AN ALTERNATIVE OWNERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR A NCAA DIVISION I POST SEASON BOWL GAME

A CREATIVE PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION- SPORTS MANAGEMENT

BY

JAY STEILBERG

DR. LEIGH ANN DANZEV-BUSSELL - ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

JULY 2010
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1. PROPOSAL FOR ALTERNATIVE OWNERSHIP OF DIVISION I FOOTBALL BOWL GAME ................................................................. 4
   Introduction .............................................................................. 4
   Statement of the Problem .......................................................... 7
   Purpose of Proposal ................................................................... 9
   Significance of Proposal ............................................................ 10

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ............................................................. 13
   Context of College Football ....................................................... 13
   Post Season Football Games ....................................................... 21

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ................................................................. 30
   Proposal ................................................................................ 30
   Conclusion ............................................................................. 32
   REFERENCES ........................................................................ 33
   APPENDICES .......................................................................... 38
College Football’s current post season bowl system for NCAA Division I is flawed. The current bowl arrangement for schools that are not part of a BCS contracted conference and are not receiving a BCS bowl invitation is expensive, unsound, and unfair. The existing system rewards the individual bowl owners and not the participating universities. Under this proposal, universities who participate in non BCS bowl games can now flourish in a system that has their best interests at the forefront. A systemic change creates new ownership by the conference office. This new ownership model reduces expenses and other negatives, maintains the current advantages and rewards of post season bowl games, and increases revenue for the participating football program.
Chapter 1

Proposal for Ownership of Division I Post Season Bowl Game

America loves sports and America loves college sports. College athletics have a unique history as they share roots with the American higher education system. Academic interests and athletic interests have often been at odds with one another in the past. The financial aspects of college athletics have often been at the forefront of this debate (Goidel and Hamilton, 2006). The current post season at the NCAA Division I level, also known as the bowl season, is also under much scrutiny and debate. This report will focus on one particular aspect of the finances in college athletics, namely the post season bowl system in NCAA Division I football.

In NCAA Division I college football, ending a successful season with participation in a post season bowl game is a long standing tradition. College football teams have participated in bowl games for over 100 years. The traditions passed down over time in regards to the bowl system also include the financial ramifications of playing in these games. Teams participating in bowl games have inherited the events and itineraries of these games, often incurring great expenses by participating in the football post season.

The NCAA conducts championships in 88 sports, all except the football bowl subdivision, (Riepenhoff, 2010). The football bowl subdivision is referred to as Division
I-A level of college football. Many fans of college sports may not realize that the NCAA does not own or conduct bowl games in the same manner that they operate and own the rights to other championship venues such as the highly viewed Men’s Division I basketball tournament. Bowl games are owned by individual people, groups of people, multinational corporations, or a local branch of government. All of these particular bowl owners desire to make a profit from these football games. They profit from ticket sales, television revenue, promotions, and other business partnerships. Although teams participating must follow rules set by the NCAA, the NCAA does not administer, control, nor own these events (Wetzel & Peter, 2009).

For a college football program at the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), playing in a post-season football game, a bowl game, is a major benchmark of achievement. Universities choose to play in post season bowl games for many reasons: opportunity for national exposure, pride and esteem generated for fans and Alumni, opportunity to increase additional athletic revenue, and as the capstone reward of a successful season (Sahly, 2010). For universities and their football programs to achieve an invitation to a bowl game is a strong motivation for success on the playing field.

The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) is the highest profile and highest revenue generating piece of the NCAA Division I college football post season. The BCS is a five-game showcase of college football consisting of the following games: (a) Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, (b) FedEx Orange Bowl, (c) Rose Bowl Game, (d) Allstate Sugar Bowl and (e) BCS National Championship Game The BCS National Championship game played at one of the aforementioned bowl sites. The BCS is also a selection system designed to
create five bowl matchups involving ten of the top ranked teams in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision, including an opportunity for the top two to compete in a "national championship game." The system also selects matchups for the other prestigious BCS bowl games. The ten teams selected include the conference champion from each of the six BCS conferences plus four others (Football Bowl Association, 2010). Hancock (2010) further summarizes the essence of the BCS:

The BCS is a voluntary contractual arrangement, not a legal entity that recognizes college football’s unique structure and the long-standing relationships between conferences and bowl games. Specifically, the BCS is a contractual relationship among the 11 NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) conferences (Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Conference USA, Mid-American, Mountain-West, Sun Belt, Pacific-10, Southeastern and Western Athletic), the University of Notre Dame, five bowl games that are operated by four bowl organizations (the Fiesta Bowl, the Orange Bowl, the Rose Bowl, the Sugar Bowl, and the BCS National Championship Game that is played at one of the bowl sites) and a broadcast entity. (p.1)

For many of the larger and higher profile bowl games, particularly those involving the Bowl Championship Series, millions of dollars of revenue are generated (Wetzel, 2008). The revenue is then shared differently among the schools in a conference that has teams participating in that game. Each conference has its own method for distributing revenue, including bowl revenue, to its member institutions (Hancock, 2010). “If a team from the non-automatic qualifying conferences participates in a BCS game,
that group will continue to receive 18 percent of the net revenue under the agreement for
the bowl games of 2011 -2014” (Hancock, p. 2). If a team from those conferences does
not participate, the group will receive nine percent of the net revenue to divide as it
chooses. For example, if the University of Utah qualifies for a BCS game in the 2010-11
season, it will earn for its conference approximately $24.7 million which, under the
agreement among the Mountain West and the other four non-automatic qualifying
conferences, would then be divided among the five conferences (United States House of
Representatives, 2003).

