

Student-Athlete Identity and Developing Purpose: Strategies for Transitioning to Life After Sport

RESEARCH FROM THE FRONT PORCH

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Nearly all athletes interviewed, planned to pursue a professional career. Consistent with previous research extreme focus and desire to win and succeed athletically, hindered their identity development outside of sport.
- Students struggled finding purpose outside of athletics. Their focus and energy day in and day out is dedicated to their sport. When asked about their purpose beyond athletics and in the future, students talked about not knowing what that was. They talked about fear of the future and a life without their sport.
- Focused programming that helps student-athletes identify their purpose would serve them well in their identity development as well as transition into life after sport. The programming for student-athletes needs to be specifically targeted and thoughtfully planned based on the student-athletes' needs and wants, rather than the ideas of adults.

Helping student-athletes develop purpose is a useful strategy to support identity development beyond their sport.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What practices or programming does our university already have in place that focus on developing purpose among student-athletes outside of sport and their athletic identity?
2. What steps can be taken to integrate our student-athletes' needs and wants for programming or practices that focus on developing purpose?
3. How might these programs serve our athletes when they are finished competing in intercollegiate athletics?



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Additional resource:

- [NCAA After the Game Career Center](#)

Reference:

- [Chickering, A. W. and Reisser, L. \(1993\). Education and identity. \(2nd Ed.\) San Francisco, CA](#)

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