THE PLAYBOOK: A CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM
FOR STUDENT ATHLETES AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

A CREATIVE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Playbook: A Career Exploration Program for Student Athletes at Ball State University

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College and university athletes provide a source of entertainment and revenue for an institution and create a sense of pride and school spirit. However, the academic, athletic, and personal schedule requirements of a student athlete can prove to be rigorous and time consuming which can lead to low levels of engagement when it comes to academics. This program was created to ensure that individuals, who have dual roles in higher education as both students and athletes, are able to devote time to exploring academic and career interests. This program allows athletes to engage in personal exploration through questionnaires and self-reflection, while introducing campus resources that are available to them, information about campus offices, and key individuals that can assist them on their journey to finding a future career.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Identifying a career path and designating an academic major are very crucial to the success of students at institutions of higher education. Certain careers require a bachelor’s degree or higher in order to work in the field, and often times they require an internship or related work experience. Students often experience difficulties in the area of career exploration; however, one student population in particular can experience this hardship due to their engagement in a university-sponsored activity. Student athletes dedicate a significant amount of time to their chosen sports, and as a result they can experience difficulty finding the time to engage in career exploration. Collegiate sports can promote a sense of school pride, and generate a source of revenue, all of which would not be possible without student athletes. In some cases, athletes forego the career development process and as a result fail to engage in their academics, which can lead to their dismissal from an institution, or a prolonged graduation date. A program is needed in order to assist athletes with the process of career exploration, and helping them understand that it is their responsibility to choose career paths that suit them.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a career exploration program for Ball State University student athletes that provide them with a supportive environment where they can explore their career goals and interests.

Significance of the Study

This program was created to ensure that individuals, who have dual roles in higher education as students and athletes, are able to devote time to exploring different academic and career interests. Student athletes have a set of demands that require a significant amount of
student time and attention, and in some cases these demands can divert them from their academic responsibilities and limit their engagement in career exploration. The implementation of a career program can assist athletes with bringing career explorations to the forefront of their mind, and encouraging them to explore career possibilities available to them. By helping students identify a career path, they will be able to identify what they need to accomplish in order to achieve this goal and graduate with a degree.

Through this program, athletes will explore their academic interests and understand the requirements necessary to obtain a career in a particular field. This will be accomplished by assisting athletes with identifying their current skills and abilities, applying them to a particular degree or major, and designing a plan of action that will assist them in making sure they have met all the requirements necessary to graduate. This final portion of the program will assist student athletes with preparing a resume, cover letter, and other necessary documents to begin the job search. Continually engaging athletes in this process, and providing a supportive environment, will allow athletes to see the importance of academics and personal career exploration in planning for a life beyond collegiate sports.

**Scope and Limitations**

This program was designed to assist student athletes with career exploration from their entrance into the university until their departure at graduation. The program would encourage the attendance of the athletes at every program session in order to gain optimal results, as well as the utilization of Career Center services. This program would not be a requirement of any individual who is considered to be a student-athlete, nor is the completion of this program mandatory. Therefore, student athletes may not be inclined to participate in an additional responsibility outside of their already demanding schedule. Those athletes who do choose to
participate may be deterred from continuing the program because of ongoing commitments; therefore, this program could experience low completion rates and difficulty with assessment.

**Definition**

Student Athlete – An individual who is asked to manage two different realms of their life successfully, athletics and academics (Woodruff & Shallert, 2008).

**Organization of the Paper**

This paper is organized into four chapters, the first chapter will introduce the project, identify the purpose of the study, explain the significance, scope and limitations, offer definitions, and detail the organization of the paper. Chapter two will introduce the review of related literature that includes the history of athletics and their inception into higher education, the development of the student athlete, and a look into career exploration and development. Chapter three will review the methodology and design of the career exploration program. Chapter four will outline how the program will be implemented for the student athlete population on the campus of Ball State University.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Summary of the Project

Athletes are very recognizable individuals on college campuses; they are a source of school pride and entertainment for their peers, alumni, and surrounding community. Heavy engagement with athletics can prove to be beneficial for the athlete, but in some cases it can also have a negative effect on their role as students. Rigorous schedules, and other athletic commitments, can prevent students from engaging in necessary activities like career exploration and academic support services that can help promote their growth as students. Instances of academic scandals, and low graduation rates, have created an image that academics has taken a back seat to sports. Organizations like the National Collegiate Athletic Association agree that this was not the message that should have been communicated to student athletes, and responded with initiatives to assist with the regulation of academic progress of athletes. Institutions have an obligation to promote an environment that encourages career exploration and academic progress among their student athletes. A career exploration program for student athletes is proposed in this project. It begins with their entrance into the institution, and continues throughout their collegiate career, and concludes with an exit interview. This program will encourage athletes to explore their interests, assess their current skills, set goals, and monitor their academic progress towards their anticipated graduation.

Athletics in Higher Education

Intercollegiate sports entered higher education as student organized recreation, and a means of distraction from the everyday academic agenda. It started out as healthy competition between peers but gained popularity with students and the surrounding community drawing
crowds and publicity (Chu, 1982; Heyer & Hannah, 2000). Though successful, these events proved to be dangerous as well; most high contact sports produced numerous injuries and some resulting in deaths. For example, the 1905 football season alone resulted in 18 deaths and 143 injuries and signaled a time for change. President Roosevelt created the organization preceding the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) (Heyer & Hannah, 2000).