**Statement of the Problem**

A systemic problem develops in this profit and revenue sharing model. According
to the website blog, The National Championship Issue, (2009) “…bowls are commercial
ersprises designed to make money, and their decisions revolve around those things that
will make them the most viable in the market. The website continues by stating “the bond
between bowls and competition is weak” (p. 1). Participation in a bowl game is
expensive. Costs incurred typically include travel, hotels, bus and plane chartering, fan
and pep rally events, meals, paying staff for extra work, additional equipment needs, and
marketing and promotions (Sahly, 2010). All bowl games contain these similar costs,
regardless of whether they are BCS or non-BCS games and regardless to how their
conferences share revenue. The problem is that these non-BCS games, often referred to
as lower tiered bowl games do not generate near the revenue as their BCS counterparts.
So teams participating in a bowl game have similar expenses, but only teams
participating in the higher profile bowl games or receiving a larger share of the BCS
revenue are able to meet and possibly exceed those expenses (Schrotenboer, 2010). And they are heavily reliant on the ticket subsidy to break even (Sahly, 2010). Once schools factor in their operating costs, most universities in these 29 other games lose money. For universities playing in these lower tiered (and non revenue) bowl games, expense are off-set by the revenue generated from conference teams playing in larger (and often BCS) bowl games. But universities in a conference not receiving the BCS revenue do not have that shared payout to help them off-set costs and therefore face a more difficult financial situation.

The choice to participate in these lower tiered bowl games can be a difficult one for the invited universities. The invited universities would possibly face negative public scrutiny if they chose to turn down the invitation to play in the game. Players and staff want to be rewarded for a successful season, alumni and fans want the esteem of post-season play, and the universities relish the national exposure a post-season football game provides (Goidel & Hamilton, 2006). However, universities face large expenses, often ranging from $300,000 to $800,000. And the games at this level generate little if any revenue. So the universities involved with many of the non-BCS bowl games must choose whether to participate in the game knowing they may lose money. Often, the universities participating in the lower tier bowl games represent the same universities with athletic departments struggling to compete. These universities participating in the lower tiered bowl games must compete throughout the year and in other sports with universities from larger conferences, with larger fan bases and greater resources to be shared (Schrotenboer, 2010).
According to the Knight Commission (2009), conferences in the BCS have the most lucrative television contracts and have access to financial resources not enjoyed by the non BCS conferences. In the Knight Commission report, institutions in BCS participating conferences are referred to as equity institutions. The Knight Commission explains the widening gap between the “have and have-nots, the difference between those programs that have high levels of success and revenue and the less successful programs that do not receive the same financial benefit yet still have similar high costs of competition” (p. 27).

**Purpose of Proposal**

The purpose of this project is to propose an alternative ownership model for an NCAA Division I post season bowl game. This creative project proposes a solution to the expensive dilemma a university faces of going to a bowl game when not part of a conference contracted with the BCS. This proposal changes the basic ownership organization of the bowl games. The conference offices involved would now own the game. Conferences can now work in a system that reflects the best interest of their respective schools. This removes control from private and profit seeking individuals and places decision making power with schools in the conferences. This systemic solution offers cost saving operational changes that would be more cost effective than the existing system employed. This is explained further in a flow chart in Figure 1. With this proposal, participating universities will be free to decide how assets will be allocated rather than the current system where profit seeking bowl owners decide how universities will spend their money through mandated itineraries and arrangements. The solution
proposed can save the participating universities hundreds of thousands of dollars while still maintaining the positive benefits of participating in post-season football games.

**Significance of Proposal**

College Athletics have a business component and it is often big business. The University of Michigan and Notre Dame athletic programs generate revenues exceeding $20 million per year. As they generate large amount of money in athletics, which approaches many professional team game revenues, they do so while avoiding the $30 million dollar payrolls which professional teams must meet (Goff, 2000). “The NCAA earns hundreds of millions of dollars every year from its contract with CBS to televise its basketball tournament” (Goff, pg. 86). The revenue available to major NCAA athletic programs, their ability to restrict payments to players, and their avoidance of antitrust regulation, show that college athletics is a potentially profitable enterprise (Goff, 2000). College athletics has a large place in society. It involves millions of fans and retains a high level of interest in the sports and entertainment industry. Because of its large place in society, college athletics can have a large influence on many post secondary campuses. Daughtrey and Stotlar (2000) say “it is apparent that Americans highly value watching college football” (p. 7). Football traditionally is the largest economic player in college athletics. Despite financial concerns noted in other sections of this project, university presidents researched in the Knight Commission report (2009) agree that competing at this level carries many financial and tangible benefits. Post season bowl games are a major goal for many football teams, offering a great sense of pride for the Alumni and fans, while offering tremendous exposure for the university. This solution can greatly
reduce the expenses for the participating institutions, making these games appealing for their positive benefit and reducing the negatives. A summary of the cost saving measures and proposed money flow structure is explained in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Flow of Proposed and Existing Bowl Ownership Structure

**Existing Bowl Structure**

**Bowl Owners:**
- Private individual(s) & non profits

- Dictated bowl arrangements and longer itinerary
- Participating universities not allowed to competitively bid contracts

Leads to higher expense for participating universities

Profits go back to individual bowl owners

**Profits from Bowl Game**
- Television contract, ticket sales, and corporate sponsorships

**Proposed Bowl Structure**

**Bowl Owners:**
- Conference Office

- Reduced infrastructure and shorter itinerary
- Participating schools allowed to competitively bid contracts and dictate itinerary

Leads to reduced expense for participating universities

Profits go back to conference office for conference distribution

**Profits from Bowl Game**
- These include television contract, ticket sales, and corporate sponsorships

Participating universities given larger portion of profit to offset expenses
Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Context of College Football

Literature pertaining to the many aspects of football and its role in college athletics is explored. American sports fans point to football as its pinnacle sport. College football is hugely popular. Each year, millions of fans attend games and matches between student-athletes who provide fans with entertainment while helping bind together communities. According to the Football Bowl Association (FBA) website, bowl games have been a part of college football for over 100 years (www.footballbowlassociation.com/faq.html, 2010). The FBA asserts that college bowl games have provided some of the greatest moments in college football history and add to the pageantry, color, and excitement of the game. In 2009, twenty-seven communities across the United States and Canada hosted thirty-two post season college football games involving 6,400 student-athletes, 12,900 band members, 1,200 cheerleaders, and about 1.7 million fans in attendance (www.footballbowlassociation.com/faq.html, 2010).

