that transcended obstacles and time; a trust that is long lasting.

This study was limited to football student athletes due to the fact that the team chaplain serves all student athletes, but his main responsibility is the football team. Student athletes from all sports are encouraged to participate in FCA. Since the creation of the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program at Rickman University, the team chaplain has served all student athletes through Bible studies, one-on-one meetings, prayer and other events. The team chaplain has also

had former athletes of a variety of sports come back to speak to student athletes, serve on his staff and support FCA events.

Even though FCA is a Christian based organization Rickman University have student athletes of all faiths. The data showed that the FCA chaplain treated all student athletics with love and support. He walked the path of life with any student athlete that asked for his help and guidance. The team chaplain was also willing to assist student athletes of different faiths grow spiritually and personally.

Participants also stated that there were barriers to the success of the program. These hindrances were separation of church and state, antagonism from outside organizations, and increased financial obligations due to fundraising needs to support the program. An additional barrier was the student athletes' lack of time and commitment to the program due to their hectic schedules that included personal, academic and athletic engagements. These are issues that should be addressed by the program and by others wishing to adopt a chaplaincy ministry program. These issues are discussed more completely in the implications for practice section that follows. These findings are presented in summary form representing the new FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program conceptual framework (Figure 4) and overall findings (Figure 5).

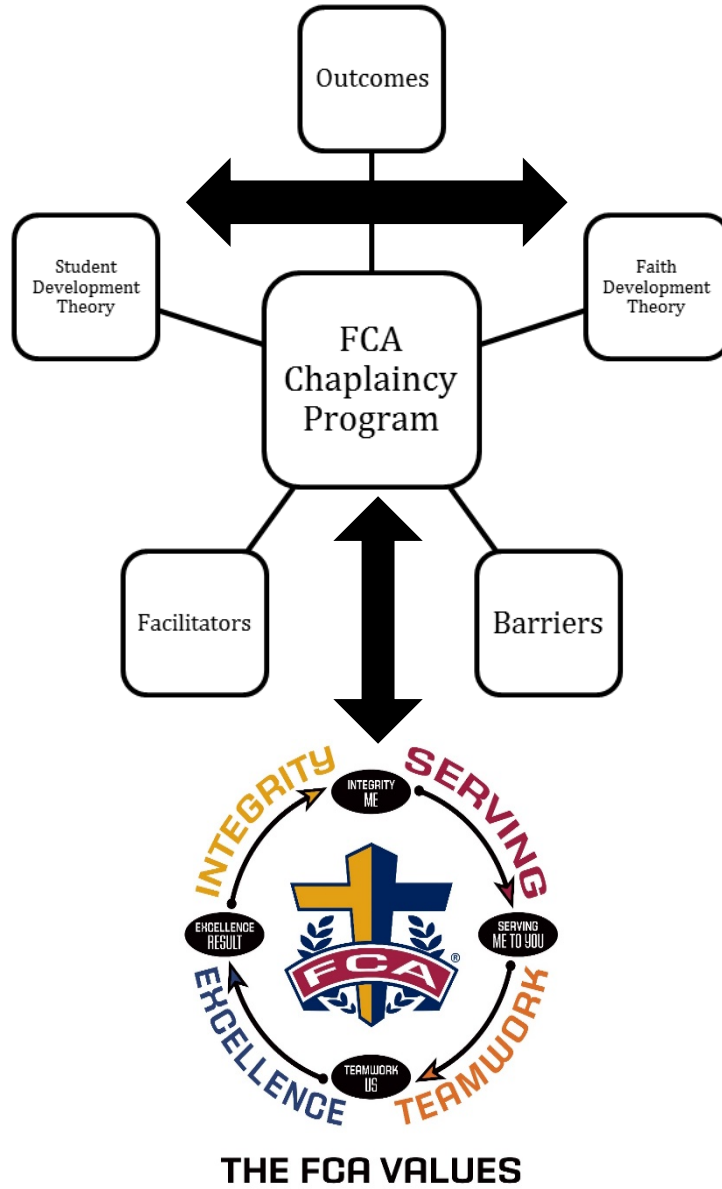


Figure 4. New FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program Conceptual Framework