Sports entered higher education at a time when the education system was struggling to find a consistent source of funding, and sports provided a viable solution. Before athletics, institutions were funded through donations, churches, and the government, none of which were stable sources of monetary support (Heyer & Hannah, 2000). Businessmen and professionals on the boards of these institutions found it necessary to generate revenue and diversify the funding sources in order gain the much-needed financial support. They began to realize that sports brought popularity and prestige if the team was successful; alumni were willing to donate back to the institution, and it helped to attract a higher quality of students and faculty. Television appearances and bowl games assisted with monetary support; pressure mounted to have an athletic program that played exceptionally well during their sporting season. This pressure resulted in instances of enrolling athletes in courses that were less academically challenging, allowing athletes to play even though they were academically ineligible and doctoring transcripts. These actions conflicted with the original goals of higher education institutions by placing a lower value on academic success and encouraging students to focus more on athletic competition.

The NCAA became concerned with college athletes and their educational experiences when instances of low graduation rates, academic scandals, and student athletes being dismissed from institutions because of poor academic standing started catching public eye (Gayles & Hu,
The NCAA implemented regulations regarding athletes and the amount of time students could participate in athletic activities. For example, as a requirement, athletes received one day off per week from their athletic responsibilities, and practice times were limited to no more than four hours per day and twenty hours per week. The NCAA also required academic support services for athletes who are at Division I institutions. Even with these new stipulations, student athletes were still limited in the amount of time that could be spent on their academics and other non-athletic related activities (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001; Gayles & Hu, 2009).

**Development of the Student Athlete**

A student athlete, as defined by Woodruff and Shallert (2008), is an individual who is asked to manage two different realms of their life successfully, athletics and academics. They are a special population of students that require a diverse set of needs from institutions of higher education. While they can still suffer from the same transition issues that non-athletic students experience, athletes have an additional set of responsibilities that can add to their college experiences often times making it moreover difficult for them (Carodine et al., 2001; Chartrand & Lent, 1987). With two roles that can demand a significant amount of time, athletes can experience what is characterized as “role conflict” which occurs when one of their roles is incompatible with the requirements of another. As an athlete, their schedule demands a significant amount of time from their workouts, practices, game schedules, and other time commitments. Their student role includes common issues experienced by individuals making the transition into college – being away from home, autonomy, and establishing new peer relationships as well as academic responsibilities like classes, studying, exams, and time management. For a student who is not familiar with this new life transition, they may not understand how to balance these roles. In some cases student athletes are ill prepared to handle
the workload, they enter into the university with poor grade point averages, and low-test scores and expect to meet the expectations of the college level curriculum (Carodine et al., 2001).

Serving in dual roles can be very demanding, and students struggle to fulfill the responsibilities of both, which results in the individual failing at their tasks as a result of the gap between their ability and their environmental demands (Carodine et al., 2001). Blinde and Greendorfer (1992, as cited in Carodine et al., 2001) noted four difficulties associated with this gap: the individual could experience role conflict which is the disconnect in meeting the expectations of their roles as both a student and an athlete; role strain which is the stress associated with meeting the expectations of others around them like parents, teachers, and coaches; value alienation, which is when an individual is struggling to integrate their personal values with their sports related values; exploitation, which is the process of a student giving priority to their athletic responsibility and not enough time towards their academic or personal responsibilities.

Studies have focused on the development of the student identity and how it can affect the way an individual engages in career planning (Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000; Lally & Kerr, 2005). Brown, Glastetter-Fender, and Shelton (2000) demonstrated that those who are heavily involved in their chosen sport can develop an athletic identity that prevents them from engaging in their role as a college student and any career exploration behavior. An athletic identity is characterized by Lally and Kerr (2005), as an individual that has committed exclusively to their athletic role at the expense of exploring other available roles. While there are positive aspects of participating in sports, student athletes have a higher risk of identity foreclosure (Brown et al., 2000). Athletics require a certain level of commitment and dedication, which can interfere with a student’s ability to engage in other activities outside of their athletic
role (including academics and career exploration), which can promote identity foreclosure. Identity foreclosure is the commitment to an occupation or ideology without engaging in any personal exploration.

**Career Exploration and Development**

One of the major goals of higher education is to ensure that students gain an education that allows them to obtain a career. Career development is the formation of mature, realistic career plans through the assessment of an individual's career goals, interests, and abilities and the understanding of vocational opportunities (Lally & Kerr, 2005). When students find difficulty in making career decisions they can experience hardships like underemployment and loss of earnings. Student athletes in particular are known to have poor decision-making skills because of their role as student athletes and the focus on their performance (Burns, Jasinski, Dunn, & Fletcher, 2013; Lally & Kerr, 2005). When compared to non-athletes, students who participate in athletics face issues with developing clear educational plans, adjusting to college, and developing career maturity.