The debate exists in college athletics as to the value of a successful season on a number of factors. The value of intercollegiate athletics within higher education is frequently debated. It has spawned numerous research projects throughout the years. The debate over the positive and negative aspects of winning athletic programs has given rise to many studies designed to measure the impact of athletic success on universities. Universities have decided to enter the sports arena by conducting games and this has
merged schools and athletics in a way that is unique to the American higher education system (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). According to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics report in October of 2009, a majority of university presidents believe that athletic success benefits their institutions (Knight Commission, 2009). Yet, the study notes a “…cultural divide between the athletic and academic enterprise,” (Knight Commission, p. 13).

A college football program can have a large impact on the entire university. Research has found that successful college football programs are profitable for universities. Goff (2000) begins his discussion about the financial impacts of university athletics, of which football programs are a major part, by challenging the myths associated with past research and study. Goff believes that people who doubt the revenue generating power of college football are refusing to accept intuition and simple economics. At a fundamental level, Goff asserts that college athletics enjoy the benefits of large revenue streams, restriction on payment (to players) unlike professional sports, and the lack of having to follow antitrust laws as a very profitable mix.

Goff (2000) continues his discussion about the profitability of major college athletics by noting that it is likely the discrepancy and wide variety of accounting methods practiced by universities that have led past researchers astray. Goff believes that nearly all but the last 10% of Division I-A athletic departments are profitable. He cites weaknesses in past research stemming from the complications of reviewing data that did not take into account the not for profit status of universities and the tendency for university administrators, including those in athletics, to add expenses during their fiscal
season so as to always spend their budgeted amount. Goff continues to assert that dropping of football has found to have a negative impact on many financial variables for universities. Humphreys & Mondello (2007) conclude that the overall financial impact of college athletics at Division I-A institutions is larger than originally thought.

The nature and extent of a college football program’s impact on its community has inconsistent data. Baade, Bauman, and Matheson (2008) find that college football does not have a financial impact on metropolitan areas that host college football teams. Baade, Bauman, and Matheson explain that neither the number of home games played, the amount of wins versus losses for the home team, nor winning a national championship has any impact on employment statistics and personal income statistics in those cities. Goff’s (2000) research may help explain Baade, Bauman, and Matheson’s findings. Goff notes that cause and effect relationships in regards to college football revenues can be difficult to measure and can be ambiguous. Goff found different results. Goff found increases in expenditures for student groups, a positive employment impact, and a positive tax impact for communities with college football. Goff’s research was based on a summary report measuring the potential economic impact of a Division I-A football program under consideration at the University of South Alabama.

Secondly, successful college football programs can positively affect the amount and quality of incoming students. Roy, Graeff, and Harmon (2008) argue that an increase in the awareness of a university as generated by athletic success, most notably by the football program’s wins and losses and postseason bowl appearances, can affect the academic image of a university. Roy, Graeff, and Harmon state that “…concerns about
football overshadowing academics appear misplaced; to the contrary, athletics can actually help to develop and enhance the academic image of a university” (p. 28).

Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009) studied the impact of athletic success on future enrollments. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder cited examples with Northwestern following the 1996 Rose Bowl. Applications for next year’s incoming class rose 30%, the average SAT score rose 20%, and the school raised four places to 9th place in the US News and World Report ranking of colleges.

Adding to the mixture of results from the data, Tucker (2005) finds similar results as Roy, Graeff, and Harmon. Tucker finds that previous research using older data found that success by the football program did not positively affect the nature of incoming students. Tucker noted that a successful football program had no advertising effect nor positive externality existed between football success and the quality of incoming freshmen. However, Tucker used updated data for the years of 1990 and 2002 and found that the SAT scores for incoming freshman were influenced by success in a quality football season. During years recently following a successful football season, Tucker explained the statistical basis of higher quality incoming freshman for those universities. Goff (2000) confirms Tucker’s thesis by finding that achievements in athletics generate interest from prospective students, even at high schools with highly rated academic reputations. Goff cites evidence that success in college athletics can increase student applications and enrollment in subsequent years.

Successful college football programs can positively impact the financial involvement of their Alumni. Daughtrey and Stotlar (2000) found that football
championships spawned interests from fans. Daughtrey and Stotlar note that the results varied slightly based on divisions, but generally donations increased in amounts of donations and in the total number of donors to the athletic department. Humphreys and Mondello (2007) found mixed results. Humphreys and Mondello concluded that post season bowl games for football and appearances at the NCAA Division I men’s basketball tournament were associated with increases in restricted giving to public university athletic departments. However, Humphreys & Mondello found for the same data no increases were found in unrestricted gifts to the general funds of the public universities. With private institutions, Humphreys and Mondello found only a post season basketball appearance increased restricted funds.

In earlier research, Sigelman and Bookheimer (1983) found that success in football is the first indicator of athletic contributions for Alumni. Turner, Meserve, and Bowen (2001) contradict this research by finding no relationship between won-lost records in football and general giving patterns at Division I-A universities. Turner, Meserve, and Bowen continue by adding detail explaining that no statistical association exists between football wins and losses and the giving patterns for any group of non-athletes. Turner, Meserve, and Bowen discussed possible drawbacks to the research by stating “it is, of course, entirely possible that the relationship between alumni giving and success on the football field follows a more complex dynamic path than the simple model we were able to explore with our data” (p. 825).

Meer and Rosen (2009) further studied the impact of athletic performance may have on Alumni giving further. One of the key findings from Meer and Rosen’s research
is that the impact of athletic success on alumni giving will differ for men and women. For men, when a male graduate’s former team wins its conference championship, male donations to the university’s general fund and his donations to the athletic program increase by about 7%. However, for women, Meer and Rosen found no effect of a former team’s success on giving patterns. Meer and Rosen continue by noting that, for men who were varsity athletes, when their team was successful, those males tended to make larger donations to the athletic programs and likewise, no effect exists for female former varsity athletes.