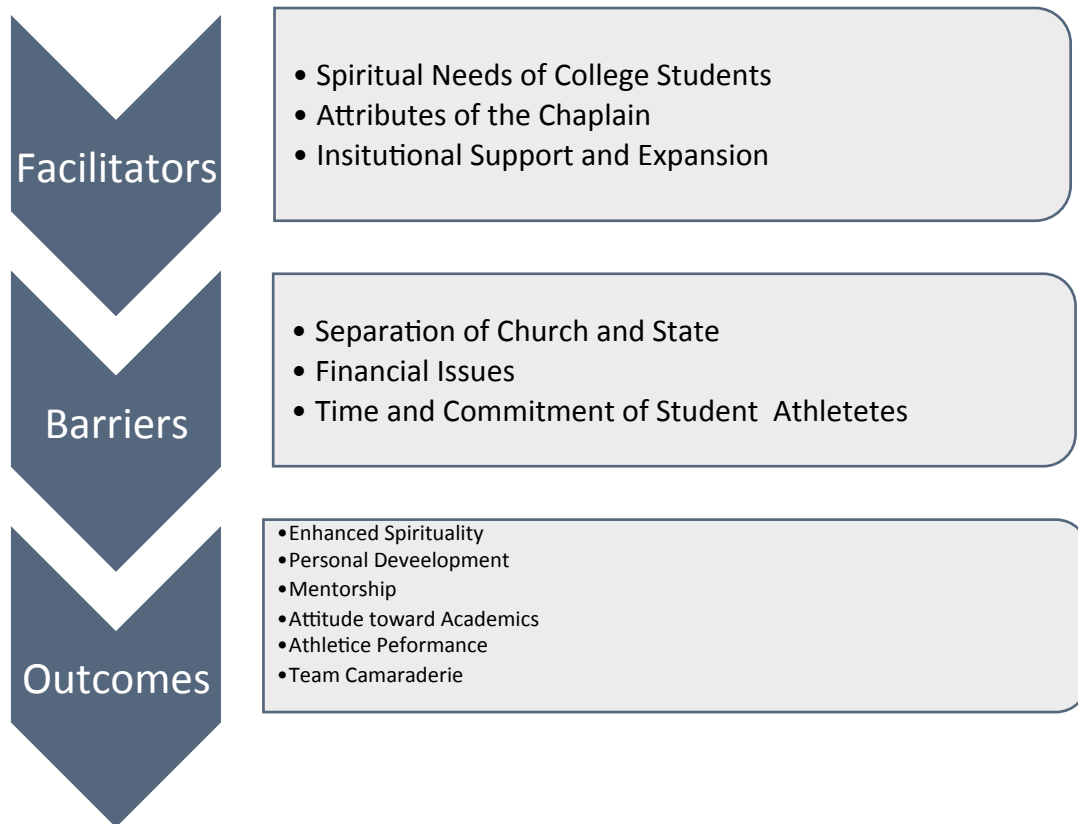


Figure 5. Factors Influencing the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program

In addition to adding to the research on this topic, these findings have practical implications for others who may wish to implement similar programs. There is also additional research that should be conducted to extend knowledge about this topic. These issues are addressed in the sections that follow.

### Implications for Practice

There are many practical implications that flow from the findings. These are organized into five sections: The attributes of the chaplain, Spiritual needs of college students, Institutional support and expansion, Overcoming potential barriers and Time and commitment of student athletes.

## **Attributes of the Chaplain**

One of the most important factors of incorporating a team chaplain is getting the right fit for the team. Chaplain Barry Smith had a lot of qualities that meshed well with the Rickman University athletic and football program. First, Barry was an African American male, former football player at Rickman University and he came to faith by a FCA student leader while in school at Rickman University. Barry and the football student athletes would share a lot of the same life experiences.

Key attributes were his openness, faith, non-judgmental personality and ability to be a servant leader. Also, he was available to his student athletes 24/7. Student athletes now had a person who, like a coach, was always around them. The team chaplain would attend team meetings, workout sessions, practices, games and other events or activities. His sole purpose was to walk with the student athletes throughout life. To be a safe place of refuge to learn, explore, evaluate and grow personally, academically, emotionally, athletically and spiritually.

The findings also showed over the years he has been consistent, reliable and loving. The team chaplain cares about student athletes and them becoming the human beings they were created to be. He assisted them in finding, walking out and sustaining their meaning and purpose in life. This allowed student athletes to pay forward this knowledge, wisdom and experiences to others.

Thus, it appears that educational institutions should make a careful selection of a chaplain based on personal attributes, education, personal background and experience. This is a job that not everyone is equipped to fulfill. It is a job that requires counseling, time, patience, understanding and above all confidentiality. The research showed that it is a position that a

person is called to do and prepared in a variety of ways to become highly qualified. The chaplain has to be able to make a connection with the school's or universities administrator, staff, coaches and players, a duty that is not taken lightly by the team chaplain. Likewise, the institution must assure that adequate resources are provided to support the program. Since, this type of activity cannot be supported by public funds, systems have to be put into place that will provide needed funds to support the chaplain and his/her work.

### **Spiritual Needs of College Students**

College is a time of self-evaluation and discovery for college students. Student athletes are a very special population because they have the added stresses of athletic practice, games, academics and the expectation of winning games and representing their university in a positive manner.