Albert and Luzzo (1999) suggested two theories that could serve as a framework for helping individuals overcome perceived barriers to career development. Social cognitive career theory (Lent & Brown, 1996) focused on the importance of personal agency in the decision-making process. This theory has three social cognitive mechanisms that go into the decision-making process and career development: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting. Self-efficacy defined by Bandura (1994) is a person's judgment regarding their own capabilities to execute actions that obtain a designated performance. Outcome expectations are the personal beliefs about one’s action and the probable outcome of that behavior; this motivates an individual to engage in certain behaviors (Lent & Brown, 1996). Goal setting, the third
component, can be described as a person’s determination to engage in an activity or behavior that will affect a future outcome. Setting goals allows for the individual to exercise forethought and guide their own behavior. Social cognitive career theory implies that these three components are essential to help individuals exercise their personal agency that guides them to be self-directed when engaging in career development and decision-making.

Weiner’s theory (1985) of attribution asserted that when people experience successes and failures, they develop causal beliefs about why a particular outcome was achieved. Based on these beliefs regarding their successes and failures it can impact the future behaviors of the person. Research has shown that there are career decision-making benefits associated with those individuals who believe that such decisions are controlled internally as opposed to externally (Albert & Luzzo, 1999). When looking at college students, individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to have a career path that is similar to their career aspirations, have higher levels of career maturity, and engage in career exploration. The more a student realizes that their career decisions are under their control, the more they actively engage and take responsibility for their future. By helping students understand their internal control over the career decision making process, it could inspire students to take on these active roles and encourage positive behaviors.

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE) is defined as the confidence in making career decisions, an important component in career development and its processes (Burns et al., 2013). The lower the level of CDSE, the more likely an individual will avoid tasks like choosing a major, deciding on a career path, taking inventory of their skills and interests, and seeking information regarding relevant career choices. Student athletes are likely to have a lower CDSE and as a result they are unprepared to make important career decisions. However, CDSE has
proven to be malleable and, with the help of workshops and other intentionally focused programs, can support students with their career decision-making issues. Institutions of higher education have found it imperative to provide environments that allow student athletes to flourish. According to Carodine et al. (2001) this can be accomplished through the use of important factors such as workshops, assessment tests, and interactions with faculty and staff. Assessment tools like Discover, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the Strong Interest Inventory can help students identify their values and interests, and help match them to occupations and majors. Faculty and staff need to be able to assist the students through encouragement, pushing students to engage in internship experiences, and volunteer opportunities. Workshops should help students set goals, complete career planning, and discuss information regarding career transitions, interviewing techniques, and other important information regarding the job search.

**Summary**

Athletics play a large role within institutions of higher education, but the athletes who participate at the college level may be lacking the proper development in other life areas outside of their chosen sport. A primary focus on athleticism can cause them to form an athletic identity that can deter them from exploring other roles in life, engaging in career exploration, and the development of important life skills. Research has shown that programs designed to aide in career exploration can assist athletes with developing career-related skills, and planning a future outside of athletics. By using the Social Cognitive Career Theory and Weiner’s Attribution Theory as a framework for the program, student athletes will be able to gauge their own personal interests to begin developing plans for their future. This program will provide an environment that supports the role of a student athlete, but encourages them to engage in positive behaviors.
towards the completion of their academic curriculum and the exploration of other options for career choices.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a career exploration program for Ball State University student athletes that provide them with a supportive environment where they can explore their career goals and interests.

Methodology

The first step in designing this career exploration program for athletes was to understand the current issues surrounding student athletes and their difficulty with career exploration. The literature review was constructed in order to gain insight about the entrance of athletics into higher education, and develop an understanding of why athletics became so important to the funding of these institutions. The review includes information about the development of student athletes, the effects a heavy schedule can have on academics and career exploration, and the importance of career exploration and theories surrounding it. This information was obtained from journal articles that focus on career development and intercollegiate student athletes.

The next step in designing this program was to review other institutions and their model of a career exploration program. For example Northwestern University has a career exploration program called the Wildcat Professional Excellence Program, which focuses on the junior and senior classes. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University has the Career Game Plan program, which sponsors a program for each class level. Each institution differs in their model of career exploration programs designed for their student athletes, but they both focus on the importance of career exploration and academics.
The final step in designing the program was to review the services that the Ball State University campus offered, and determine services that would aide in the development of the career exploration program. Two offices in particular could help with this initiative, the first being the Career Center, which offers resources like career advising, self-assessments, and interest tests. The Academic Advising Office could also assist with registering for courses, and developing four-year plans.

**Design of the Program**

The career development program is divided into four seminars that are conducted each year (maximum of four) that the athlete is present at the institution. Each of the four seminars is themed and has an outcome associated with career exploration, academic preparation, and planning for the future. Sessions last around two hours or less, and are instructed by a career services professional. The seminars include four main topics: Orientation, Choosing your Path, Gaining the Experience, and Solidifying your Future. A survey is distributed at the end of each seminar, and allows the participant to rate how useful the seminar was, if the session met expectations, and any suggestions they had. These seminars utilize activities from the book “Bound-for-Career Guidebook: A Student Guide to Career Exploration, Decision Making, and the Job Search” published by Rowman and Littlefield Education (Burtnett, 2010). Students have the option of purchasing the book from Amazon.com and this is highly encouraged, however, the activities can be printed for them and provided during the seminar.