Despite Sigelman and Bookheimer’s findings, other researchers studying the effects of winning football games and increasing Alumni donations have found mixed results. Daughtrey and Stotlar (2000) reviewed many research studies that began in the 1970’s to find out whether a football program’s success was related to Alumni donations to the university’s general fund. Initially, athletic success in football did not influence donations. They noted that later studies found gaps in the initial work and contradicted the earlier studies noting that particularly in private institutions, donations increased with athletic success. In earlier research, Daughtrey and Stotlar found that more wins in football reduced the amount of donations (2000).

More research has been done to find out what impact winning football had on the athletic department as a whole. In many cases, research found a positive impact for football success on the athletic department. Researchers expanded their knowledge by measuring football’s impact on donations to the school’s general fund. Daughtrey and Stotlar (2000) argued that results of previous studies have been inconsistent. They note
many apparent gaps in research and shortcomings in previous studies. Daughtrey and Stotlar continue by stating “a review of the literature has revealed that the existing research fails to resolve the conflict regarding the value of football programs” (p. 187).

The evaluation of donations to a university from all constituents, not just Alumni, also show inconsistency. In an older study, Coughlin and Erekon (1985) stated that football success increases monetary contributions to a university. Coughlin and Erekon argued that football attendance is the most powerful variable in regards to athletic success and financial contributions to a university. Stinson and Howard (2008) also found that athletic success helps increase donor giving for both athletics and academic programs. Stinson and Howard’s research finds that successful athletic programs influence the number of donors and the average dollar amount of those gifts to institutions. Stinson and Howard also concluded that donors tend to give more to athletic programs and not to academic programs during athletic program successes. This tendency is most evident at schools that play major college football.

The impact a college football program has in relation to the university’s public image is studied next. According to Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009), a successful athletic program can “…help institutions gain national exposure” (p. 6). Goff (2000) concludes that athletics, particularly a football program, are an integral part of the university’s name exposure model. He continues “for schools with little or poor reputations for academics, athletics is often the only frequent avenue for exposure” (p. 91). Goff’s research cites strong data that athletic success was an important source of exposure and significantly increased exposure for Western Kentucky University and
Northwestern University during the period studied. Goff’s finding goes as far as explaining how dropping football from its athletic program can have a measurable negative impact.

Goidel and Hamilton (2006) studied the impact of football success and on perceptions about the universities and to what extent the public connects athletic success with academic quality. The research took into question whether the connections are stronger during a national championship year, what type of constituents would respond in this way, and how much these connections make in terms of support for the universities. Goidel and Hamilton concluded that a large part of the population believes that athletic success and academic quality are connected. Goidel and Hamilton noted that these connections are affecting universities and carry future implications for the universities.

College football programs have a role in building school pride. Roy, Graeff, and Harmon (2008) note that college football is more than a sport at many universities and is part of the very culture of the institution, as well as of the nation at large. Myles Brand (2006), former President of the NCAA, strives for a balanced approach to the role of athletics in higher education. Brand wanted athletics to be more integrated into the educational mission of the university. Beyer and Hannah (2000) assert that athletics function as part of the university’s culture and help carry the meaning and ideologies of the university to the society at large. Beyer and Hannah state:

Hearing one’s college fight song can evoke many of the emotions, ideas, and values associated with that school. Seeing the football team fight its way down the
field can surface memories of past intercollegiate events as well as ideas and emotions associated with… the university. (p. 109)

Beyer and Hannah continue by noting that culture is interwoven in college football with the financial and practical realities and that it must be considered as an important element. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009) built upon this point by noting that athletic success can “help build school solidarity among the entire university, community, and connect alumni back to their alma-mater” (p. 7).

Roy, Graeff, and Harmon (2008) offer compelling information about the effects of college football on higher education. He finds that college football has three outcomes: one, an increase in brand awareness, two, an enhanced image for the university, and three, a change in desired behaviors which refers to an increase in ticket purchase, an increase in merchandise sales, an increase in enrollment figures, and an increase in donations. Roy, Graeff, and Harmon claim that it cannot be denied that athletics is the most visible aspect of a university. They conclude by asserting that athletics can actually help to develop and enhance the image of a university.

**Post Season Football Games**

The literature finds a wide variety of results and paints a sometimes confusing picture as to college football’s history and impact in the sports world. Post season football is certainly a big piece in this often confusing picture that has developed with years of tradition. The Football Bowl Association (FBA) defends the current bowl system citing numerous benefits of participating in bowl games. As of 2009, 68 teams participate in games that crown 34 bowl champions. Players take part in these bowl trips
to interesting venues, take part in many unique experiences, and are treated as if they are all national champions (www.footballbowlassociation.com/faq.html, 2010). The website continues by expressing that coaches get to work with their players for an extra two to five weeks, which the website asserts benefits younger players. Additional benefits include fans rallying for their university, and alumni and boosters building their relationships with their favorite school. The FBA website cites the national exposure gained for both the institution and the athletic program. More benefits include the ability of fans to vacation with their team in exciting places. Lastly, the FBA website asserts teams participating in bowl games have a head start on the next season and will see an increase in donations, ticket sales, and revenue (www.footballbowlassociation.com/faq.html). Atlantic Coast Commissioner and BCS coordinator John Swofford, in testimony given during US Congressional Hearings in May of 2009, repeatedly cited 2 main reasons bowl games must be saved at all costs: 1) donations to local charities and 2) economic impact on host cities (Wetzel, 2008).

Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009) argue the value of participation in college athletics to its participants. They claim that student-athletes benefit greatly from participation. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder argue that student-athletes are given the opportunity to obtain a college degree, develop leadership traits, and develop a competitive spirit, teamwork, and time management.

The root of the systemic problem with post season football games is ownership. Who owns the bowl games? According to an article by Dan Wetzel and Josh Peter on Rivals.com, ten bowl games are… “privately owned and one is run by a branch of local government” (2009, p.1). ESPN, a multinational corporation focusing on the sports
media, television, and entertainment production industry, owns six bowl games (Wetzel and Peter). The remaining 23 games enjoy tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service as nonprofit organizations (Wetzel and Peter). However, Wetzel and Peter assert that these non-profit organizations combined to give just $3.2 million to local charities on $186.3 million in revenue according to their most recent federal tax records and interviews with individual bowl executives.