The findings showed that these students had tremendous need spiritually and the implementation of a chaplaincy ministry program would aid in meeting these felt needs. Oftentimes students have so many struggles that they walk out alone and without guidance. Student athletes have coaches, athletic administrators, academic counselors and other support staff. However, they often lack a person that they have no commitment to, a person that can just serve them and become a safe place for student athletes in times of need and times of triumph.

The data showed that students, no matter their faith truly valued their relationship with the chaplain and felt comfortable to express issues of faith. They discussed how the team chaplain assisted them in learning about the Bible, prayer and walking out their faith daily through one-on-one mentorship, devotionals and just hanging out. They were free to express themselves and seek out answers to life's mysteries. For some they felt like one of the reasons

they attended Rickman University was to meet the team chaplain and became a Christian or to enhance their Christian faith.

In this study Spirituality was defined as “the values we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here-the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life-and our sense of connectedness to each other and the world around us (Astin, 2004, p.34). In addition, personal faith or spirituality is a person’s discovery of their meaning and purpose in life. This can include student-athletes of all faiths. Rickman Univeristy has had mulsim student athletes and students of other faiths particitipate in the FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program over the years. Higher Education historcially has not done a good job creating spiritual paths or opportunities for college students to have the option of participation to explore, develop or enhance their personal spirituality and/or faith. In the absence of faith programs in Higher Education to develop spirituality, this program has offered the opportunity for students athletes to develop purpose and meaning in their lives.

Spirituality is taboo on many levels of education due to issues related to the separation of church and state. However, one thing that is very common among the Christian faith and education is the standard of practicing good morals and character development. Sports are also a way to include these topics. Students are given a choice to participate in FCA. They are also given opportunities to develop leadership skills, speak at events, and attend camps and retreats. They are encouraged to share their stories, which improves their public speaking and exposes them to greater opportunities in the community and aboard. It helps them to give back in a more personal and intimate way. This seems to have been very beneficial to the students. Thus, it might be of value for athletic departments, student affairs professionals, counselors and others in school settings to provide additional spiritual outlets for students, within the framework of the

law. Many students may have problems that they are not seeking counseling services to assist them with. They may be looking for a safe environment that provides a consistent and intimate setting for them to build trust and a relationship with student affairs personnel. It is likely that having some type of spiritual group in sectors outside of the sports arena may be of value to students and could also assist in their development and retention.

### **Institutional Support and Expansion**

The findings indicate that having institutional support is critical to having a successful chaplaincy ministry program. A head coach might want to hire a chaplain for their team; however, if he or she does not have institutional support that dream might not become a reality. The evidence from this study showed the head coach gained the support of the Athletic Director, university President and Board of Trustees. Without this support it would have been impossible to create and establish an FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program, one that would become successful, meet the mission of the university, meet the needs of student athletes and create opportunities for expansion at other universities.

Rickman University had no idea how their implementation of a football team chaplain would not just affect their athletic department, student athletes and campus. It would have a nationwide affect and now team chaplains are common within intercollegiate athletics. This may be true for other institutions. It might be valuable for those wishing to create a similar program to seek expertise from Rickman University and/or other successful programs in order to avoid pitfalls and have a model to follow

### **Overcoming Potential Barriers**

The findings revealed that since FCA is a para-ministry, all employees depend on fundraising as their only means of financial support. If a school wants a team chaplain, there has



to be a financial support base to fund the chaplain's salary and ministry operations. This could be very challenging for smaller athletic programs and a university where having a team chaplain is not a major priority. The team chaplain at Rickman University has been very fortunate that he has had strong financial support throughout his tenure. From year to year the programs financial situation can fluctuate. Having a strong and consistent financial support system was shown to be very important in sustaining a successful FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program. If this financial support is not consistent and maintainable, it could serve as a major barrier to the success and sustainability of the program. Due to separation of church and state, universities are restricted from funding religious organizations however this opens the door for partnerships with outside organizations that can provide monetary support to FCA.

When starting chaplaincy programs and/or improving existing programs athletic departments and team chaplains might want to look into increasing their staff so all the pressures of the program is not one person's responsibility. The data showed fundraising is a major area that can take time away from the team chaplain serving students. Therefore, additional staff and volunteers could serve to enhance program operations. Programs could also incorporate internships. This training could decrease the team chaplain's workload and also help to provide qualified chaplains to work at other universities and colleges.

In order for FCA to be a viable organization, the university, athletic department and FCA leaders could be proactive in reaching out to alumni for monetary support. Through these partnerships and through delegating a staff member or volunteer to direct fundraising efforts for the organization, the financial support needed to sustain the program could be provided. This would provide a dedicated person for fundraising and take pressure off of the team chaplain and other FCA staff members so that they may spend more time serving student athletes.