**Orientation**

The student athletes attend the Orientation seminar during their first week of classes. The seminar focuses on key areas such as transitioning to college, Ball State University resources, the importance of goal setting, assessing their interests, and overall awareness of their own personal
values. A PowerPoint presentation is shown that includes information about various offices and resources on the campus of Ball State University like Student Athlete Support Services, Career Services, Learning Center, and Library resources. Student athletes are then formally introduced to key individuals that play an important role in their success at Ball State University and include individuals like their academic advisors, career counselors, and academic coordinators.

Next, the seminar covers the importance of goal setting, determining their skill set, and assessing their career interests. This discussion is followed by two activities provided in Chapter 4 of the career guidebook (Burtnett, 2010). “Activity 1 The Personal Audit: How Do You See Yourself” requires them to self-reflect on their skills, interests, and personality traits. “Activity 2 Setting Career Goals” requires athletes to create a list of achievable and realistic careers that they have a strong interest in. These activities are followed up by information about the different interest tests provided by the career center and what type of information these tests can provide them. Student athletes are then shown how to access these tests and given an assignment that requires them to take the test and have their results evaluated by career center professionals.

Before the conclusion of the seminar, athletes would have gained insight on their skills and interests, became familiarized with the resources and individuals who could help them on their journey, set goals for the year, and learn about test that measure personal interests. As a homework assignment, they will be encourage to take the interest test and have their results evaluated by the Career Center, and begin determining possible major/minors and careers of interest. After this initial meeting student athletes are encouraged to utilize career counselors that can assist with determining career areas of interest, and narrowing their list of possible academic majors.
Choosing your Path

The second seminar in the series occurs at the beginning of the student athletes’ sophomore year at the institution. This seminar focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of their career interests, and what a career in particular fields requires. By this time student athletes should have met with career counselors at least three times, and narrowed down their lists of majors and possible career interests to five. Representatives from the seven different colleges at Ball State University are present during this session in order to provide resources on the different majors and minors within their college, and course requirements necessary to complete a degree in an academic program. Using their list of possible major choices, athletes are able to converse with representatives from the respective colleges, and learn what they could do with a degree in that field.

The next part of the seminar is a presentation of resources that are provided by the Career Center and various online websites. This discussion, which is led by Career Center staff, will aid student athletes in their exploration of particular careers of interest and allow them to engage in their own research process. Using the resources provided by the Career Center, athletes will be able to acquire more in depth information regarding the various career paths they can engage in. The seminar encourages the athletes to draw connections between their self-interests, the information provided from the various colleges, and their own exploratory research to find a major/career that interests them.

Towards the end of the seminar athletes are asked to complete Activity 3 that is provided in the career guidebook (Burtnett, 2010). The activity encourages athletes to think in depth about some of the challenges they may encounter as they pursue a particular career path, and develop career and educational goals that will push them to achieve their desired career. As a
homework assignment, athletes are expected to use the resources provided by the Career Center to narrow down their career options and met with their academic advisor in order to determine an academic plan.

**Gaining the Experience**

The third component to the seminar series is held during the beginning of the student athletes’ junior year of college. This seminar focuses on various opportunities that can assist students with gaining experience and other transferrable skills that are beneficial in future job search processes. For this presentation there are four guest speakers from on-campus offices, the first being the Career Center. Career Center representatives have the opportunity to explain the importance of internships and other experiences and what this looks like from the employer’s perspective. The presentation includes the resources that the Career Center provides in terms of finding internship opportunities, and the preparation needed to secure a placement.

A representative from the Office of Student Life presents the second portion of the seminar. This presentation focused on the various organizations within the Office of Student Life that provide opportunities for leadership, engagement, and volunteerism. The office provides resources on the various student organizations registered on campus, from the academically centered groups, to Greek Life, extracurricular activities, multicultural organizations, and those that are community service oriented. This is followed by a presentation from the Excellence in Leadership program who discuss the opportunity to add leadership studies as a minor.

The third portion of the presentation is done by the Study Abroad Office, this presentation focuses on the opportunity to go to other destinations around the world and engage in learning. A representative discusses the value of studying abroad, and how students benefit
from the experience. This presentation includes a tutorial of how to explore the various study abroad program options online and finding one that best suits their goals as a student. Pamphlets and other resources are provided by the office, including office location, frequently asked questions, scholarships available, and information for parents.

The final portion of the presentation includes a presentation by the Building Better Communities Fellows, and/or the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry. These two programs handle the Immersive learning opportunities at Ball State University, and will provide information regarding the importance of the program and the opportunities that they provide for students. The presentation allowed student athletes to hear first-hand from other students involved in the program regarding their experience and what they gained from their participation.

**Solidifying your Future - Exit Interview**

The fourth seminar in the series focuses on preparation for the job search and occurs at the beginning of the fall semester of their senior year. This presentation, which lasts an hour, is a PowerPoint presentation led by a Career Center representative and highlights important topics such as checking in with academic advisors to ensure that they are on track to graduate, translating their experience as a student athlete on their resume, job search strategies, and career fair opportunities.