What does the bowl spend money on? “The Sugar Bowl’s total revenue was $12.9 million in 2006, according to tax documents” (Wetzel & Peter, 2009, p. 2). According to Wetzel and Peter, bowl games “…actually received more in direct government spending (almost $5.5 million) than what they gave directly to charity, according to tax records” (p. 4). The problem according to Riepenhoff (2009), is that the schools in BCS conferences make the most money, 85% of total revenue from the BCS. The non BCS schools receive a disproportionately small amount from those games. A bowl’s primary expense is paying $6 million into a payout pool for BCS teams. The remaining money for teams comes from a portion of television and sponsorship revenue. As an example, the Sugar Bowl can do whatever it wants with the other $6.9 million. Riepenhoff summarizes the Sugar Bowl’s outlandish expenses for 2006:

- Employee salaries: $1.3 million
- Unspecified entertainment: $494,177
- Special appropriations: $455,781
- Sugar Bowl entertainment: $348,847
- Media relations & Hall of Fame: $364,582
Conference relations & meetings $198,921
Gifts and bonuses $60,932
Other expenses $82,844

Other bowls of similar size and scope note similar revenue and expenses. In another example from Wetzel and Peter, similar to the Sugar Bowl, the Orange Bowl did over $17.9 million in revenue and the Rose Bowl over $10 million, according to 2007 tax records. In the same year, the Orange Bowl brought in over $17.9 while the Rose Bowl was able to generate over $10, according to 2007 tax records. Wetzel and Peter commented that both bowl games spent almost all of it. “Not that it had to pay any taxes. Almost none of the bowls do, the entire thing is tax free” (Wetzel & Peter, 2010, p.126)

Wetzel (2008) claims that college football participates in one of the worst business arrangements imaginable. Universities struggle to place athletics in its proper place, particularly financially. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009) state that, with a few exceptions, athletic programs are not large revenue generators for universities. They claim most schools are losing money in athletics. The bowl games in debate are part of a larger financial struggle taking place on college campuses nationwide. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder assert that a trend is taking place in college athletics finances where most programs are diverting university funds and becoming more dependent on institutional resources (2009). Zimbalist (2010) states in a report to the NCAA, that the “economic argument against the BCS rests on three points. The BCS is a) flawed, b) unfair and c) anti-competitive. …It outsources its most profitable and easily sold product – postseason football” (p.2). In a hearing before the US House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary Oversight on Competition in college athletics in September
2003, Tulane University President Scott Cowen called the current post-season football arrangement a 2 tiered system of inequities marked by a lack of access for certain universities. He continued citing that football is the only NCAA sport where this inequity exists and not coincidentally, Division I-A postseason play is “exclusively controlled” by the BCS (p. 2).

Participation in a bowl game is expensive. The team, travel party, university band and cheer, and university officials, all go on the bowl trip and often for many days. Travel budgets for these groups accumulate rapidly and are expensive. This entire group needs to eat, hence large catering and per diem budgets. They need housing for a multiple day trip, hence large hotel bills. One example of the tremendous expenses incurred at bowl games is NIU in 2009. They played in the International Bowl in January of 2010. According to an article in Huskiewire.com (Sahly, 2010), NIU ended up with a deficit of $271,152 for its participation in the International Bowl. The International Bowl was held in Toronto, Canada. The previous year, NIU lost $117,027 during its participation in the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, LA. According to the article, attempts were made by NIU officials to limit costs. “We tried to keep our expenses down. We were trying to not to be extravagant. But you have to go and stay for a certain amount of time” (Sahly, 2010). According to the article in Huskiewire.com (Sahly, 2010), the biggest expenses were in travel, which includes the charter flights to Toronto, rooms at the team hotel, on-site transportation, meals and allowable per diems given to the players. That total was $255,434. A summary of the finances for Northern Illinois’ trip to the 2010 International bowl (Sahly, 2010):
Revenue - $229,040

Expenses - $500,192

Note the total loss for Northern Illinois at $271,152 for a single post season football game.

Another often confusing and misleading component of bowl finances is the payout and ticket guarantee. Schrotenboer (2010) notes Western Michigan’s acceptance to the Texas Bowl in Houston. WMU had to buy $450,000 worth of tickets in order to accept the bowl bid. The school only sold 10,452 tickets, so it lost $412,535 just on tickets alone. These tickets are then returned to the bowl. In effect, the participating schools are paying the bowls a certain amount for tickets so that the bowls can have enough money to pay back a certain amount (called a guarantee) later. They can then be sold by the bowl operators (for profit) or given away to community groups. The bowls then claim these tickets given away as charitable deductions to help protect their non-profit tax status. Western Michigan received a $750,000 allowance to spend on the Texas Bowl from the Mid-American Conference. But largely because of its ticket losses, WMU spent $1.3 million. So WMU lost $550,000 to participate in the Houston Bowl (Schrotenboer, 2010).

Another example from the Mid-American Conference as to misleading ticket donation policy involves the Motor City Bowl in 2008. According to the Rivals.com article from Wetzel and Peter (2009), the Motor City Bowl listed team payouts as $750,000 to each participating university. However, in 2008, Florida Atlantic University accepted 16,666 game tickets instead of cash payout. FAU returned approximately
$600,000 worth of tickets. The Motor City Bowl then turned them over to local organizations, but bowl officials were not sure if they were used. Wetzel and Peter claim the tickets, even if unused, count twice as a payout to the teams and as a charitable contribution. Some bowls count their payouts to the participating universities as charity (Wetzel & Peter, 2009).

