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Edited by Daniel Kissinger and Michael Miller, *College Student-Athletes: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Implications* is a compilation of essays focused on college student athletes and their experiences in higher education. Working in concert, all of the authors did a phenomenal job of inclusively examining issues affecting student athletes such as recruitment and retention, physical and mental health, and academic concerns. Moreover, the volume also looks at student athletes in specific contexts by discussing the environmental differences that accompany holding this status at community colleges and private institutions, and as women and international students. Just as series editor Bruce Anthony Jones promises in his introduction, this text

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indeed provides, “an excellent explication of the strengths, challenges and weaknesses in the research literature on college athletics” (p. ix).

Following the foreword and two introductory chapters that provide a general description of the student athlete population and a historical overview of athletes in higher education, the editors organized the essays in four parts. Entitled (“Entering the College Environment,”) Part I consists of Chapters 3-6 all of which discuss the transitional issues that student athletes face. Featuring Chapters 7-12, Part II (“Types of Student-Athletes and their Identities”) centers on identity subgroups of college student athletes with chapters addressing counseling and mental health, body image concerns among female athletes, the place of athletics within community colleges, athletics at private institutions that do not offer athletic scholarships, and the unique position occupied by international students who participate in athletics while attend U. S. colleges and universities. Part III contains two chapters (Chapters 13 and 14) that highlight the challenges that college student athletes encounter related to substance abuse and their academic responsibilities. The final part (IV – Chapters 15 and 16) speaks to some of the institutional issues surrounding college athletics by addressing accountability, investment, and the importance of understanding and following policy when addressing the needs of student athletes and operating intercollegiate athletic programs.

Over the years, various scholars have delved into several issues surrounding college athletics. Among these, Bowen and Levin (2005), Duderstadt (2000), Shulman and Bowen (2002), Sperber (2001), Thelin (1996), and Zimbalist (2001) concentrate on the evolving position that athletic programs occupy in the academy, the business side of college sports, and the general impact that sports has on undergraduate academics at both public and private institutions. Even so, Kissinger and Miller’s volume differs from these texts by examining concerns related to the experiences of college student athletes, not their athletic programs, institutions, or the larger context of college sports.

Furthermore, this text also helps to reconnect intercollegiate athletics into the larger institution by looking at the academic and student affairs concerns that these athletes face as college students. From an organizational perspective, (lucrative) college athletic programs often function on the fringes of the institution providing students with special academic, counseling, and other support services (Duderstadt, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2002; Sperber, 2001; Thelin, 1996; Zimbalist, 2001). By refocusing attention onto the students themselves, *College Student-Athletes* reminds us that, like all other traditional age college students, college athletes undergo a variety of developmental and transitional changes while working towards a degree. As with all other students, college athletes need and greatly benefit from interventions and support systems designed to help them to adjust college life (see Chapter 5 – Stephen & Higgins; Chapter 7 – Kissinger & Watson; Chapter 14 - Tull) (Gayles, 2009; Gayles & Hu, 2009; Harrison & Lawrence, 2004; Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001; Lorenzetti, 2009). Essentially, the ability of college athletes to succeed in sports should not overshadow, disguise, or eliminate the need to attend to their developmental progress as both postsecondary students and young adults.

By helping to emphasize the academic responsibilities and student development of college athletes, this volume also helps to illustrate the continued absence of sufficient research on this segment of the student population. While these students do share some common goals and experiences with the general college student population, they also have unique roles and pressures that have a significant impact on their collegiate experiences. As Kissinger and Watson argue in Chapter 7, “Not addressing the student-athlete’s core athletic identity would seem a recipe for therapeutic interventions that are less likely to neither facilitate self-understanding nor lead to a positive return of health” (p. 103). Optimistically, this volume will help to generate both more research and improved services for all categories of student-athletes.

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