

**TEMPORARY LEADERSHIP IN ATHLETICS: THE EXPERIENCES  
OF INTERIM NCAA DIRECTORS OF ATHLETICS**

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## ABSTRACT

### **TEMPORARY LEADERSHIP IN ATHLETICS: THE EXPERIENCES OF INTERIM NCAA DIRECTORS OF ATHLETICS**

By

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May 2017

Turnover in intercollegiate athletics leadership often results in an interim director of athletics appointment, which is a quick solution to fill a gap in leadership until a permanent successor can be named. Not only is interim leadership a convenient option for the institution, it can also provide an individual the opportunity to serve in a senior leadership position that may otherwise be difficult to obtain. Although there are many advantages to serving as an interim director of athletics, those who serve in the role are also faced with a number of challenges that have implications to the individual and institution during the temporary appointment.

This dissertation captured the experiences of interim National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) directors of athletics. Through the use of qualitative interviews, the dissertation explored and described the perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support experienced by 15 participants who had served and completed their appointment as an interim NCAA director of athletics. Bridges' (2004) transition theory model, and the human resource frame of Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational reframing model provided the conceptual framework to analyze the data of this study.

The study found that participants experienced change that triggered their transition into the interim director of athletics role causing them to let go of an old identity with which they were familiar. Participants also experienced varying degrees of unfamiliarity as they adapted to

new job tasks, experienced increased workloads, and managed new and old relationships. Ultimately, participants experienced acceptance of their role as interim by building the confidence and skills needed to be successful before they transitioned out of the interim director of athletics position into their next role.

Recommendations for policy include the need to develop NCAA and institutional guidelines to provide a go to guide in how to efficiently and effectively support an interim director of athletics. Practice recommendations include the implementation of procedures that encourage professional learning and growth opportunities. Finally, future research should examine employment trends and provide different perspectives on the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics, such as gender and race differences, family dynamics, and staff perception.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2014, my boss was unexpectedly let go. Within minutes of him cleaning his personal belongings out of his office, I was meeting with the vice president of enrollment management and student affairs and was promoted from associate director of athletics to the interim director of athletics. Without having experienced a full academic year in my role as an associate director, I had gone from being second in command, to having complete oversight of an entire department that I was still trying to get to know and understand. Even though I was in the process of getting acclimated to the culture of the campus, the department, and the overall college system, as an aspiring intercollegiate athletic administrator, I looked at this situation as a great opportunity to experience the position I one-day desired to have. Little did I know how different of a role it was going to be as I quickly transitioned from being an associate director, to the director.

As the interim director of athletics, not only did I keep my job duties as the associate director of athletics, but I also became instantly responsible for everything else in the athletic department. I did not have a boss to go to anymore to ask for direction, and to learn from, as it pertained to particular issues that related to my department. Coaches, staff, administrators across campus were looking at me to figure everything out. They were looking at me for guidance, leadership, and direction. Everyone was coming to me in order to fulfill promises made by my predecessor, to answer questions to things I had no previous knowledge of, and to provide solutions on how to fix what was broken in our department. The responsibility fell on me, regardless of whether it was something I directly did or my predecessor did before I was even hired at the institution.

The day I became the interim director of athletics was the day I started doubting my abilities of being an intercollegiate athletic administrator. I was appointed to a position that I had not properly been trained for. I was being pulled in every direction, attending meeting after meeting; learning as I went along, because I had to; making decisions that I thought were the best at the time and later realizing that they were not. It seemed like I could not do anything right because I was always fixing something, mainly things that my predecessor left behind broken. However, as the interim director of athletics, they were all my issues to manage, whether I had a part in making them or not.

I served as an interim director of athletics for almost a year before a more experienced professional came and replaced me, also in an interim capacity. Running the athletic department was too much for me to handle by myself without proper training and support. Even though I can look back on this experience as a great opportunity for my professional and personal growth, at the time I was not prepared to handle the responsibilities of being an interim director of athletics.