Schrotenboer (2010) continues to note that in 2009, schools and their conferences returned $15.3 million worth of unsold tickets for the 34 bowl games. Schrotenboer claims unsold tickets are the third biggest expense for teams and conferences involved in these games. “...As a result many schools lose money from attending these games, especially those in lower-tier games that depend on selling a guaranteed amount of tickets” (Schrotenboer 2009, p. 2). NCAA records show that bowl teams average exceeding their conference bowl allowance by $120,000 per team in 2008. (Schrotenboer, 2009).

The financial problems of these bowl games must be viewed in the larger budget problems faced by many athletic departments of universities in higher education. From the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, a report was published in October of 2009 chronicling research about football bowl subdivision university presidents and the financial aspects of college athletics. The Knight Commission found that “...despite the progress made with presidential governance and academic reforms, the escalating costs of competing in big time intercollegiate sports, especially at the football bowl subdivision institutions, have remained an intractable program” (p.1). The Knight Commission cites Myles Brand, President of the NCAA, in a report to the NCAA in December of 2008, that
spending on college athletics has increased at a rate that is unsustainable. The Knight Commission finds that research shows the need for reform. The university presidents studied believe they have limited power to change college athletic finances, even on their own campuses, much less with the football bowl subdivision as a whole (Knight Commission, 2009).
Chapter 3 – Recommendations

Proposal

The solution in the proposed bowl game greatly reduces expenses. In the report from the Knight Commission on Athletics in October of 2009, a reform idea supported by nearly 2/3 of the presidents studied would be to change the BCS system and change the revenue distribution policies. Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder (2009) discusses in his reform ideas that minimizing travel expenses would be an easy and effective way to reduce costs. Denhart et al. believe reform is needed and that the current structure encourages increased spending, when the opposite is needed. He proposes limiting post-season participation to bowl games. Although the current proposal would not limit the number of bowls, and therefore the number of teams participating in bowl games, it would agree in principle with Denhart, Villwork, and Vedder by limiting the length of stay and the financial impact for universities. The Knight Commission asserts that most college presidents reported making budget cuts to the athletic departments and many predict this trend to continue (2009).

The proposed solution works within the model of reform possibilities discussed in the Knight Commission of Athletics report in 2009. That report cited solutions for the fiscal problems of college athletics including a shift of economic factors to the control of
presidents and their institutions (Knight Commission, 2009). A summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the proposed ownership model are found in Figure 2.
Figure 2. S.W.O.T Analysis of proposed bowl ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Increase decision making to the participating universities.</td>
<td>- Added responsibility to conference offices for game administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reduces costs for participating universities.</td>
<td>- Lower economic impact for host communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased ability of participating universities to competitively bid travel related contracts.</td>
<td>- Resistance from tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Same revenue generated as existing bowl structure.</td>
<td>- Existing bowl contracts (TV, venues, and conference match-ups) must be renegotiated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Same exposure gained as existing bowl games.</td>
<td>- New structures and relationships developed to promote, sell and administer the bowl games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Eliminates third party profit seeking bowl structure.</td>
<td>- Limited budgets of the conference office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Existing structure utilized – teams and conferences have prior knowledge of how to conduct football post-season games.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities:</th>
<th>Threats:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Could create more just system of bowl invites where invitations are based more on merit than on economics.</td>
<td>- An NCAA unified playoff system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Revenue distributed more fairly to all bowl participating universities.</td>
<td>- Existing bowl owners may counter-offer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More revenue for lower tiered non BCS participating conference teams.</td>
<td>- Host communities may lose desire to host bowl game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New bowl games may develop and stronger traditions and more loyal fan base may develop.</td>
<td>- Relationship with TV contracts may suffer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More non BCS games could develop.</td>
<td>- Legislation from government could impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Negative media attention.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

This proposes an alternative ownership model for an NCAA Division I post season bowl game. The current post season bowl structure for Division I football universities that are not part of the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) is an expensive, flawed, and unfair system that rewards the individual bowl owners instead of rewarding the participating universities. Under this new proposal, conference offices will own and conduct the bowl games. Now the decision making and priority interests exist with the universities in those conferences. This systemic change will create a more improved economic model for the non BCS bowl games, greatly reducing expenses and other negatives for the participating universities, while maintaining the current positives of post season football participation. The proposal challenges the existing traditions of post season bowl games and allows for needed economic reform to occur in college athletics. By advancing a new ownership structure at the conference level, participating universities can greatly reduce expenses, increase revenues, and maintain the positive benefits of post season bowl participation.
References


AN ALTERNATIVE OWNERSHIP MODEL FOR DIVISION I BOWL GAME


Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, (2009). *Quantitative and qualitative research with football bowl subdivision university presidents on the costs and financing of intercollegiate athletics*. Baltimore: Art & Science Group LLC.


Appendix A

Bowl Manual

Details of planning a non BCS bowl game are included below. Each team in the conferences involved will be given a manual before the playing season. As the playing season progresses, teams who may possibly go to the bowl game will begin focusing attention on details. Once the bowl bids are offered and accepted, teams will use the manuals for planning and organizational purposes. Notes are included in this outline that explain how this bowl model is different from most other existing and profit seeking bowls.

1. Team(s) Manual:
   
   a. College football programs often have written manuals in place and on file for organizational purposes. Once a team accepts a bowl bid, the manual serves as a guide for the many people involved. It is often updated after the bowl event, and kept on file for archive purposes.
   
