

SENSE OF PURPOSE

Comparing Athletes and Their Non-Athlete Peers

RESEARCH FROM THE FRONT PORCH

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Data collected from student-athletes and non-athletes at a single institution revealed that students had generally positive attitudes about their purpose.
- Analyses found little to no difference between student-athletes and their non-athlete peers.
- In contrast to non-athletes, student-athletes experienced growth from the start to the end of the academic term in items related to purpose (e.g., “My life has a clear sense of purpose”; “What I do in life is valuable and worthwhile”).
- The growth experienced by student-athletes suggests that there may be more uncertainty at the beginning of the term for athletes than was previously known.

Since former athletes demonstrate a higher sense of purpose than non-athletes after college, our findings illuminate the need to better understand the conditions that contribute to sense of purpose for athletes.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. How is our athletic department currently fostering student-athletes’ sense of purpose?
2. How can existing campus and athletic department resources help student-athletes navigate potentially heightened questions about sense of purpose at the beginning of the academic term?
3. What support is in place to make those efforts successful and what additional support is needed?



Dr. Becky Crandall
Senior Lecturer
The Ohio State University
crandall.77@osu.edu



Dr. Pamela Robenolt
Director of Learning Resources
University of Washington
proben@uw.edu



Nathan Adkins
Doctoral Student
University of Washington
nadkins@uw.edu

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