There is evidence that my experience is not unique (Browning & Boys, 2015; Browning & McNamee, 2012), as well as reasons to believe others will face similar challenges going forward. Betts, Urias, Chavez, and Betts (2009) predicted that beginning in 2014 there would be a 50% turnover of senior administrators in higher education. Furthermore, Everley (1994) indicated that the average search process for a senior leader in higher education could range between six to 18 months. With institutions facing an increase in senior leadership turnover and a substantial amount of time between permanent leaders, these institutions can be expected to utilize interim appointments to manage and fulfill the responsibilities of the prior leader until a successor is named. Since interim leadership can provide an institution with a temporary leader

during a time of transition, further attention from researchers are needed to better understand the implications that occur to the individual serving as an interim leader and to the institution.

### **Problem Statement**

Since turnover is inevitable for institutions, changes in leadership can occur often (Jones, 2011), especially for senior level leadership positions. Trachtenberg (2008) has argued that senior leadership positions within higher education result in higher turnover due to stressful conditions that result from high visibility and scrutiny. Senior leadership turnover in institutions can often resemble a revolving door to both leaders and followers, in which leaders transition in and out of leadership positions on a regular basis (Basinger, 2001).

When planned or unplanned turnover in senior leadership occurs, institutions are left with the decision of how to fill the vacant position. While planned turnover allows institutions time to prepare for leadership replacement, unplanned turnover can result in an immediate need to fill the void in leadership. One option for institutions to utilize during leadership transition is to recruit a new replacement for the permanent position right away. Another option for institutions is succession planning, which is the purposeful attempt to develop and promote talent and knowledge from within (Rothwell, 2005). Succession planning allows an institution to retain and develop current employees for individual and organizational growth and learning, and also allows institutions continuity in leadership transition, while maintaining strong institutional memory (Rothwell, 2005). Although succession management and planning are ideal for institutions during times of planned leadership transition, unexpected leadership turnover, such as dismissal or early retirement, may result in an underprepared leader due to a lack of training or experience (Mooney, Semadeni, & Kesner, 2013).

A third strategy for institutions to utilize during leadership transition is appointing an interim leader to temporarily fulfill responsibilities of the prior leader until a successor can be named (McLaughlin & Riesman, 1990). Interim leadership can be a quick and convenient option for institutions to bridge the gap between permanent leadership positions (Gilmore, 1988), especially in cases of unplanned turnover. Whether institutions face planned or unplanned turnover and decide to appoint an interim leader, little is known about the experiences of interim appointments and the impact temporary leadership has on an institution.

There are many advantages, as well as challenges, to serving in an interim leadership position. The individual serving as interim has the opportunity to gain experience in a new position, establish a positive reputation to possibly obtain the permanent position, or recognize that this is a role that they may not ultimately desire (Rud, 2004). However, individuals serving in an interim role often have no time to plan, no training for the position, little to no information left from the predecessor, and no ability to prepare personally or professionally (Mundt, 2004). Interim leaders are at a disadvantage because long-term goals and needs for the department cannot be addressed in the short timeframe of the appointment (Gilmore, 1988).

The nature of the appointment can also pose other challenges. Since appointing a person into an interim position can be the result of a difficult situation, decisions to appoint an internal employee can be quickly and conveniently made by appointing authorities, with little regards to long-term issues (Gilmore, 1988). Quick decisions to hire an interim leader, or to accept an interim appointment, may lead to difficulties in the future for the individual and the institution (Alley, 2005). In addition, when an internal employee is utilized to serve in an interim leadership position, a gap may exist in completing other organizational tasks originally done by the new interim leader (Draper & McMichael, 2002). As a result, internal appointments of

interim leaders can cause difficulty for the individual appointed to meet the needs of the institution when trying to balance dual positions.

