

International Student–Athlete Adjustment Issues: Advising Recommendations for Effective Transitions

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Through an extensive literature review, student–athlete college transition issues as well as concerns of international student-athletes are identified. Research on general student advising, developmental advising, and mentoring literature points to successful tactics for assisting domestic students, international students, and student-athletes through the transition to college life. This review culminates in a table that combines findings from previous studies into a set of suggested practices for academic advisors working with international student-athletes. Advisors can use this research to support international student-athletes during recruitment and throughout their collegiate career.

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While the front-facing image of intercollegiate athletics—particularly at the Division I level—presents quasiprofessionalism with superstar athletes and coaches, the majority of the student–athlete population looks far different. Rather than elite football and men’s basketball players, most student-athletes, including a meaningful number of international competitors, compete in nonrevenue sports. Although previous literature has been devoted to studying student-athletes in various capacities as both scholar and competitor (Lally & Kerr, 2005; Potuto & O’Hanlon, 2007; Reiter, Liput, & Nirmal, 2007), most of it focused on general advising and counseling of the entire student–athlete population (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Etzel, Ferrante, & Pinkney, 1996; Hinkle, 1994; Hurley & Cunningham, 1984), and little of it has been dedicated to the international student-athlete (ISA). A few studies addressed transitional issues faced by student-athletes (Meadows, Pierce, & Popp, 2011; Ridinger & Pastore, 2000), but most presented purely qualitative data or were based on small sample sizes.

The dearth of information creates problems for those accommodating the population of ISAs on

U.S. university campuses. In the 2012–2013 academic year, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (n.d.b) reported that 8,653 of the 186,640 (4.6%) Division I student-athletes came from outside the United States. However, in some sports, the percentage of ISAs was higher; for example, 33.2% of the participants in men’s tennis are considered ISAs. For institutions in conferences that sponsor various athletic competition venues, including the Olympic sports (e.g., Big Ten, Pac-12), the efforts to integrate ISAs into the American higher educational experience create opportunities and challenges for advisors. Specifically, advisors need to understand the factors that influence ISA success. They also need to know the reasons student-athletes leave an institution.

Recruitment and retention of an ISA—like any student-athlete—cost the institution money. From the official visit to the offer of full or partial scholarships for sport competition at the Division I level, institutions that pursue ISAs make a substantial financial investment. As of 2012, the NCAA reported that Division I institutions spent, on average per student-athlete, between \$36,000 (for NCAA Football Championship Subdivision schools) and \$102,000 (for NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision schools) (Fulks, 2013). A 2012 *New York Times* article reported that international students can pay three times as much (or more) as in-state domestic students in tuition and fees at U.S. public universities (Lewin, 2012). University athletic departments that pay part of the tuition, room, and board bill for ISAs likely invest more than they do for domestic student-athletes. Therefore, to protect their investment, college athletic departments and universities must devote resources to the success and retention of ISAs.

Existing literature indicates a preference for a targeted and comprehensive advising model via a specialized unit and a support services office (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; Clark & Parette, 2002; Ender, Winston, & Miller, 1982; O’Banion, 1972/1994/2009). By promoting a developmental advising approach (Broughton & Neyer, 2011; O’Banion, 1972/1994/2009) and utilizing advisors to promote support services across campus,

universities can better support and promote success of ISAs.

This review of the literature offers a twofold purpose: provide valuable information to increase advisor understanding of ISAs and suggest recommendations for practice. First, the existing literature is presented on academic advising and athletic academic support systems at U.S. universities as well as the special needs of three populations: student-athletes, ISAs, and international students. Second, the featured literature demonstrates commonalities in the recommendations for advising and mentoring student-athletes and international students. This breadth of data informs possible best-fit practices for advisors to utilize when working with the ISA population.

Unique View of Sport

ISAs view their athletic participation differently than do U.S. student-athletes, which may explain the emphasis they place on athletics and academics. Popp, Hums, and Greenwell (2009) assessed the differences in the perceived purpose of intercollegiate athletic participation between domestic student-athletes and ISAs. Student-athletes in 16 different sports from 50 countries, including the United States, responded to the researchers' questionnaire. The overall results indicated that U.S. student-athletes tend to place a higher priority on competition than do their ISA counterparts. The findings may explain the different impacts of transition issues as articulated by native student-athletes and ISAs matriculating into U.S. higher education.