## Time and Commitment of Student Athletes

Participants noted that student athletes commitment to FCA participation served as a barrier. With the many demands of student athletes, time management is very important. For some athletes FCA participation is something they want to incorporate within their daily, weekly or monthly schedules. For others it is not a major priority. Universities and athletic departments might want to incorporate courses that teach students how to incorporate time in their schedules that is aimed at time for personal and spiritual development. This could be done through life skills courses that are offered at most colleges and universities. Also, the incorporation of scheduled seminars and retreats that deal with spiritual exploration and development could help foster a greater commitment with student athletes. Figure 6 provides an overview of the implications for practice.

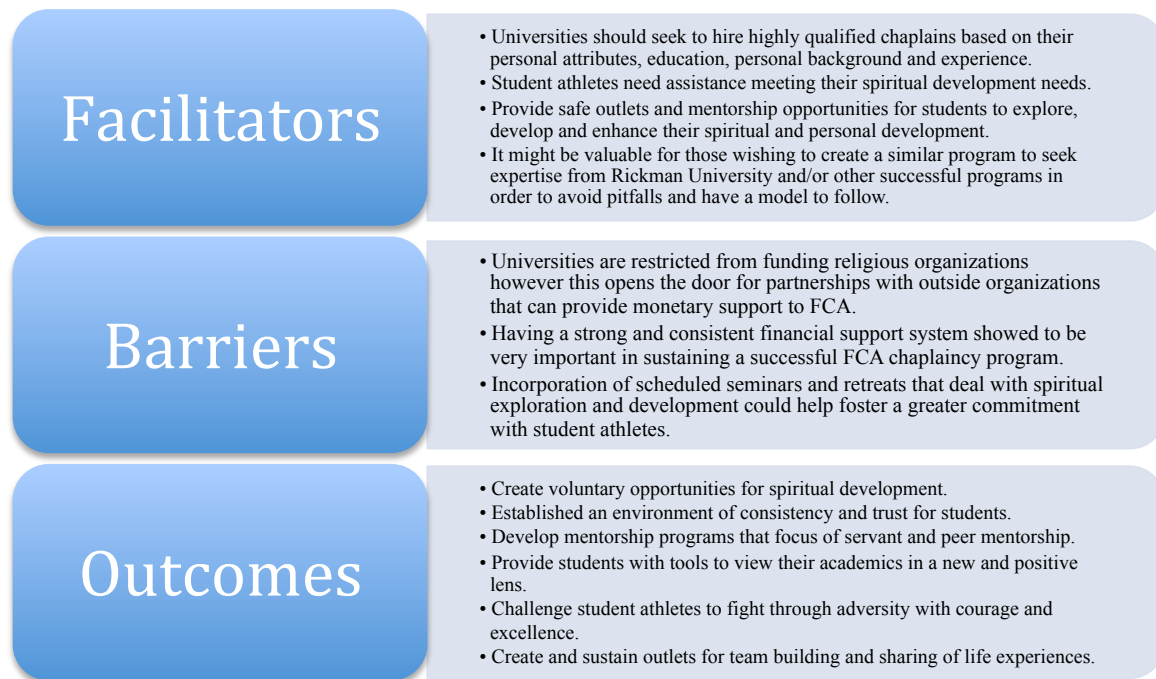


Figure 6. Implications for Practice for a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program

## **Future Research**

Character is an area that needs development in all students' life. The principles of FCA appear to help build strong character and integrity on and off the playing field for athletes. FCA programs are in K-12 schools all across the nation. This research shows that participation in these programs at the college level has a very positive impact on students. It would be of value for school systems to conduct research on the degree to which students in K-12 programs realize similar benefits.

Conducting research at one Southern university bound this study. It would be beneficial to conduct a study that explored FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Programs at other universities located in different regions of the United States. Similarly, since this study consisted of qualitative data that looked into the lives of participants and stakeholders within a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program, the findings from this study could be used as a foundation to develop a quantitative survey instrument to conduct a study that examines student perceptions of their FCA programs would be of value.

The positive outcomes of this study appear to be closely related to the chaplain's background and the way in which he functioned and related to students. It might be of value to examine other chaplains' backgrounds and ways of operating to determine if there are specific strategies that they use that work as effectively, and/or whether there are some others. Researchers could also conduct a study that looked at high school chaplains and their duties and responsibilities to student athletes.

This study looked only at student benefits and impact of this program on them. It might be interesting to interview other people involved in the program to determine ways in which the program may have benefitted them. Another area for examination would be to investigate the

impact of the program on other staff members and people in the athletic department who were not directly involved, but who might have had some experiences with the program.