Although interim leadership occurs often in higher education, there is limited research that has identified the challenges of interim appointments in general (Goler, 2004), and is non-existent on the population of interim National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) directors of athletics. Unfortunately, the turnover rates of NCAA directors of athletics are unknown, as well as the exact number of positions that are temporarily filled with an interim leader. However, just as other senior level interim leadership positions occur within higher education, it is reasonable to suspect that interim NCAA directors of athletics experience the same.

Since intercollegiate athletics has an environment of high accountability and often brings national visibility to an institution, additional research is needed to investigate the experiences of those who serve as interim NCAA directors of athletics. Further research will offer a better understanding of the individual, the impact that interim leadership has on an institution, and the institutional expectations related to temporary appointments. Additional research will also provide a better understanding in what to anticipate from interim NCAA directors of athletics before institutions appoint and individuals accept the temporary role.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to capture the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics. Since there is a lack of literature in general on the topic of interim leadership in higher education, and on directors of athletics in particular, findings from this study will add to the gap in literature and provide insight into the challenges and benefits of serving as an interim leader within college athletics and the support system of the institution during the temporary appointment. Findings from this research will allow individuals who serve as an

interim intercollegiate director of athletics to better understand what is expected of them to be successful as an interim leader. As well, institutions can understand how to better support interim intercollegiate director of athletics appointments during times of leadership transition.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this qualitative study are:

1. What professional and personal challenges do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
2. What professional and personal benefits do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
3. What institutional resources are needed to support interim NCAA directors of athletics as they transition through the interim appointment?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that will guide this dissertation on the experiences of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics will include Bridges' (2004) transition theory model (TTM) and the human resource frame (HRF) of Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational reframing model (ORM). Bridges' TTM will focus on the process of transition experienced by an individual, while the HRF of Bolman and Deal's ORM will focus on institutional relationships with their employees. This conceptual framework is relevant to the topic of interim leadership because it will focus on how people transition once change occurs, and how institutions may support, or not support, their employees through this transition.

### **Transition Theory Model**

Bridges (2004) argued that change is what happens to people, while transition is what people internally go through when change occurs. His TTM highlights three stages of transition.

These stages include (a) the endings, (b) the neutral zone, and (c) the new beginning. Bridges indicated that people would go through each stage at their own pace. However, there is no linear progression of stages within the TTM. Since individuals can experience an overlap of stages, a skip in stages, and a return to stages, those who are more comfortable with change will move through each stage at a faster pace than those who are not.

The first stage of Bridges' (2004) TTM is the stage of endings. This stage is initiated when someone is presented with significant change in his or her current situation. In reference to the experiences of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, the endings stage would begin when they are asked to move into the director of athletics role. In this stage, people have to let go of something they have been comfortable with. Often marked by personal resistance and emotional upheaval, individuals in this stage may experience emotions of fear, denial, anger, sadness, disorientation, frustration, uncertainty, and a sense of loss. This concept is applicable to newly appointed interim leaders because they are put into a position where they have to break old connections to the world they are used to and let go of the old ways of defining themselves by their previous position held. Bridges argues that individuals must be willing to accept that something is going to end before they can accept that something new is coming.

The second stage of Bridges' (2004) TTM is the neutral zone. In this middle stage, people who are affected by change are often confused, uncertain, and impatient. This stage is the bridge between people being attached to the old while they try to adapt to the new. Individuals in this stage often experience higher workloads as they get adjusted to the new ways of doing things. In this stage, people may experience emotions of resentment, low morale, anxiety, and skepticism. For interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, the neutral stage is a time of unfamiliarity as they take on a new position and additional responsibilities. As they try to

determine their role, this sense of unfamiliarity can lead to feelings of being lost, empty, and alone. Although the neutral stage can feel like an endless cycle of self-doubt, this stage can also result in great creativity, innovation, and renewal, as individuals try to create new ways of thinking and working. Therefore, in this stage, interim intercollegiate directors of athletics might also become more accepting of the role they are in as they realize what their purpose is in holding a temporary leadership position.