Not all international students, and thus not all ISAs, can be categorized in any single way. Although this review provides a set of proposed practices, like all suggestions, they feature comprehensive ideas that may apply to most ISAs. A single model cannot suitably fit every individual, and differences between Western European, non-Western European, and other international students add to the diversity of students competing on U.S. campuses (Trice, 2004).

Adjustment Issues

International Students

By identifying and understanding the challenges ISAs face in their transition to life in the United States and as student-athletes, advisors take the first step in determining the best course of support and advising. Ridinger and Pastore (2000), who were among the first to address the acclimation of ISAs to U.S. higher education and

athletics, noted the absence of research on ISA adjustment into college. The results of their survey showed that ISAs were better adjusted to the new environment than international students not competing in intercollegiate athletics. However, the researchers cautioned readers to consider the small sample size ($N = 16$) of ISAs when interpreting the results. Although not generalizable, Ridinger and Pastore's study provides an interesting basis on which to build further inquiry. For example, ISAs showed the highest adjustment mean scores among all subgroups studied; they scored higher than domestic in-state nonathlete students and student-athletes, domestic out-of-state nonathlete students and student-athletes, and international nonathlete students. The authors also pointed out that the ISAs in their study enjoyed a structured support system that may not be available to ISAs in other situations.

Meadows et al. (2011) expanded upon Ridinger and Pastore's (2000) preliminary examination of ISAs and studied the recruitment of ISAs by surveying a diverse population on the greatest challenges they faced in their first year of college. Their survey was completed by 355 student-athletes at 15 NCAA Division I institutions; 192 of the respondents hailed from foreign countries, including Canada. The researchers found that the three most common ISA struggles involved homesickness, adjusting to U.S. culture, and negotiating the language. The results from Meadows et al. may indicate that the broad struggles of ISAs throughout all of Division I signify a need to improve social and interpersonal adjustments to alleviate some stressors that may lead to academic failure or withdrawal from the institution.

Realizing the connection between the adjustment issues faced by international students, including athletes, Abel (2002) wrote an article that outlines specific educational challenges these special populations face. Abel discerned that international students may not expect the levels of individualized learning and independence, the competitive classroom environment, and the time expectations for work outside of the classroom typical of U.S. postsecondary institutions. With knowledge of ISA concerns, practitioners may raise awareness of the potential difficulties of ISAs in managing their transition to the new environment. Abel acknowledged the role of the language barrier in impeding the transition process of international students—and thus ISAs.

This finding reinforces the results of Meadows et al. (2011), who suggested that international students seek out tutoring, develop visual models for studying, learn time management and planning skills, and forge relationships with professors.

Andrade (2005) addressed the transitional issues unique to the general international student population during the first year in a U.S. college or university. Many of the issues encountered by international students overlap with those of domestic students: adjusting to a new environment, leaving home for the first time, developing effective study habits, and choosing a major; however, these potential struggles are compounded for international students by language barriers and cultural differences. Consistent with the finding of Popp, Hums, and Greenwell (2010) that ISAs consider their intercollegiate athletic experience a relatively less significant aspect of their overall education, Andrade's study illustrated that academic issues such as those associated with language barriers, including a high level of commitment to their studies, affected the social transitions of international students.

Andrade (2005) also concluded that formal, organized clubs and activities significantly helped international students adjust socially. Perhaps the team atmosphere experienced by ISAs in their sport may mitigate some problems associated with matriculation, but a developed sense of belonging remains a transitional concern. Andrade also argued that specific cultural and linguistic challenges, which affect nearly every facet of the international student transitional process, are too often neglected.

Student-Athletes

Just as literature on the international student population can relate to ISAs, examining previous literature on the student-athlete transition can provide further insight into the unique needs of the ISA population. Student-athletes face demands from their sport that affect their life as a student. Comeaux, Speer, Taustine, and Harrison (2011) explained, "Striking the proper balance between their academic and athletic lives can be difficult for transitioning student-athletes, and they must continually negotiate the dual roles of student and athlete" (p. 36). They suggested that these competing roles coupled with the time demands of each can lead to both academic

difficulties and social isolation for the student-athlete.

Parham (1993) found six challenges that differentiate student-athletes from those who do not participate in NCAA sports: handling both athletic and academic pursuits; negotiating socialization through periods of isolation caused by athletic participation; dealing with athletic success or lack thereof; coping with injuries; balancing the demands from various relationships, including those with teammates, coaches, friends, and family; and coping with the end of one's athletic career. Etzel et al. (1996) also studied the special needs of the student-athlete population and identified four unique needs similar to those illuminated by Parham, including issues related to athletic success or failure and balancing competing academic and athletic demands.