Another study could examine the experiences of student athletes who are of different faiths. Student athletes on all levels come from different family backgrounds and faiths. Since not all student athletes who participate in FCA activities are of the Christian Faith, studying the experience of these students could open up new insight into FCA. Another rich avenue for exploration would be to conduct a replica study examining other intercollegiate sports and including female sports and their participation and experience with FCA. Also, researching how the experiences of student athletes' participation in an FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program are related to self-efficacy over time. Finally, a longitudinal study that examines students that participate in FCA from high school through college and into later life would be of great value in determining whether the findings reported here continue into later life.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Student athletes are a unique population, and have special needs. One of these needs is a spiritual guide who has a total commitment to them and their well-being. With the rise of violence and defiant behavior in athletes and the growing demands and societal pressures on coaches and athletes FCA and their chaplains serve as an outlet of love, hope and peace. It is the Chaplains full time job to invest in the lives of the students and coaches they are called to serve on an everyday basis. In addition, the team chaplain encourages student athletes to pursue all aspects of their life with the same spirit of excellence, passion and commitment that they invest into their respective sport.

The findings from this study indicate that a FCA Chaplaincy Ministry Program can have a positive influence on all participants and parties involved in the ministry. Even though this

study was conducted at a Division I Southern university the lessons learned from this study could be used to examine other programs in college and K-12 settings. The openness of this program provides universities, colleges and school system endless opportunities to create and improve FCA programs that are geared to contributing to the holistic development of students. The findings of this study indicate that students participation in FCA goes far beyond athletics and spirituality to developing leaders that will make a positive contribution to society; thus, it is very important that additional research be conducted so that if these outcomes appear to be consistent over programs and settings these programs can be expanded as a means of assisting our youth and young adults as they prepare for life.

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APPENDIX A

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANSUBJECTS  
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM**

For information or help contact THE OFFICE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH, 307 Samford Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: hsubject@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vprohs/>

Complete this form using Adobe Acrobat Writer (versions 5.0 and greater). Hand written copies not accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE OF STUDY: Dec 15, 2010
- PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):  FULL BOARD  EXPEDITED  EXEMPT
2. PROJECT TITLE: Inspiring athletes through mentoring: A case study of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program
3. LaTosha Nicole Ramsey Graduate Student EFLT 786-26-8273 ramsefn@auburn.edu  
 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT PHONE AU E-MAIL  
923 McKinley Ave Auburn, AL 36830 N/A N/A  
 MAILING ADDRESS FAX ALTERNATE E-MAIL
4. SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT:  Not Applicable  Internal  External Agency  Pending  Received
5. LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT:  
 N/A

**6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

6A. Mandatory CITI Training	6B. Research Methodology
Names of key personnel who have completed CITI: <u>LaTosha Nicole Ramsey</u> <u>RSOR, children, HIPAA, etc</u> <u>Dr. Frances Kochan</u> <u>Dr. Paulette Dilworth</u> <u>RSOR, students</u>	Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology. Data Source(s): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Data <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Data Will data be recorded so that participants can be directly or indirectly identified? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Data collection will involve the use of: <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview / Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.) <input type="checkbox"/> Internet / electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio / Video / Photos
CITI group completed for this study: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Behavioral <input type="checkbox"/> Biomedical Protocol-Specific modules completed: <input type="checkbox"/> Genetic <input type="checkbox"/> Vet.'s Administration <input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoner Research <input type="checkbox"/> Public School Students <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses Other: _____	

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 1/28/11 to 1/27/12  
 Protocol # 10-334 EP 110

6C. Participant Information	6D. Risks to Participants
Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Males <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Females <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AU students Vulnerable Populations: <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses <input type="checkbox"/> Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL) <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners Persons with: <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Disabilities Do you plan to compensate your participants? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality* <input type="checkbox"/> Coercion <input type="checkbox"/> Deception <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Social <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ *Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

**6E. Institutional Biosafety Approval**

Do you need IBC Approval for this study?  No  Yes - BUA # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OHSR OFFICE USE ONLY**

DATE RECEIVED IN OHSR: 2/2/11 by SRA PROTOCOL # 10-334 EP 110  
 DATE OF IRB REVIEW: 1/28/11 by FW APPROVAL CATEGORY: 45 CFR 46.110 (#1)  
 DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMMENTS: original in 11/8/10; reviewed not approved 1/22/11 FW  
revisions in 1/20/11; reviewed by FW as APR-EP  
final revisions in 2/2/11; reviewed by SRA, approved FW, approved

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

PROJECT TITLE: Inspiring athletes' through Mentoring: A case study of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program

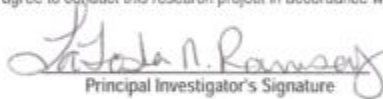
**A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
  - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Human Subjects Research
  - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
  - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Human Subjects Research in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise OHSR, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Human Subjects Research before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

LaTosha Nicole Ramsey

Printed name of Principal Investigator

  
Principal Investigator's Signature

Oct 5, 2010

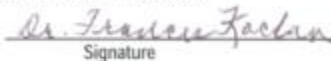
Date

**B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
2. I certify that the project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol using conventional or experimental methodology.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
4. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
5. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant adverse events and/or effects to the OHSR in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
6. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the OHSR by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.
7. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology

Dr. Frances Kochan

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor

  
Signature

11/3/2010

Date

**C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE**

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Sheri Downer

Printed name of Department Head

  
Signature

11/5/10

Date





**8. PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**

(400 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

- I.) A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal, (Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)
- II.) A brief description of the methodology,
- III.) Expected and/or possible outcomes, and,
- IV.) A statement regarding the potential significance of this research project.

