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November 1, 2007

Ed 399 Independent Study Proposal for Spring 2008 with Professor Jack Dougherty

For this course I will examine the role college athletics play in higher education. My main data source will be "*The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values*," although I will incorporate additional books, articles, reviews and interviews to further understand this complex, controversial topic.

To be comparable with the writing intensity of traditional courses I will submit twenty pages of written assignments through a series of response papers, a research proposal and final paper. I will write a series of three response papers from the items cited in the bibliography below and how they reflect what Shulman and Bowen write in *The Game of Life*. These papers will address the following topics and due dates:

Feb 15: 3-page response to questions posed by Jack regarding opinions expressed in *The Game of Life* and conflicting evidence (Beauchamp) & (Scott), worth 15%

Feb 29: 3-page response to questions posed by Jack regarding the follow-up study, *Reclaiming the Game* (Bowen & Levin, Adams & Levin), worth 15%

March 25: 3-page exploratory paper focusing on possible solutions or alternatives to improving the negative consequences of college sports. Authors: Schulman and Bowen (*The Game of Life*), Knight Report & Gerdy (*Air Ball*), worth 15%

Also, I will submit a research proposal and paper, following the same criteria and expectations as in Ed 300:

April 11th -- 2-page research paper proposal, worth 15%

May 2nd -- 10-page research paper, worth 40%

Annotated Bibliography

A Call to Action: Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education. The Knight Commission. 2001. 21 Sept. 2006
<http://www.knightcommission.org/about/knight_commission_reports/>.

Initially the Knight Commission came out with a report in 1991 asking for Presidents' to have more control in addressing the inequalities in student-athlete education. "A Call to Action" reviews the progress since then and calls for even a stronger position to be made dealing with academic standards. Similar to other articles and reviews, it claims that the answer lies within the recruiting process of athletes.

Adams, William D. and Levin, Sarah. "College Sports and Educational Values." Harvard Graduate School of Education, Boston, MA. 27 Sept. 2006
<http://forum.wgbh.org/wgbh/forum.php?lecture_id=1413>.

This lecture given at the Harvard Graduate School of Education is going to be a great tool on expanding what is written from one of my other sources, "Reclaiming the Game." It hits on many of the key points and facts from Bowen and Levin's book but also elucidates to the audience on many other ideas. Levin explains in detail through a PowerPoint presentation facts that they briefly touched upon in the book and then talk about how they feel about the response they've received from "Reclaiming the Game."

Beauchamp, E. William. "Review of James L Shulman and William G. Bowen's *The Game of Life*." Journal of College and University Law 28 (2002): 687-755.

Beauchamp analyzes the data from "*The Game of Life*" and notices the increasing tension that lies between college athletics and academia. He also examines the data between the normal undergraduate student and that of a student-athlete further and in a different light that which Shulman and Bowen do. Another critical article that will look at this central issue of college athletics and academics from a different side.

Bowen, William G., and Sarah A. Levin. Reclaiming the Game: College Sports and Educational Values. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003.

Reclaiming the Game looks into the academic experience of recruited athletes as well as the admissions benefits they received while entering their respective school. The most shocking information in my eyes is the fact that a recruited athlete is extremely more likely to end up in the bottom third of their class than an average student. These kind of facts on top of numerous others make this book essential to my research.

Gerdy, John R. Air Ball: American Education's Failed Experiment with Elite Athletics. Mississippi University Press. 2006.

Gerdy believes that the intense desire to succeed in elite athletic programs have caused schools to overlook the highly damaging effects of these programs and he proposes a radical alternative or solution; shift elite sports away from higher education to private sports clubs and professional teams. In addition to offering a different solution to resolve the problems with elite athletes to incorporate aspects of the Knight study and Congressional rulings into his argument, which help to further my understandings of each author.

Scott, Hal. "What Game Are They Playing? A Review of *The Game of Life*." Journal of College and University Law 28 (2002): 719-755.

Scott addresses directly the mistakes he believes are dispersed throughout "*The Game of Life*." He states that athletics does not diminish the attractiveness of a college rather it enhances student life. He also draws on his own experience as well as those of his daughters, claiming that the "jock culture" is not as prevalent as Shulman and Bowen state. This will be important because of the contradictions and opinions directly relate to one of my key sources in "*The Game of Life*."

Murray, Sperber. Beer and Circus: How Big Time College Sports is Crippling Undergraduate Education. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 2000.

Unlike the other books, *Beer and Circus* looks at the higher profile sports (football and men's basketball) at the top NCAA Division I level. Murray claims that many

colleges and universities use these programs to lure in prospective students with this party atmosphere. In turn they rake in millions of dollars and ignore the academic failures of the student-athletes. He says this environment takes away from not only the athletes' education, but also those of the other undergraduates.

Shulman, James L., and William G. Bowen. The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001.

I will be using *The Game of Life* as a major contributor to my research this spring. It sparks debate to this day because the facts it presents talks about our nations leading higher education institutions and their loose academic standards for athletes. It has led to many reviews and critiques that I will be using along with another book "Reclaiming the Game."

Zimbalist, Andrew S. Unpaid Professionals: Commercialism and Conflict in Big-Time College Sports. Princeton University Press. 1999

Based upon the massive commercialization of college sports and therefore desire to be successful, Zimbalist highlights several of the negative effects athletics are having on student athletes and their schools. Specifically, he offers evidence which demonstrates the incentives, primarily financial, for being successful have caused schools to overlook cheating and the "erosion of academic standards". Furthermore, while athletic success translates to large financial gains Zimbalist offers evidence that despite athletic success many athletic programs end up costing their school more money than they bring in. I believe this book will complement several other sources by reinforcing existing arguments with empirical evidence.