As a result of their unique challenges, student-athletes need a support system different from their nonathlete peers (Etzel et al., 1996). Although not specific to ISAs, the challenges identified by Parham (1993) and Etzel et al. (1996) warrant consideration, particularly those that can factor into some of the exceptionally disruptive challenges (e.g., language barrier, cultural transition) to the ISA population (Meadows et al., 2011). Personnel of support services units may implement suggestions for helping student-athletes when developing resources for the international population, and when making referrals for ISAs, advisors should note the services proven helpful to domestic student-athletes or international subpopulations.

Targeted Support

In a finding that contradicts that of Ridinger and Pastore (2000), Popp et al. (2010) determined that ISAs demonstrate lower adjustment to U.S. colleges than their U.S. counterparts. In addition to a small sample size, the comprehensive support systems cited in the Ridinger and Pastore (2000) study may account for the disparity in findings. Therefore, recognizing the potential power of comprehensive support services offices for student-athletes may help athletics administrators and student affairs professionals mitigate the most troubling issues facing ISAs.

The success of the student-athlete as well as the financial investment of the athletic department hinge on student-athletes persisting through their adjustment period. Popp et al. (2010) explained

that the acclimation experiences of the ISAs differ from those of U.S. student-athletes both in joining the new team and in meeting educational obligations. That is, ISAs constitute a subpopulation among student-athletes and should be evaluated specifically and separately so that administrators and coordinators dedicate the most appropriate resources to their recruitment and success.

Despite the literature expounding on the nature of ISA challenges, which blend situations encountered by the international and the student-athlete populations, practitioners need more information to advise ISAs. Specifically, they need to identify the advising, mentoring, and support practices that best address vexing concerns. Narrowing the findings of previous literature leads to a recommended set of suggested practices.

Hurley and Cunningham (1984) conducted one of the earliest studies of special student-athlete needs and made suggestions for best practices for providing support for educational and personal development. Citing the longstanding accusations that Division I universities, in particular, focus on athletic performance over academic growth or career preparation, they noted the importance of supporting student-athletes' academic aspirations in addition to their athletic experience. The authors, in findings consistent with the subsequent studies of Parham (1993) and Etzel et al. (1996), listed the academic skill acquisitions demanded of the student-athlete, including acquiring time-management skills, adjusting to a new and more independent lifestyle, as well as learning to interact with professors in the academic setting, and they pointed out that these constitute a particular challenge to the student-athlete population, who commit more than 20 hours per week solely to their sport.

Hurley and Cunningham (1984) also addressed the interrelatedness of academic, psychological, and social support necessary for the academic success of student-athletes, noting that "loneliness affects academic and athletic performance, poor athletic performance affects academic performance, and so on" (p. 55). Meadows et al. (2011) found that ISAs, in particular, struggle with loneliness and homesickness after moving to the United States. Consequently, by providing effective advising and support services that range in scope and type, policy makers offer the best model for ISA success and retention.

Support Models for Advising Student-Athletes Comprehensive Services

Hinkle (1994) suggested that support services for student-athletes should include educational, developmental, and remedial programs. Based on the lengthened and more complex transition period for ISAs identified by Meadows et al. (2011), institutional personnel should provide extra support to them. In addition, Howard-Hamilton and Sina (2001) suggested that athletic departments offering student-athlete support services should work closely with academic units and academic advisors to foster positive relationships and form connections that can augment the assistance they provide.

Other recommendations for working with student-athletes come from Watt and Moore (2001) in their review of historical and current trends in the makeup of the student-athlete population. The authors provided a list of recommendations for student affairs practitioners—such as advisors—including educating both faculty members and coaches about the unique balance between athletic and academic life; designing courses and seminars targeted to student-athletes that emphasize time management, career development, and study skills; establishing flexible times for e-programming, counseling, and advising; maintaining a network of former student-athletes; and arranging opportunities for faculty members and coaches to meet about student-athletes on campus.

Chartrand and Lent (1987) also studied and stressed the importance of including social and psychological services in the student-athlete support model. In their initial review of literature, they found special concerns of student-athletes that separate them from the general student population, and they determined that services should be provided to help accommodate those differences. They pointed out that these issues extended to areas other than conflicts student-athletes experience during their playing years to those that affect them after their years of eligibility.