I. This study examines a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry program. According to a legendary coach, FCA is "America's best-kept secret" (Dunn, 2010). American society is crazy about intercollegiate athletics, however what goes on behind the scenes is often overlooked (Baker, 2007). Since the early 1950's FCA has had roots within intercollegiate athletics impacting the lives of student athletes and coaches by giving them meaning that "stretches beyond sports" (Dunn, 2010; Baker 2007). Student athletes face many challenges, having to balance academics, athletics and a social life (Watt & Moore, 2001). There are many parties within higher education that contribute to the success of these athletes. Nevertheless, research on a FCA chaplaincy ministry program and its affects on student athletes and all others involved in the program is sparse. More empirical evidence on mentoring student-athletes and the benefits and outcomes of a FCA Chaplaincy ministry program is needed to advance the literature.

II. This research uses case study methods of inquiry, a purposeful sample of a FCA Chaplain, staff members, student-athletes serving on the football FCA leadership team, former football student athletes, coaches and athletic department staff and other persons involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Ministry at a southern division I NCAA institution will be used. Data will be collected, coded, analyzed for themes.

III. The purpose of this study seeks to describe the mentoring program, identify outcomes for all those involved and propose lessons learned for those interested in similar ministries. One focus of this study will be to examine student development from a variety of perspectives. Additionally, there will also be an examination of the spiritual aspect of this program and its impact on those involved.

IV. Examining the purpose and experiences of a FCA football chaplain's ministry opens up a new arena of research in higher education. Little is known about the affects that chaplains have on the student athletes they mentor and interact with on a daily basis. Student athletes are a unique population (Watt & Moore, 2001). There is limited research on mentoring and spiritual development of these students. Colleges and universities aim to develop all aspects of a college students' life except for the parts that deal with spirituality. Spirituality often is an area of student development that is neglected in higher education; nevertheless college students search for a sense of meaning and purpose that is not fostered or developed (Chickering, Dalton & Stamm, 2006).

**9. PURPOSE.**

**a. Clearly state all of the objectives, goals, or aims of this project.**

Five research questions were posed as aims for this study:

1. What are the primary factors that facilitate the development and implementation of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplaincy ministry program?
2. What are the factors that hinder or serve as barriers for a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplaincy ministry program?
3. How does mentorship involvement in a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplaincy ministry program affect student-athletes spiritual formation and student development?
4. How does the Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplaincy ministry program affect others involved?
5. What is the assessment of the spiritual development of those involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes chaplaincy ministry program?

**b. How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

Results from this study will be used for a doctoral dissertation, presentations and future publications.

10a. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **CITI is required. Be as specific as possible.** (Attach extra page if needed.) *All non AU-affiliated key personnel must attach **CITI certificates of completion.***

Principle Investigator LaTosha N. Ramsey Title: Graduate Student E-mail address ramseln@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

1. Principal investigator and sole interviewer
2. Obtain informed consent.
3. Transcribe data from tape recordings into text format
4. Collect interview data, analyze transcripts, and prepare final report.

Individual: Dr. Frances Kochan Title: Professor E-mail address kochafr@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Dissertation supervisor and advisor

Individual: Dr. Paulette Dilworth Title: Assist. VP E-mail address ppd0001@auburn.edu  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Dissertation committee member

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roles / Responsibilities:**

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH.** List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E.**  
(See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)  
Data collection will take place through interviews in various offices on Auburn University's campus, Athletic Department and Haley Room 3002.

12. PARTICIPANTS.

a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project.

(If data are existing, check here  and describe the population from whom data were collected.)

All students are from Auburn University and are participants in the Auburn Fellowship of Christian Athletes program.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplain from a selected university and staff members

Student-athletes serving on the football FCA leadership team (The participants will be 19 years and older because the study seeks to work with sophomores or higher as we want participants who have been in the program for at least one year.)

Former football student athletes

Coaches and athletic department staff

Other persons involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Ministry

b. Describe why is this participant population is appropriate for inclusion in this research project. (Include criteria for selection.)

Participants were selected based on their involvement with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football Chaplain. The FCA Football Chaplain's mentorship relationship with football student athletes creates a unique opportunity to aid in their student development as college students and athletes.

c. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate.