   b. Licensing
      
      i. NCAA Post Season Football Licensing Committee
      
      ii. All NCAA rules remain the same
   
   c. Personnel
      
      i. Conference Office
      
      ii. Administration
   
   d. Bowl Events
      
      i. Community
ii. Travel Party

iii. Team

iv. Bands/Cheerleaders

v. Fans

e. Composite Schedule of Events

i. Thursday:
   1. Teams Arrive
   2. Practice
   3. Post Practice Press Conference

ii. Friday
   1. Luncheon
   2. Practice
   3. Pep-rally

iii. Saturday
   1. Pre-game band rally
   2. Game

f. Stadium Facilities

i. Lockerroom

ii. Suites

iii. Ticketing
   1. Gates
   2. Passes
iv. Band and Cheerleader

g. Credentials

h. Parking

i. Team

ii. Fans

iii. Accessibility

iv. Officials

i. Training Facilities

j. Coaches’ Communication

k. Practice Times/ Issues

l. Ticketing

i. Policy

ii. Revenue Sharing

iii. Players

iv. Band/Cheer

m. Hotels

i. Bid by Conference (School)

ii. Hotel stay commitment

1. Two nights - Team

2. One night - Travel Party

n. Courtesy Cars

i. None
ii. Save money

o. Media Information
   i. Credential Request
   ii. Press Conference
      1. Thursday practice
      2. Friday luncheon
      3. Post game interviews
   iii. Photography

p. Game Day press box
   i. Services
   ii. Location

q. Broadcasting
   i. Conference Office- Television nights
   ii. Radio nights

r. Team Gifts
   i. Reduce money- purchased by conference office
   ii. Electronic gift card
   iii. Paid for by TV revenue
   iv. Schools may sell merchandise

s. Band/Cheerleaders
   i. Friday Luncheon- optional
   ii. Friday pep-rally-optional
iii. Saturday pre-game band rally- mandatory

t. Timing Sheet

u. Practice

v. Dates and Times

w. Location

x. Pre- Game mandatory meeting

i. Agenda

1 Format for meeting with participating institutions.

2 Kickoff time

   a. Potential for change

   b. 60- minute notice if more than 5 minutes

3 Pregame schedule

   a. Time field is available

   b. Warm-up area

4 Bench and dressing room assignments

   a. Uniforms

   b. Sideline telephone policy

   c. NCAA emphasis

      i. Tiebreakers

      ii. Football playing

      iii. Administrative Bylaw 30.9

   1. Institutional written report
2. Length of halftime

d. Bylaw 16.2.1.1 Tickets for student-athletics
   i. Six per student-athlete
   ii. Administration of pass gate

5 Credentials
   a. Bench area
   b. Press box coaches and booth
   c. Press box administration staff
   d. Films
   e. Band
   f. Cheerleaders
   g. Mascot(s)
   h. Official party for dressing room

6 Parking location and credentials
   a. Team
      i. Buses
      ii. Automobiles
      iii. Equipment
   b. Band
   c. Mascot(s)

7 Bowl footballs

8 Press conferences
9 Drug-testing procedures
10 Medical procedures
11 Cheerleaders
12 Band participation schedule
13 Tickets
   a. Will-call
   b. Student-athlete/guest admissions
14 Instant Replay
15 Questions

ii. Review television arrangements
   1 Procedures for changing kickoff time
   2 Timetable for pregame, halftime, etc.
   3 Pregame introductions
   4 Emphasize football playing rule 1-2-4-e
   5 Commercial format and length
   6 On-field interviews
   7 Keep cameras out of team areas
   8 Tiebreaker
   9 Institutional and NCAA public service announcements
Appendix B

Pregame Timing Schedule Example:

An example timing schedule is included. Notice the simplicity of the events and the midday game time help teams travel immediately following the game and therefore save transportation costs.

11:30 am  Field available for teams
Noon       Officials’ meeting with timer, ball persons and chain gang
12:45 pm   Teams leave field
12:45 pm   Pregame activities begin

   Bands

   National anthem

12:55 pm  Officials notify teams in locker rooms
12:57 pm  Actual coins toss
12:58 pm  Introduction of student-athletes
1:00 pm   Kickoff
Appendix C

Bowl Preparation Quick Reference Checklist:

This list serves as a ready reference lists for all the tasks each school should operate during bowl planning. Following this list will ensure that all pieces of the bowl event are covered and delegated to an appropriate person. This bowl game is too large of an event for a single person to administer. Delegation and organization must occur for a successful execution of the bowl game. This list will help organize an athletic director or university administrator responsible for bowl planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Personal Responsible For:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Charter Airfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Athletes Return Flight Airfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Ground Transportation (Local City)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Grounds Transportation (Bowl Site)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
____ Meals .................................................................

____ Snacks/Sodas……in player lounge .......................

____ Player per diem-official party per Diem ..............

____ Player gifts ..................................................

____ Other gifts ..................................................

____ Courtesy cars .............................................

____ Courtesy car gas money .................................

____ Cheerleaders .............................................

____ Practice facility ..........................................  

____ Band .........................................................

____ Bowl hospitality ..........................................  

____ Equipment transportation ...............................

____ Complimentary tickets ................................

____ Official party list ........................................

____ Official gift list ..........................................

____ Press box for AD/President (1) ........................
- Buffet after game/post game food
- President’s reception
- Thank you letters to all those involved
- Luggage (how do we handle?)
- Set up office on site
- Set up copier/extra phones
- Alumni pep rally
- Liaison with alumni office
- Letter to Special invites with itinerary
- Liaison with president’s office
- Special staff outings
- Travel itinerary
- Babysitting
- Pre-trip meeting for wives
- Press headquarters
- Turnaround trip
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowl budget—preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowl bonuses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff children gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from GS to all invited with itinerary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office staffing- Manager on duty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player transportation at Bowl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket trade outs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts/T-shirts/attire for hotel employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie tickets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing/postage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel incidentals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player eligibility list deadline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Car seats for kids..................................................
Appendix D

Team / University Planning Checklist:

Closely related to the delegation checklist, this ready reference will serve as a checklist for each participating school. Universities, conference officials and bowl officials, will use this list to ensure all aspects of the bowl game are covered and accounted for.

y. Travel

i. Air charter

1 Name of Airline carrier?

2 Contact person and phone #?

3 Price?

   a. What is included?