The second part of the seminar will focus on interview preparation. It will include a presentation on preparing for an interview, interviewing tips, proper attire, and following-up. After this presentation student athletes are encouraged to schedule meetings with a Career Center staff member to review their job search materials, and discuss what strategies the student would utilize for his/her job search.
Summary

This program is meant to assist student athletes with determining their interests and abilities and allow them the opportunity to engage in their own career exploration. By engaging in this program, student athletes will be connected with various resources on campus that can assist them with exploration, information about internships and organizations, and prepare them for the job search. In between these seminars student athletes are encouraged to utilize offices such as the Career Center to assist them with issues they may encounter through this decision making process. Through assessment methods the program can evolve to ensure that the needs of the student athlete population are being met.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PLAYBOOK: A CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM FOR STUDENT ATHLETES AT BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

Summary of the Project

Athletes are very recognizable individuals on college campuses; they are a source of school pride and entertainment for their peers, alumni, and surrounding community. Heavy engagement with athletics can prove to be beneficial for the athlete, but in some cases it can also have a negative effect on their role as students. Rigorous schedules, and other athletic commitments, can prevent students from engaging in necessary activities like career exploration and academic support services that can help promote their growth as students. Instances of academic scandals, and low graduation rates, have created an image that academics has taken a back seat to sports. Organizations like the National Collegiate Athletic Association agree that this was not the message that should have been communicated to student athletes, and responded with initiatives to assist with the regulation of academic progress of athletes. Institutions have an obligation to promote an environment that encourages career exploration and academic progress among their student athletes. A career exploration program for student athletes is proposed in this project. It begins with their entrance into the institution, and continues throughout their collegiate career, and concludes with an exit interview. This program will encourage athletes to explore their interests, assess their current skills, set goals, and monitor their academic progress towards their anticipated graduation.
This project contains the following items:

• A detailed presentation outline for the four career exploration sessions:
  
  o Session One: Orientation, page 25.
  
  o Session Two: Choosing Your Path, page 33.
  
  o Session Three: Gaining Experience, page 36.
  
  o Session Four: Solidifying Your Future – The Exit Interview, page 40.

• The student activities work sheets:
  
  o The Personal Audit: How Do You See Yourself, page 45.
  
  
  o My Dream Career: A Look into the Crystal Ball, page 50.

• Seminar Evaluations:
  
  o Evaluation: Orientation, page 49.
  
  o Evaluation: Choosing Your Path & Gaining Experience, page 51.
  
Session One: Orientation

Purpose
The purpose of the career exploration seminars is to provide guidance to Ball State University athletes who need assistance with major and career exploration, identifying their skills and interests, and preparing them for the job search process.

Resources

Learning Outcomes
From this session student athletes will
- learn about common transition issues students face in college,
- learn about Ball State University offices and the resources they provide,
- learn about individuals who can assist them during their collegiate experience while at Ball State,
- learn the importance of goal setting and how this can assist them with the career exploration process; and
- learn how to assess their skills, interests, and values important for determining a career path.

Presentation Outline
1) Introduction and overview
   a. Presenters introduce themselves and discuss the purpose of the session and the learning outcomes.
   b. Distribute an attendance sheet.
c. Allow students to introduce themselves, their sport, and why they chose to attend this session.

2) Transitioning into college

a. The importance of time management – Your schedules are very structured because of designated practice times and class schedules.

b. Open communication with coaches, advisors, faculty, and staff will be the key to your success.

c. Be knowledgeable about the people and resources available to you at Ball State University.

3) Ball State offices & resources

a. Academic Advising

i. Location and hours

• North Quad (NQ), Room 339.
• Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?

• The academic advising office assists student with planning student schedules, creating a plan for graduation, and assisting with registering for courses.

b. Student Athlete Support Services

i. Location and hours

• North Quad (NQ), Room 351.
• Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?
• Student Athlete Support Services is a program designated for all athletes on the Ball State campus. They assist with academic monitoring, study table activities, and work with Academic Advising, and the Learning Center to provide resources that athletes may need. These individuals meet with students on a frequent basis in order to assist students with developing key skills such as time management, establishing goals, and assisting with personal concerns that could affect academic success.

e. Career services

i. Location and hours

• Lucina Hall (LU), Room 220.
• Monday- Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?

• The career center assists students with exploring various career opportunities, and provides resources for internships, as well as graduate school and job search preparation.

iii. Resources that are available to you

• career advising,
• resume review,
• mock interviews,
• referrals for on-campus employment, and
• career interests tests.

d. Counseling Center
i. Location and hours
   • Lucina Hall (LU), Room 320.
   • Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?
   • Career exploration and assessment and
   • career counseling.

e. Learning Center

i. Location and hours
   • North Quad (NQ), Room 350.
   • Monday thru Thursday from 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. and Friday 9a.m. – 12 p.m.

ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?
   • The Learning Center assists students with core classes and developing study skills.

iii. Resources that are available to you
   • free tutoring in the specific areas,
   • workshops, and
   • supplemental instruction.

f. Bracken Library

i. Location and hours
   • Situated between Noyer Complex and Atrium.
   • Hours vary by day, can check the BSU Library website for more information: http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/libraries/.
ii. How they can assist you throughout your time here?

