

Dr. Brandon E. Martin serves as Associate Athletics Director at the University of Southern California. In his role, he is primarily responsible for all admissions and initial eligibility issues for 19 Division I sports. In this multi-faceted position, he presents over 200 student-athlete cases/transcripts to a provost selected admissions subcommittee annually. His additional responsibilities include assisting the Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) staff with programmatic interventions for enhancing the skill development among “high-risk” student-athletes. Lastly, Dr. Martin maintains an active research agenda that includes projects examining the experiences of African American male student-athletes and the gains and outcomes associated with student engagement in out-of-class activities.

Title: *A Phenomenological Study of Academically Driven African American Male Student-Athletes at Highly Selective Division I Universities.*

Abstract

The academic performance and motivation of African American male student-athletes has received considerable attention in the higher education literature over the past two decades. One void in the commentary and research regarding African American male student-athletes is this group’s full expression of being students, particularly those who are academically driven. Moreover, much of the published research regarding the experiences of African American male student-athletes experiences at Division I universities has been from a deficit perspective—focusing primarily on the academic hardships, social challenges, and other maladjustments to the campus community. This study underscores the perceptions of African American male student-athletes who have excelled both scholastically and athletically at highly selective Division I universities student-athletes.

Qualitative research methods were used to explore the 27 African American male student-athletes’ experiences at four large, academically prestigious institutions in the West: Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. Face-to-face, semi structured interviews were conducted with each of the 27 participants.

The findings of this study could be used to inform the work of faculty, academic advisors, and student affairs professionals at a variety of institutions. Above all, this study provides much needed insight into the experiences of academically successful undergraduate African American male student-athletes.