

An Abstract of the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Thesis of:

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Exploitation of Black Male Student Athletes

Black male student athletes make up the majority of participants in Division I basketball and football. This thesis is an examination of secondary and post-secondary recruitment and retention of black male student athletes, and their graduation rates. The problem being addressed is the recruitment of academically deficient black males for the purpose of generating revenue for Division I universities and their athletic programs. Literature and data were used to explore the factors involved in unethical recruitment and low graduation rates of this group.

The black male student athlete is a highly sought-after commodity because of their athletic abilities. This is the result of social and cultural conditioning that emphasizes sports participation in place of academic pursuit. The athletic success and concurrent academic failure of black male athletes has resulted in their low graduation rates. Nevertheless, this has not deterred Division I athletic programs from recruiting them. Large gate receipts and large television contracts secured by their talents are key factors involved in black male athletic recruitment. Additionally, because of the lack of farm systems for the two elite sports, football and basketball, it is necessary for athletes to play in college if they hope to attain a professional contract.

In brief, the resolution to unethical recruitment, and use of college sports as a stepping stone into professional sports, is for the universities to hold student athletes to contracts, thus, binding them legally for the duration of the contract to the universities they sign with.