- Bracken Library is your one stop shop for academic literature and research, and can provide a variety of services that can assist you with paper writing.

iii. Resources that are available to you:

- notary services,
- print, scan, copy, laminate,
- reserving study spaces,
- large poster or format printing, and
- instructional services.

4) Career exploration and goal setting

a. Why is it important?

i. Career exploration

- There are various career opportunities within today’s ever-changing workforce. Career exploration allows you to gain more insight into areas that pique your interest. Career exploration is about finding a profession that YOU are interested in and determining whether you can see yourself building a future in that profession.

ii. Goal setting

- Goal setting allows you to work towards your objective, and ensure that you are progressing towards a desired outcome.

Especially in terms of a college education, there is a very limited
window to decide a major in order to stay on track to achieving your desired degree. Setting these goals allow for you to continually track your progress, celebrate your accomplishments, and set a focal point for the future. During the course of this exploration process, it is highly encouraged that you engage in goal setting.

b. Activity 1 The Personal Audit: How Do You See Yourself (Will do on their own time) – See Appendix A.

i. This activity will engage the reader in a self-assessment of what they believe are their talents, skills and abilities, personal accomplishments, and personality traits. Student athletes evaluate their perceived strengths, and identify areas of growth. This activity will probe the student to identify academic subjects in which they excel, and determine which areas spark their curiosity.

5) Assessing interests and skills

a. Why is it important?

i. Assessing your interests and skills are a way of gaining more knowledge about yourself and identify areas that you excel in.

• Look at things such as:
  a. abilities and aptitudes,
  b. achievements,
  c. interests,
  d. personality traits,
e. values and lifestyle preferences.

b. Activity 2 Setting Career Goals (Will do on their own time) – See Appendix B.

i. This sheet allows student athletes to identify careers that can see themselves attaining in the future. They will use Activity 1 to look at their abilities and other factors to gain a sense of what it is they may want to do career wise. In the instance that you encounter multiple students with “Professional Athlete” on their list, encourage them to think of careers that might serve as an alternative if they are not able to accomplish that dream quite yet.

6) Information on interest tests

a. Interest tests serve as a self-assessment that help you determine career fields that fit your interests, skills, values, and personality. The Career Center provides access to various interests’ tests that assist you with exploring possible major and career interests.

7) Homework assignments

a. Complete Activities 1 and 2.

b. Taking the Interest Tests (Counseling or Career Center).

c. If you would like to meet with a Career Counselor to go over your test results schedule a meeting. They can discuss your interest tests in depth and they can assist you with the career exploration process, and decision-making processes.

d. Develop a list of possible career options – These are a list of 5 career options that you are seriously considering for the future.

8) Closing remarks and questions.
9) Distribute Seminar Evaluation Sheet – *See Appendix C.*
Session Two: Choosing Your Path

Purpose

The purpose of the career exploration seminars is to assist student athletes with exploring viable major options that can help them achieve the career they want in the future.

Resources


Learning Outcomes

From this session student athletes will

- learn more about particular career paths that pique their interest,
- gain more resources about the different colleges as Ball State University,
- understand career exploratory resources available through the Career Center, and
- learn more about exploring career options on their own.

Presentation Outline

1. Introduction and overview
   
   a. Presenters introduce themselves and discuss the purpose of the session and the learning outcomes.

2. Information session (20-30) minutes depending on how many students are in attendance.
   
   a. Allow each of the seven representatives from the colleges to introduce themselves and which college they represent.
   b. Each representative will have their own table with information about majors that are offered within their colleges. Allow students to gravitate towards certain
tables that interest them. Encourage them to take notes and pamphlets with them to review at a later date.

3. Exploration resources and techniques
   
a. Career links - website
      
i. Within the Career Center website, there are links organized by Ball State majors that link to more information about particular careers. Staff have compiled lists of resources that can assist you with the exploration process.

   b. Personal research techniques
      
i. When researching particular careers take a look at key factors such as average salary, working conditions, and job projections for the future.
      
   ii. Draw connections between your self-assessment and the requirements of these positions and whether you can see yourself committing to a career in this field.

4. Activity 3 My Dream Career: A Look into the Crystal Ball (Amended) – See Appendix D
   
a. This activity is meant to get you thinking about possible careers that you are interested in, and whether or not these are realistic options, and possible challenges that you foresee yourself facing and how you plan to overcome them.

5. Homework assignment – Review the information that you have obtained from the different colleges. Use this information as well as the resources and techniques provided by the Career Center to engage in your own research of potential career interests. At some point in time during this academic year you should choose a major, develop a plan for graduation, and the course work needed to obtain a degree in this area.
6. Closing remarks and questions.

7. Distribute Seminar Evaluation Sheet – *See Appendix E.*
Session Three: Gaining Experience

Purpose
The purpose of the session is to provide information to student athletes about different opportunities that can assist them with gaining experience in their field of choice, and other ways to get engaged on campus.

Learning Outcomes
From this session student athletes will

• learn about more opportunities to engage on campus, and gain valuable experience in their field that can assist them with obtaining a career.

Presentation Outline

1. Introduction and overview
   a. Presenters introduce themselves and discuss the purpose of the session and the learning outcomes.