Although many ISAs participate in sports with relatively wide professional opportunities available after graduation, such as tennis and golf, they need development opportunities that prepare them for life after sport (NCAA, n.d.b; Popp, Pierce, & Hums, 2011). However, this suggestion presents unique challenges, as noted by Watson (2005), who conducted comparative research of

attitudes toward seeking counseling assistance and found that student-athletes were less likely to seek help than their peers. Watson suggested that student-athletes hold a more negative view of counseling received outside of the athletic department due to stigma and a perception that those unfamiliar with life in sports do not understand the issues exclusive to the student-athlete population. Watson suggested incorporation of counseling services into the student-athlete support services system as a potential counter to these negative attitudes toward help seeking. Advisors can provide domestic student-athletes and ISAs with information about typical struggles so that they understand that some of their concerns do not differ from those of other student cohorts.

In addition to the survey, Watson's (2005) recommendations are based, in part, on the prior work of Broughton and Neyer (2001), who had also reviewed student-athlete advising and support systems. The author duo had concluded that a developmental-style model for academic advising and counseling programs, as detailed in the college advising literature, not only best fit but was also necessary to provide support to the student-athlete population.

Developmental and Holistic Advising

The developmental model of advising was first explained by O'Banion (1972/1994/2009) and involves understanding and addressing the whole student, not merely academic courses and schedules. Ender et al. (1982) expanded on the discussion of developmental advising practice by applying it to career and personal as well as academic goals. They characterized developmental advising with seven principles that served as an operational definition: It is undertaken throughout the student's academic career and is goal driven; addresses human growth; promotes a personal, caring, and empathetic relationship; features the advisor as a role model and mentor; demands collaboration between academic and student affairs departments; and encourages the utilization of all campus and community resources to best support the student (Ender et al., 1982, pp. 7–8).

Broughton and Neyer (2001) noted that an ideal support system should be designed around the comprehensive developmental model and include psychological services as well as athletic academic and life skills coordinators; the former works with student-athletes to help them maintain

athletic eligibility based on NCAA academic progress rules, and the latter practitioner works with student-athletes to develop skills related to internships, the job search, résumé development, study skills, and the like.

Carodine, Almond, and Gratto (2001) also advocated for a holistic approach to providing student-athletes with support throughout their transition to and through college, which they deemed the most effective model in practice. Their research focused on the model proposed by Etzel et al. (1996), which broke support services into categories: academic, athletic, personal and social, and general. Building upon those categorical recommendations, Carodine et al. cited the following practices in the best support-services offices: orientation programs; career and life skills development; career planning and placement; NCAA Challenging Athletic Minds for Personal Success (CHAMPS)/Life Skills (now known as NCAA *Life Skills*) programming (NCAA, n.d.a); academic advising that includes eligibility monitoring; and academic support services that include tutoring, mentoring, and diagnostic testing.

The Student–Athlete Advising Approach

Clark and Parette (2002) offered a variation of the services for athletes model proposed by Jordan and Denson (1994). They termed their new version the *student–athlete advising approach* (SAA). Their revised model included five specific areas of support: education and transitions; academic pursuits and transitions; personal and social issues; collaboration; and leadership, scholarship, and self-advocacy.

In the SAA, Clark and Parette (2002) broke down each of these five components into service suggestions for universities. For support of academic goals and transitions, they made suggestions almost identical to those offered by Carodine et al. (2001). In terms of personal and social support, they called for implementation of a peer mentorship program and access to professional counselors to support student-athletes' psychological well-being. For collaboration, they pointed out that parents, athletics staff, coaches, and faculty members can share in meeting student needs; no one should be out of the support loop. Furthermore, they encouraged students to engage in leadership development through sport and other student organizations, and they reaffirmed efforts for empowering the student-athlete to be a self-advocate.

Support Models for Advising International Students

Individualized Advising

In addition to providing comprehensive and all-inclusive support services in a centralized location, academic advisors must receive training to deal with the special needs of international students and ISAs. Lee, Abd-Ella, and Burks (1981) explained that international students often view the relationship with their advisor as one of the most crucial in their academic career. They found that the athletic academic coordinator—as an advisor-like figure in matters of eligibility but not for specific classes—may exert a great deal of influence on student-athletes; therefore, academic advisors and others (e.g., athletic academic coordinators) within the university who work with ISAs must know and address the unique challenges of student-athletes.