(See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

Participants from this study will not be coerced. Before data is collected the study will be explained to participants and that their participation is strictly voluntary. Only those students who volunteer to participate will be selected and included in the data collection phase of this study. According to Creswell (2002), a case study requests a minimum of three participants.

I. Identify a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football team Chaplain

II. Identify potential football student athletes' participants, coaches, former student athletes, FCA staff members and athletic department staff with help of the football team chaplain.

III. Students athletes will be recruited by those who are on the FCA leadership team or involved in a mentorship relationship with the team Chaplain

IV. The team Chaplain will email potential participants with an email script (Appendix B) prepared by the researcher. The Chaplain will inform participants that this study is strictly voluntary and if they decide to participate they can contact the researcher by email or phone.

V. Contact all participants to answer questions and schedule individual interviews.

VI. Meet with each individual during the interview, get consent forms signed, and ensure confidentiality.

What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will recruit?  No  Yes – the number is \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?  No  Yes – the number is \_\_\_\_\_

d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here .)

Select the type of compensation:  Monetary  Incentives

Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)

Extra Credit (State the value)

Other

Description:

### 13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

a. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants.

(  Check here if this is "not applicable"; you are using existing data.)

Step 1: Meet with each participant and issue them a consent form informing them of the aims, risks, benefits and purpose of study

Step 2: Ask participant if he/she has any questions regarding the study

Step 3: Inform the participant that information gathered from all interviews will be confidential, participants will be assigned code numbers and a master code list will be kept separate from all other data. The master code list will be used to link data from 1st and 2nd interviews. All identification tags will be removed

Step 4: Remind participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time

Step 5: Assign individual code names to participants once they agree to participate

Step 6: Schedule and conduct interviews based on the availability of the participants

Step 7: Audio tape and transcribe interview

Step 8: Inform participants of the follow-up interview

Step 9: Audio tape and transcribe interview

Step 10: Ensure anonymity in expressing that all information discussed shall remain confidential

Step 11: Conduct data analysis

b. Describe the procedures you will use in order to address your purpose. Provide a step-by-step description of how you will carry out this research project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the

Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 6 of this form.)

Qualitative methodology was selected for this study. Qualitative research investigates research questions of how, what, and why in situations calling for in-depth exploration to provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The researcher has chosen to use a case study which examines "contemporary events, uses direct observation of the events being studied and interviews of the persons involved in the events" (Yin, 2009).

Once final approval is granted by participants, an initial interview is scheduled. Interviews are the primary method of data collection for this study. Open-ended questions will be employed to address the purpose of this study. Each participant will be interviewed at least once, followed by a second interview.

The second interview will be conducted mainly for member checking and validation. Member checking is a term used to determine the trustworthiness of the data analysis. By participating in member checking, study participants have the opportunity to review the researcher's conclusions to ensure that they accurately depict the participants' personal experiences (Creswell, 2007). Also, this second interview will provide an opportunity for participants to elaborate on any information presented from a previous interview.

To better ensure the risk of breaching confidentiality all individual identifiers of each participant from all interviews will be removed and replaced with a code name. All participants will be reminded that all information discussed within this interview shall not be discussed outside of the location.

**13c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.**

(e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

Instruments being used to complete this project include the following: interview questions, e-mail, audio, paper, pens, and video recording. These six instruments will be the only tools used to collect interview data. All aforementioned instrument are essential to the data collection process.

**d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.**

The researcher will use the qualitative software of Atlas.ti to code and analyze the narrative data collect after completing interviews. Qualitative research analysis will be used to investigate research questions of how, what, and why which will allow for in-depth exploration providing a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2004).

**14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D. (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 1.)**

The risks for this study are breach of confidentiality and possible coercion.

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D.

Mitigation for this research will be addressed as follows:

Data will be kept confidential. Participants will be issued informed consent letters. Before data is collected the study will be explained to participants and they will be informed their participation is strictly voluntary. Only those students who volunteer to participate will be selected and included in the data collection phase of this study. Emphasis will be made that no specific or identifying information (such as SSN or name) is collected during the interview and the participant should have a reasonable expectation of anonymity. Participants will be informed that code list and video/audio tape from the interview will be destroyed after transcription and will be anonymous. Code list will be kept in a secure and locked area when not in use.

If using the Internet to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

*(These are likely listed on the server's website.)*

N/A

16. **BENEFITS.**

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.

*(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12e.)* Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

Results from this study will help Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplains foster and develop mentoring programs that aid in the student development and more specifically spiritual formation and development of the student athletes they mentor.