2. Importance of internships and resources
   a. Internships allow you to gain work experience that is directly related to the field that you intend to go into, or assists you with getting close to your career goal. Certain colleges or departments may require you to have an internship as a condition of graduation, and this information can be found by talking with your academic advisor, or the internship coordinator within your college.
   b. You have the ability to do internships for academic credit, and it can be arranged at various points within the year (academic year or over the summer). Depending on the company, internships can be organized as a paid or unpaid.
c. The Career Center offers resources that can assist you with finding an internship such as:
   
   i. Internship book – Offers you great information regarding the internship search, how to contact employers, the process for creating your own internship experience and preparation tips and techniques.
   
   ii. Internship database and information.

d. The Career Center can also assist you with preparation for interviews, resume critiques, cover letters, networking, and other valuable information that can put you on the right track to obtaining an internship.

3. Student Life

a. Student Life will discuss the role of their office as a one-stop shop for involvement opportunities. With over 350 student organization on campus, there are various ways to develop leadership skills and gain relevant experience.

   i. Academic organizations – Departmental and Professional organizations exist within Student Life that focus on a particular major and opportunities within a particular career field. For example the Accounting Club!
   
   ii. Greek Life – There are 33 Greek organizations that abide by certain values and principles. These organizations are a great way for students to get involved in leadership, scholarship, and service.
   
   iii. Multicultural Organizations – These are organizations in which students may share similar cultural backgrounds, or if you would just like to know about a different ethnic group other than your own. Multicultural
organizations offer an opportunity to get involved with different groups and broaden your knowledge.

iv. Honorary and Professional Organizations – These groups promote academic excellence and typically require a certain grade point average or academic standing in order to become involved.

v. Service Organizations – These organizations are dedicated to service and leadership and primarily focus on giving back to others and the community around them.

b. Excellence in Leadership (EIL)

i. This is an opportunity to assist students with becoming leaders inside and outside of the classroom. They offer opportunities to participate in seminars, workshops, guest speaker presentations, and earn course credit. There is also the possibility to add a Leadership minor to your academic curriculum.

4. Immersive Learning

a. This is a program at Ball State that allows students to become immersed in a unique learning experience. These experiences are not only beneficial for the student but they are often partnerships with other businesses, the surrounding community, and the government in an effort to assist with real-world solutions.

5. Study Abroad

a. As athletes it may be more difficult to participate in study abroad trips, however, having knowledge about this information is often helpful. Study abroad gives you the opportunity to engage in academic course work around the world. There are
various programs, and they range in terms of the locations, the amount of time spent, and the overall cost of the trip.

i. The BSU website can assist you with finding a program that suits your needs, you can request advising, browse through the different options, or apply for a program using the link provided.

6. Homework assignment – Consider the possibilities for gaining leadership experience, transferrable skills, and a chance to engage with others who may have the same interests as you. If something sparks your interest – Get Involved!

7. Closing remarks and questions.

8. Distribute Seminar Evaluation Sheet – See Appendix E.
Session Four: Solidifying Your Future – The Exit Interview

Purpose

The purpose of this career exploration seminar is to provide student athletes with assistance on the job search process, interviewing techniques, and resume help.

Learning Outcomes

From this session student athletes will

• learn about the resources available at the Career Center that can assist them with the job search process and
• learn about various types of resumes and materials needed for the job search.

Presentation Outline

1. Introduction and overview
   a. Presenters introduce themselves and discuss the purpose of the session and the learning outcomes.

2. Checking-in
   a. Frequent check-ins with your academic advisor are highly encourage! Ensure that you are on track to obtaining your degree, and you have all relevant coursework needed to fulfill that requirement.

3. Landing a career
   a. Resume tips
      i. The Career Center will help you with key information such as common mistakes, formatting, different types of resumes, curriculum vitaea, and how to translate your experience as an athlete on your resume.
   b. Job search strategies
i. The Career Center representative will provide insight on different avenues and resources students should use to search for relevant job openings. The Career Center can discuss the Career Fair and the opportunities that it provides for students.

c. Interview preparation

i. The Career Center representative will discuss interview attire, proper research techniques, follow-up, and thank you letters.

4. Homework assignment – Drop in during resume review hours and have your job search materials looked at. These professionals can offer you amazing advice, and feedback.

5. Closing remarks and questions.

6. Distribute Seminar Evaluation Sheet – See Appendix F.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Student Exercise 1
THE PERSONAL AUDIT: HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

Complete the audit that follows. Review your responses periodically, and update any information that does not reflect your current view of your personal characteristics.

1. Abilities and skills are the talents that you possess. They may have come to the surface in your school work (e.g., conducting research for a term paper, etc.) or in your daily life (e.g., interacting with others in group, etc.). Others you don’t possess now will emerge as you develop and learn. List the abilities and skills you have at this point in your life.

2. Aptitudes represent your capacity for learning, your natural ability to do something. They can range from academic things like writing or mathematics to other strengths like music or athletics. Make a list of your strongest aptitudes.

3. Achievements are the measured accomplishments of your life, those things that you have done well or those for which you have received recognition. They include things like making the honor roll to setting a record for rebounds in basketball to collecting the most food for the homeless at Thanksgiving. List the achievements for which you have been recognized.