Clark and Pyle (1986) stressed the importance of training and preparation for advisors working with international students (including ISAs) because they present needs that require specialized resources and professional development. Specifically, they argued that advisors should receive resources to access unique training opportunities, such as professional seminars, to equip them for assisting international enrollees.

Where multiple staff members are not hired to provide all possible support services, academic advisors and athletic academic coordinators can utilize the developmental advising model to address transitional issues with ISAs (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; O'Banion, 1972/1994/2009). With appropriate training, both academic advisors and athletic academic coordinators can advise ISAs not just on academic and eligibility issues but also on social, personal, and career concerns. In all cases, the practitioner takes a mentor-like approach to working with the student.

Stebbleton (2011) applied a developmental model to academic advising for immigrant college students. He advocated use of a developmental approach because it focuses on individualized interaction that does not generalize and instead encourages practitioners to seek information about and gain understanding of the differences between each immigrant student. Stebbleton reminded readers that, like all undergraduates, no two immigrant students are alike, and their specific needs should be approached individually and holistically.

The developmental advising approach presents some challenges to practitioners. Brown and Rivas (1993) pointed to the need to cultivate an understanding and sensitivity to cultural diversity over a multitude of populations. They argued that rapport must be established with the student in the course of developmental advising, and without a thorough understanding and empathetic approach to student cultural differences, such relationships remain elusive. Brown and Rivas also pointed to the disproportionate number of academically underprepared ethnic minorities who will need help with academic competency. To best advise underrepresented students, advisors must also employ practices not specifically addressed in the developmental paradigm; that is, advisors must acknowledge possible biases and accept cultural differences.

Without invoking principles of developmental advising, Andrade (2005) provided suggestions for mitigating the challenges encountered by international students at one U.S. institution. Specifically, international students benefited from social involvement on campus and communication with professors because these types of engagements developed their English-language speaking skills. Therefore, both academic advisors and athletic academic coordinators should promote on-campus activities as means of promoting English as a second language (ESL). The students in Andrade's study also found that setting achievable short- and long-term goals helped their academic development; however, some participants also indicated that they did not know where to go for assistance and therefore sparingly used formal on-campus support services. These findings should encourage practitioners to make ISAs aware of available resources both within athletic academic support units and throughout the entire university.

Specialized Services

To help international students acclimate to the educational culture at U.S. colleges and universities, Sarkodie-Mensah (1998) suggested that institutions create and publicize the availability of specialized orientations for international students that give an overview of the U.S. classroom culture and information on available campus resources. As later confirmed in Andrade's (2005) research, Sarkodie-Mensah suggested that making international students aware of available services helped them overcome difficulties with

college adjustment. Sarkodie-Mensah stressed the value of periodic, continuous outreach that assists with international student transitions to the classroom and emphasized the usefulness of campus libraries for orientation and resource repositories.

In addition to pushing for orientation to resources, Burrell and Kim (1998) advocated for workshops and specialized courses in which the cultural differences in education between the United States and an international student's home country are explained. They pointed out that although ESL education must be offered during the transition, workshops or specialized courses that focus on study skills, classroom expectations, communicating with instructors, and learning the curriculum improve international students' ability to transition into the academic demands of the U.S. institution.

Ghosh, Javalgi, and Whipple (2007) focused their research on target needs of special populations and included an overview of the offerings of successful support services for international students. They identified comprehensive programs with diverse offerings as the most successful, particularly those that included advising and counseling related to visas and immigration, remedial English writing and speaking courses, career services targeted at finding jobs in the United States and abroad, and special financial aid officers who address issues of student employment and sources of internal and external funding. Additionally, the authors noted that because they often place a high emphasis on education, international students appreciate services that explain graduate education options in their home countries and in the United States.

Peer Partners and Group Counseling

Peer and group advising as components of adjustment have proven effective throughout the international student transition. Quintrell and Westwood (1994) conducted a pilot program that paired international students with a domestic student as a peer partner throughout the academic year. Domestic student partners were asked to maintain contact with the international student at least twice a month. The posttest results indicated that the international students matched with a domestic peer partner were more likely to choose positive descriptors to characterize their first-year experience, to have utilized

on-campus resources, and to report gains in language fluency.