4 Crew; who is included?

5 Fuel?

6 Meals?

7 Beverages?

8 Entertainment / Movies?

9 Fees

   a. Airport

   b. ground handling

10 Type of Aircraft?
11 Seat Configuration?
   a. First class
   b. Coach

12 FAA regulations regarding children?

13 Where does the charter originate?

14 What time does the flight leave?

15 In flight meals?

16 Beverage service?

ii. Ground Handlers

1 Should arrival of buses be staggered?

2 Should team buses arrive at same gate as equipment trucks?

3 Where does charter load?

4 Will there be one set of stairs or two?

5 Where does it land?

6 TSA contact?

7 Where does charter unload?

8 Ground handlers Company?

9 Ground handlers contact?

10 Can we choose how plane is loaded?

11 Amount of luggage per person allowed?

12 Luggage divided by bus?
z. Lodging

i. Hotel

1. What is check in/ checkout date and time?
2. Late checkout problems?
3. What are check-in procedures?
4. What is the room availability?
5. Prices for rooms (including tax)?
6. Method of payment? Deposit?
7. Availability of complimentary suites? Locations, sizes, amenities, etc?
8. Availability of connecting rooms?
9. Refrigerators in coaches’ rooms?
10. VCR’s/DVD players in coach’s rooms? Cost?
11. Complimentary training storeroom, equipment storeroom, and room for football office?
12. Computers, fax, cop machine, whiteboard/pens, other office equipment availability?
13. Meeting rooms’ availability? Location, sizes, layout, etc?
   Price?
14. Audio visual aids? Complimentary?
15. Ability to cut long distance or all phone service to players’ rooms?
16 Ability to cut internet to players’ rooms?
17 What activities are available to guests within hotel?
18 Restaurant, coffee shop, lounge? Prices and menus?
19 Complimentary drink tickets for official party?
20 VIP lounge treatment?
21 Health club facilities—on grounds or near—special deals

i. Banquet and catering
   a. Team menus, eating areas, and prices?
   b. Are there other activities going on in the hotel?
   c. Will there be other large groups?
   d. Complimentary gifts in rooms for coaches and designated VIP’s?
   e. Banquet captain?

ii. Miscellaneous Hotel issues
   a. Game room situation for players in hotel (cost, numbers, etc.)?
   b. Accessibility of hotel to football stadium and practice facilities?
   c. Complimentary newspapers for coaches and designated administrators?
d. Multiple keys for coaches’ suites along with a meeting room type setup, extra glasses, Refrigerator, complimentary snacks, etc.?

e. Maps, general information on hotel, and surrounding areas and facilities?

f. Ability to have a daily print out of charges per room for hotel?

g. Security within hotel? Team security?

h. Secure storage room for gifts?

i. Welcoming reception from hotel for team and official party?

j. Double/doubles for players? How many? Location? No roll-a-ways?

k. Extra night at team rate for person to stay over?

l. Availability of bus parking? Cost?

m. Parking availability? Valet or Self Park? Cost?

n. Check cashing availability at hotel? Arrangement with local bank?

o. Sales manager?

aa. Transportation

i. Charter Bus Company:

1. What is charter bus company?
2 Pick up time, date and location
3 Moving van w/in continental U.S.
4 Each staff member luggage allowance
5 What is the charter bus company at bowl site?
6 Description of equipment?
7 Bus company main contact?
8 Cost? What is included?
9 State tax?
10 Driver gratuity?
11 Baggage handling?
12 Storage fee?

ii. Itinerary issues

1 Airport pick up, date, time, and location?
2 Availability of bus parking at hotel?
3 Availability of bus parking at practice site
4 Location of bus parking at game site
5 How is equipment transported to bowl site?
6 Who transports equipment?
7 Cost and what is included?
8 Date departure, time and location
9 Baggage handlers, how?
10 Availability of police escorts
11 Availability of extra security in BSU parking lots while away at bowl site.

**bb. Game, Practice Facilities, and Equipment**

i. Is there an agreed upon limit to the number of days to practice?

ii. Locations and directions to practice facility

iii. On site facility contact?

iv. Training room requirements

v. Home or away jerseys?

vi. # of players authorized to dress?

vii. Locker rooms

   1 Location

   2 Size

   3 Training facilities

   4 Availability of towels, soap, and other amenities

   5 Ice

   6 Food

viii. Bench assignments
ix. Sideline communications equipment

x. Sideline beverage guidelines

xi. Supplies needed (i.e. ice, towels, and drinks)

xii. Medical issues

1. Availability of medical services?

2. Provider?

3. Nearest hospital location?

xiii. Game balls

1. Who selects provider

2. Who provides balls

3. Number of balls required

4. Who provides handlers

5. Who provides air pump and gauge

xiv. Availability of sideline credentials?

1. For pre-game warm-ups only?

2. During Game?
cc. Gifts and Entertainment

i. Number of team gifts?

ii. Availability to purchase extra gift packages

iii. Description and price of gifts

iv. Number of complimentary game programs?

v. Is a team hospitality suite provided? What’s included?

vi. Date, time, location, attire for entertainment activities

dd. Per Diem

i. Contact prior for money

ii. Contact DPS to provide escort for money?

iii. Per Diem to be determined by cost of living rate charts for city hosting game

iv. Signature sheets

Personnel:

Positives:

a. SA experience not compromised

b. Money saved

c. Fan esteem similar
d. University and conference oversight

Saved money

a. No logos

b. Less hotel

c. Less food/beverage

d. Band/cheer in University control

e. Less per diem
Appendix E

After Action Review

Following the bowl game, university officials should conduct a review of the bowl event with all vested parties involved. An after-action review (AAR) is a professional discussion of an event, that focuses on performance standards and enables development professionals and colleagues with similar or shared interests to discover for themselves what happened, why it happened, and how to sustain strengths and improve on weaknesses. It revolves around four main questions:

i. What was expected to happen?

ii. What actually occurred?

iii. What went well, and why?

iv. What can be improved, and how?

Managed and conducted by those closest to the activity, AARs identify how to correct deficiencies, sustain strengths, and focus on improved performance of specific tasks, activities, events, or programs.

The AAR is a problem-solving process. The purpose of discussion is for participants to discover strengths and weaknesses, propose solutions, and adopt a course of action to correct problems.

Benefits of an AAR come from applying its results to future situations.