The last stage of Bridges' (2004) TTM is the stage of new beginning. In this stage, individuals experience acceptance and energy. Individuals begin to embrace change, as they build the skills they need to be successful. In this stage, people experience emotions of high energy, openness, and renewed commitment. When applied to interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, the stage of new beginnings brings about the chance for personal growth for the individual in the temporary leadership role. Regardless of whether the interim leader obtains the permanent position, or returns to their previous role, they can gain personal and professional experience that helps them define their sense of identity after experiencing the stages of transition.

Since interim leadership occurs as a result of change, Bridges' (2004) theory will concentrate on the transition that individuals go through during interim leadership appointments. Bridges' (2004) TTM will provide a framework to focus on how individuals feel when serving as an interim intercollegiate director of athletics.

### **Human Resource Frame**

Bolman and Deal (2013) created the ORM in order to provide a set of ideas and assumptions to help understand and negotiate through particular institutional territories. The ORM is described as a mental framework that allows institutions to know what they are up



against, and what they can do about a particular situation (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Although framing can serve multiple functions, some examples include being “filters for sorting essence from trivia, maps that aid navigation, and tools for solving problems and getting things done” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 21).

Bolman and Deal’s (2013) ORM involves four framing perspectives: (a) Structural, (b) Human Resource, (c) Political, and (d) Symbolic. The Structural Frame is the architecture of an institution that provides a blueprint for expectations and exchanges among internal and external constituencies. The HRF has an organizational emphasis on understanding people. The Political Frame views institutions as competitive arenas, competing interest, and struggles of power. The Symbolic Frame focuses on organizational meaning and significance. Although Bolman and Deal present four organizational frames, for the purpose of this dissertation, the HRF will be utilized to focus on the institutional support system when there is an interim intercollegiate director of athletics.

The HRF has four core assumptions including: “(a) institutions exist to serve human needs..., (b) people and institutions need each other..., (c) when the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer..., [and] (d) a good fit benefits both” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 117). The HRF emphasizes that institutions benefit from having a talented, motivated, loyal, and free-spirited workforce because employees are more productive, innovative, and willing to go out of their way to get the job done (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The HRF of Bolman and Deal’s (2013) ORM is a guide to help institutions build and implement human resource strategies and philosophies, hire the right people, keep them, invest in them, empower them, and promote diversity.

The HRF of Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM provides a framework for understanding the perceived institutional support for interim leaders. It will provide a lens for how institutions support their employees and how they can impact the experience of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics. Furthermore, it will also provide insight into institutional hiring practices and professional development opportunities. Through the HRF, the experiences of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics can be analyzed to determine what support structures are in place or may be needed as transition occurs for interim intercollegiate directors of athletics.

The three stages presented in Bridges' (2004) TTM, in addition to the HRF in Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM, will serve as the conceptual framework to guide this dissertation on the experiences of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics. Interim leadership not only brings change, but also results in transition within an individual and an institution. Since Bridges' theory focuses on transition that results from change, and Bolman and Deal's HRF focuses on the interaction of an institution with its employees, this will serve as the conceptual lens in understanding how people, and institutions, transition and are supported once change occurs.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of taking a closer look at interim leadership of intercollegiate directors of athletics is to add to the literature, and to create practical tools to help institutions support interim leaders during a time of transition. Since there is an overall lack of literature on the subject of interim leadership in higher education, further insight of this topic is important so that individuals who serve in the capacity of an interim intercollegiate director of athletics can understand what is expected of them to be successful as an interim leader within an institution. Since intercollegiate athletics has a culture of teamwork and accountability, understanding how the temporary leadership of an interim intercollegiate director of athletics can impact this culture

is also important. Furthermore, institutions can understand how to better support interim intercollegiate directors of athletics appointments during times of leadership transition.