By piloting and studying a mental health support group for international students, Dipeolu, Jinhee, and Cooper (2007) confirmed the success of counseling. They studied a group comprised of a counselor and peers charged with providing support to international students adjusting to U.S. higher education. The results indicated that group counseling and support were successfully utilized to assist students through their transition, but they noted that cultural differences, gender dynamics in the home country, collaboration with offices around campus, and targeted outreach must be addressed when developing such groups.

Mentoring

Finally, mentoring relationships can benefit international students during their transition and maturation into an independent student during their first year. They can provide international students with assistance from faculty members or staff to supplement peer or counseling group support. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1978) wrote the seminal piece on mentorship, which was born from a psychological perspective. They described mentorship as a complex relationship that promotes individual growth in the transitional period from late adolescence into adulthood. An appealing strategy for helping ISAs at the start of their experience in the United States, mentorship is based on a relatively informal relationship but embodies characteristics that elevate the teacher, advisor, or sponsor beyond the traditionally outlined role to one that encourages student development and promotion (Levinson et al., 1978). Although informal mentor relationships may naturally develop, establishment of formal mentor-mentee pairs provides ISAs with a designated advisor who guides, supports, and cheers them through the transitional period into life as student-athletes. ISAs may also benefit from advisor-mentor relationships that help them feel connected to academics at the institution.

Whitfield and Edwards (2011) studied the challenges and critical needs that define mentoring relationships for minority advisees on campus, which include the international student and student-athlete populations, to promote career development. The study suggested that mentoring can advance career development and growth in underrepresented groups. The authors

suggested that mentors undertake the following efforts to support ISAs effectively: establish trust, set clear goals for success, use an effective communication style, and show an interest in professional growth and development rather than forge a friendship. They suggested that the mentor should expose the mentee to unfamiliar ways of thinking, methods to cope with both success and failure, and behaviors that lead to success.

Mentorships as a potential support system employed via the athletic academic coordinator may help ISAs with both personal support and academic success. Whitfield and Edwards (2011) stressed the importance of authentic mentor-mentee relationships, suggesting that implementation of a mentorship system, despite some drawbacks, provides support for addressing the educational, psychological, and athletic needs of ISAs.

Suggested Practices

Academic advisors and athletic academic coordinators well versed in student-athlete needs should give critical and abundant support to ISAs through the complex and difficult transitional period (Hinkle, 1994). Additionally, educators should not consider life skills and career development services optional; rather they must regard them as necessary to assist ISAs with cultural adjustment issues as well as the possible end of an athletic career and the subsequent transition into a nonsport occupation (Carodine et al., 2001; Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Clark & Parette, 2002; Popp et al., 2011; Watson, 2005).

Meadows et al. (2011) noted issues with and sources of assistance for cultural and language adjustment experienced by ISAs. U.S. institutions should provide and promote ESL courses to support ISAs as well as other forms of assistance with the cultural transition. Employing designated staff members to serve as mentors may help remedy some of the homesickness, cultural, and language concerns expressed by ISAs.

By combining a comprehensive array of support services that address the educational, athletic, psychological, career development, and life skills needs of ISAs, institutions demonstrate a welcoming atmosphere designed for ISA success. By implementing developmental academic advising and providing a formalized mentor system to support ISAs, athletics and university administrators offer support to ISAs while promoting growth and achievement.

Based on the recommendations offered, Table 1 shows suggestions that combine the most salient aspects of the models suggested or tested in previous literature. It features the ideals of developmental advising as proposed by O'Banion (1972/1994/2009), expanded upon by Ender et al. (1984), and advocated as a useful model for student-athletes by Broughton and Neyer (2001). The suggestions place the academic advisor and athletic academic coordinator as mentor-coordinators utilizing strategies for advising defined in the developmental model (Ender et al., 1984; O'Banion, 1972/1994/2009). All of these practices are best implemented via a coordinated effort between academic advising units and athletic support services and follows a comprehensive model similar to that suggested by Clark and Parette (2002) to encourage the recruited ISA to reach his or her full potential in a holistic manner.

Because the ISA transition is affected by both academic and athletic factors, practitioners from both academics and athletics must work together to provide advising and support services that address the issues specific to ISAs. The crux of these responsibilities may fall to academic advisors, who may first recognize the common challenges faced by ISAs during matriculation into U.S. higher education.