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

- a. Will data be collected as anonymous?  Yes  No If "YES", skip to part "g".  
(*"Anonymous"* means that you will not collect any identifiable data.)
- b. Will data be collected as confidential?  Yes  No  
(*"Confidential"* means that you will collect and protect identifiable data.)
- c. If data are collected as confidential, will the participants' data be coded or linked to identifying information?  
 Yes (if so, describe how linked.)  No  
Participants' data will be coded or linked to identifying information to link data from 1st and 2nd interviews.

d. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.  
I will code participants' data and link the data with identifying information to enable the analyzing of demographic data such as academic classification, professional title, gender, race

e. Where will code lists be stored? (Building, room number?)  
Code lists will be stored in Haley Center, room 3002 in a locked cabinet drawer.

f. Will data collected as "confidential" be recorded and analyzed as "anonymous"?  Yes  No  
(If you will maintain identifiable data, protections should have been described in #15.)

g. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.  
I. Use an informed consent form that will ask all participants to maintain confidentiality  
II. All audio transcriptions will be destroyed after completed and analyzed  
III. All identifying information will be coded and kept in a separate folder  
IV. All data will be stored on the researchers personal laptop and jump drive which will remain in personal safe when not in use  
V. Code list will be kept in a separate locked area from consents and data  
IV. All information will also be advised by Dr. Frances Kochan to ensure that all participants have their anonymity protected

h. Who will have access to participants' data?  
(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)  
Dr. Frances Kochan (faculty advisor) and Dr. Paulette Dilworth will be the only individuals outside of myself to have access to participant data.

i. When is the latest date that confidential data will be retained? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained. )  
Transcriptions will be maintain indefinitely for future research opportunities. Participants will be asked for permission to maintain the transcriptions for future research.

j. How will the confidential data be destroyed? (NOTE: Data recorded and analyzed as "anonymous" may be retained indefinitely.)  
Audio/Video tape from interviews and code list will be destroyed by the primary investigator after transcription is completed.  
Code list will be destroyed by January 31, 2012.



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 1/28/11 to 1/27/12 Protocol # 10-334 EP 1101

**INFORMED CONSENT  
for a Research Study entitled**

**Inspiring athletes through mentoring: A case study of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program**

**You are invited to participate in a research study** that investigates a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Chaplaincy Ministry Program. The purpose of this study is to describe the mentoring program, identify outcomes for all those involved and propose lessons learned for those interested in similar ministries. One focus of this study will be to examine student development from a variety of perspectives. Additionally, there will also be an examination of the spiritual aspect of this program and its impact on those involved. This study is being conducted by LaTosha N. Ramsey, under the direction of Dr. Frances K. Kochan in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football team Chaplain, former student athlete, student athlete participating in the sport of football or involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at the selected research site and are age 19 or older. Participants will be 19 years and older because this study seeks to work with sophomores or higher and participants who have been in the program for at least one year.

**What will be involved if you participate?** If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to provide information and recall your experiences as a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football team Chaplain, football student athlete, or someone who is affiliated with the FCA at a Intercollegiate Division I NCAA Institution in a one-on-one face-to-face interview and in a follow-up interview scheduled at a later date. Your total time commitment will be approximately two to four (2-4) hours.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in this study. All information given will be kept confidential. Information will be reported in an anonymous manner and no identifiable information will be used.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you can expect to contribute to a body of literature that shows the impact a Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football Chaplaincy ministry program has on the character and student development of student athletes'. Additionally, benefits of this inquiry will expand best practices for mentorship of student athletes and their student development specifically spirituality formation and development. Although there are no direct benefits to you, you can expect the data generated will most assuredly add to the conversation on mentorship and spirituality of student athletes and the role of chaplains within intercollegiate athletics.

Participant's initials \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 2

4036 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5221; Telephone: 334-844-4460; Fax: 334-844-3072

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**Will you receive compensation for participating?** If you decide to participate, there will be no compensation given.

**Are there any costs?** If you decide to participate, there is no associated cost.

**If you change your mind about participating,** you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Educational Foundations Leadership and Technology.

**Your privacy will be protected.** Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. There will be no identification tags attached to any participant of this study. Furthermore, in addition to the data remaining confidential by the researcher, as a participant one must agree not to speak of any information attained during the course of this study including the revealing of other participants and subject matters discussed. Information collected through your participation may only be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, book and/or presented at a professional conference/meeting. By consenting to participate in this study you give the researcher permission to maintain transcriptions indefinitely for future research opportunities stated above.

**If you have questions about this study,** please ask them now or contact LaTosha N. Ramsey at (786) 269-8273 or via email [ramseln@auburn.edu](mailto:ramseln@auburn.edu). You may also contact Dr. Frances K. Kochan at (334) 844-4460. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334)-844-5966 or e-mail at [hsubjec@auburn.edu](mailto:hsubjec@auburn.edu) or [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

**HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature                      Date

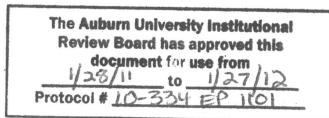
\_\_\_\_\_  
Investigator obtaining consent                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-Investigator                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name





AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

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