4. Interests are the things you like to do, spend time doing, and arouse your curiosity. Sometimes they are “spin-offs” of your aptitudes, include things like writing. Other interests may include taking photos, playing the guitar, collecting sport cards, or cooking. Often they are things you do just for fun. List your interests here.
5. **Personality traits are those individual characteristics that make you different from other people.** Words like outgoing, quiet, inquisitive, and studious come to mind when thinking of personality traits. List those personal traits below.

6. **Values are the aspects of your life that matter to you, those you hold in esteem, the principles that you believe in, stand behind, and would fight to maintain.** A commitment to family and friends, loyalty to your school, and your religious beliefs are excellent examples. Write a few of your values below.

7. **Lifestyle preferences are similar to values but may be just a bit more practical in their application to you personally.** They are the things you need to feel content and satisfied. The presence of leisure time versus long working hours is one example. Another would be your choice of living in a smaller community over living in a busy city, or vice versa. What are some of the things you prefer for your life?

8. What do you consider to be your greatest personal strengths and attributes?

9. What do you consider to be your greatest weaknesses or shortcomings?

10. List three school subjects or interests you would like to continue to study and possibly integrate into your work tasks one day.
    a. ______________________
    b. ______________________
    c. ______________________
11. Which school subjects have you enjoyed the most?

12. Which school subjects posed the greatest challenges to you?

13. Which school subjects have you enjoyed studying the least?

14. What school subjects resulted in your poorest grades?

15. Identify a recent experience that stimulated your intellectual curiosity, or one for which you enjoyed the challenge as exciting and arousing.

16. How would you describe your academic performance to date? Is your school record a true reflection of your academic ability or potential? If not, how would you characterize your ability and potential for success in future studies?

Adapted from:
APPENDIX B

Student Exercise 2
SETTING CAREER GOALS

This is an exercise that you can complete and then return to many times as necessary. In the spaces that follow, list the careers that hold particular interest for you, ones that you could see yourself performing one day. Revisit and revise your career goals at any point you learn anything of significance about yourself or the world of work.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________

Adapted from:
APPENDIX C

Seminar Evaluation for Session One: Orientation

Date: ________________

Please evaluate the statements below and circle the option that corresponds with your experience.

The learning objectives of this seminar were met.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The information given in the seminar contributed to completing the learning objectives.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The information provided assisted me with the career exploration process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The instructors were effective in communicating the information.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please offer personal feedback on your experience during this seminar, and offer information about how we can improve for the future.

What did you find most useful during this seminar?

Is there anything that was not covered in this seminar that you would have liked to discuss?

Would you recommend this seminar to other individuals who need assistance with the career exploration process?

What are some recommendations for future seminars?
APPENDIX D

Student Exercise 3.1
MY DREAM CAREER: A LOOK INTO THE CRYSTAL BALL

In the best of scenarios, what do you see as the perfect career for yourself? List it below. If multiple careers are currently on your radar screen, list your top three.
1.) __________________________________________________
2.) __________________________________________________
3.) __________________________________________________

What is it about the career or careers that you have listed above that is most appealing to you?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Do you believe your ideal career to be a realistic choice?
___Yes ___ No ___ Don’t know yet

Do you see any challenges or problems in your eventual pursuit of your perfect career?
___ Yes ___ No ___ Don’t know yet

If yes, what are those challenges or problems? ____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How do you think you can overcome these challenges? Can you identify resources that can assist you?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What short-term career or educational goals should you set now to point you toward the achievement of your dream career?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Adapted from:
APPENDIX E

Seminar Evaluation for Sessions 2 & 3

Date: ____________________

Please Circle Session Title: Choosing Your Path or Gaining Experience

Please evaluate the statements below and circle the option that corresponds with your experience.

The learning objectives of this seminar were met.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

The information given in the seminar contributed to completing the learning objectives.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

The information provided assisted me with the career exploration process.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

The instructors were effective in communicating the information.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

Please offer personal feedback on your experience during this seminar, and offer information about how we can improve for the future.

What did you find most useful during this seminar?

Did you attend previous seminars? If so, how many?

Is there anything that was not covered in this seminar that you would have liked to discuss?

Would you recommend this seminar to other individuals who need assistance with the career exploration process?

What are some recommendations for future seminars?
APPENDIX F

Seminar Evaluation for Solidifying Your Future - The Exit Interview

Date: ______________________

Please evaluate the statements below and circle the option that corresponds with your experience.

The learning objectives of this seminar were met.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

The information given in the seminar contributed to completing the learning objectives.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

The information provided assisted me with the career exploration process.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

The instructors were effective in communicating the information.
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

I feel prepared to engage in the job search process
Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Please take the time to offer personal feedback on your experience during this seminar, and offer information about how we can improve for the future.

What did you find most useful during this seminar?

Did you attend previous seminars? If so, how many?

Is there anything that was not covered in this seminar that you would have liked to discuss?

Would you recommend this seminar to other individuals who need assistance with the career exploration process?
What are some recommendations for future seminars?

Did you find the “Career Exploration Series” useful for helping to determine possible major/career options? Why or Why not?