Units offering assistance to ISAs can improve effectiveness by employing an outside review or by surveying the students utilizing—or underutilizing—advising and other forms of support (Andrade, 2005; Dipeolu et al., 2007; Quintrell & Westwood, 1994; Watson, 2005). Practitioners can evaluate their current offerings and determine those needed to equip ISAs for a successful transition and continued persistence.

Future Research

The literature shows that a comprehensive review of advising and support services specific to ISAs is lacking; therefore, the value of the suggestions cannot be fully evaluated. Although the effectiveness of general advising and student services on college campuses has received significant attention, administrators must review the effectiveness of the advising and support services to the student-athlete population, including ISAs, to maximize resources and promote success among all matriculants.

Furthermore, to better individualize advising and mentoring provided to the ISA, practitioners must understand the factors that influence the transition of ISAs into college life. Some useful

Table 1. Assistance for adjustment issues for international student-athletes (ISAs)

Adjustment Issue	Area of Assistance for International Student-Athletes		
	Academic	Personal	Career
Homesickness		Develop rapport with the student-athlete to provide mentoring relationship that helps fill the familial void.	
Adjusting to U.S. culture	Provide resources during recruitment and upon arrival regarding the structure of the U.S. education system and classroom expectations.	Develop and promote programming that acclimates the ISA to campus culture and life in the local community. Encourage peer mentorship from upper division students.	Offer information regarding careers for specific majors, including applicability worldwide, not just within the United States.
Language barrier	Work with ISA to ensure that all professors are aware of student's ESL status. Direct ISA to international student services for additional support. Ensure enrollment in appropriate ESL courses during the first semester.	Connect ISAs with students and staff who speak common languages. Provide encouragement and positive reinforcement during meetings if student demonstrates frustration with speaking or writing.	Provide or refer to interview practice as well as résumé writing and review services.
Adjustment to competing demands	Assess the needs and skills of the ISA for best placement into classes.	Direct ISAs to counseling or psychological services as needed. Particularly, make students aware of any sport psychology support available. Implement support groups with other student-athletes.	Work with ISA and coach to form a well-structured schedule of classes, practice, and other athletic commitments for at least the first few semesters or until the ISA demonstrates time management skills.
Coping with on-field success or failure	Continue to stress the importance of a balanced schedule; pay particular attention to signs that athletic success interferes with focus on academics. Mentor through struggles to ensure progress in the classroom.	Direct ISAs dealing with extreme success or failure that interferes with personal or educational well-being to counseling or sport psychological services.	

Table 1. Assistance for adjustment issues for international student-athletes (ISAs) (cont.)

Adjustment Issue	Area of Assistance for International Student-Athletes		
	Academic	Personal	Career
Socialization	Encourage connections with nonathlete students in class.	Implement programming in the support services office that connects ISAs with others. Work with coaches to ensure seamless transition to the team. Encourage ISAs to get involved with clubs and organizations outside of athletics.	Coach the importance of networking and work environment behavior.
Dealing with the end of the athletic career	Ensure ISA continues to succeed academically post eligibility and provide or promote career services.	Continue mentor–coordinator relationship to provide additional support to the ISA during this transitional period. Direct ISAs with extreme transition issues to university counseling and sport psychology services.	Direct to career services or provide postathletic career planning sessions throughout ISA eligibility to ease the transition over time.
Adjusting to U.S. education	Provide or refer to comprehensive tutoring for at least the first year to ensure the ISA is academically successful and confident.		Beginning during recruitment, provide information on potential majors and related career fields. Develop specialized information that promotes the value of a U.S. college degree and its broad practical application.

Note. Academic, personal, and career as three components of advising comes from O'Banion's (1972/1994/2009) model of development advising. All adjustment issues were identified from previous literature reviewed (Abel, 2002; Andrade, 2005; Brown & Rivas, 1993; Clark & Parette, 2002; Comeaux et al., 2011; Etzel et al., 1996; Ghosh et al., 2007; Hinkle, 1994; Hurley & Cunningham, 1984; Meadows et al., 2011; Parham, 1993; Popp et al., 2011; Whitfield & Edwards, 2011).

questions include those that clearly elucidate the size of the ISA population at a university to inform practitioner understanding about the transition experience. Finally, an analysis of the factors that affect the success of ISAs, including coaches, team dynamics, and the type of sport should be conducted.

Once recommended studies have been completed and a best-fit model developed for the ISA transition

into U.S. higher education, scholars must test and evaluate it. The development of a tested model would greatly assist practitioners who educate, encourage, and advocate for ISAs every day.

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