As it relates to policy, this study highlights the importance of developing guidelines at the NCAA and institutional level to provide best practices on how campuses can better support interim directors of athletics. This information is valuable to institutions, and to individuals who have the opportunity to serve in the temporary leadership role, because it provides a go to guide of how to effectively communicate roles, goals and expectations of the interim appointment, as well as promote an environment that fosters workload efficiency.

As it relates to practice, this study highlights the importance of creating learning and professional growth opportunities for interim directors of athletics. This information is beneficial to institutions so that processes can be implemented in order to provide continual guidance to individuals while serving as an interim director of athletics. Furthermore, this study also emphasizes the need to reevaluate the organizational structure of the athletics department, especially when an internal employee is appointed to the interim director of athletics role. This information is vital to institutions and to individuals, because it will help keep into perspective that interim leadership impacts more people within the department than just the person that moves into the temporary leadership role.

Lastly, as it relates to research, this study also highlights the importance of studying a population of temporary leaders that is uncommon in research, but very common in the practitioner community. Having a better understanding of this particular population, and of interim leadership in general, can help institutions and individuals determine upfront the benefits and challenges to temporary leadership from various perspectives.

## **Operational Definitions**

*Intercollegiate/NCAA Director of Athletics:* Interchangeable terms referring to senior level administrator responsible for managing the daily operations of an athletics department who participate in activities between other colleges and universities.

*Interim/Temporary:* Interchangeable terms referring to a short-term state of being/solution between fixed positions/circumstances.

*Institution/Organization:* Interchangeable term referring to an educational enterprise in a higher educational setting or a company in the business sector based on the context of the discussion.

*Leader:* Senior level administrator in higher education or in the business sector based on the context of the discussion.

*National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA):* Intercollegiate athletics governing body for four-year higher education institutions.

*Transition:* A series of internal feelings that people go through when change occurs (Bridges, 2004).

*Turnover:* Various reasons that result in employees no longer being employed at a particular institution/organization.

## **Assumptions and Delimitations of the Study**

There are both assumptions and delimitations that frame this study. First, this study assumes that the interim intercollegiate directors of athletics have experienced transition and are open to discuss personal challenges and benefits of serving in a temporary leadership role. Secondly, this study also assumes that participants will be able to describe their experiences in a manner that will provide for rich data collection that will be analyzed, interpreted, and used to

suggest personal and institutional strategies to support temporary leadership positions within intercollegiate athletic departments.

Since this study will explore the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics, this study will not include interim directors of athletics at the two-year community college level. It will also not include the experiences of interim directors of athletics at four-year institutions who are members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), or who are independent and are not members of any intercollegiate governing organization. In addition, since this study will provide an individual and institutional perspective from the individuals serving as interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, this study will not include the perspective of external constituents on their perceptions of the individual serving as an interim leader and the institutional impacts.

### **Conclusion**

Literature on the experiences of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics is nonexistent. This study will contribute to the body of literature by exploring the experiences of those who have served in the temporary role, focusing specifically on their personal transition while being an interim leader. Understanding the difficulties that an individual faces as he or she transitions into a temporary leadership position will provide insight into how interim leaders experience the transition and how the institution might be able to support those in the temporary role. Although interim leadership can provide a temporary fix to intercollegiate athletic departments that experience turnover in senior leadership, bringing awareness to the need of creating effective practices in higher education that support interim leaders will benefit both the individual and the institution.

This chapter provided a contextual overview of the purpose and need for the study on interim intercollegiate directors of athletics. Chapter Two will review literature related to the history of intercollegiate athletics, the role of a director of athletics, and the purpose of interim leadership. Chapter Three, will provide a detailed description of the methodological approaches that will be used during this study. Chapter Four will present the findings of this qualitative study. This dissertation will conclude with Chapter Five, which will analyze and discuss the implications for policy, research, and practice as it relates to interim intercollegiate directors of athletics.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter has six sections to introduce the reader to scholarly literature relevant to the history of intercollegiate athletics, the role of a director of athletics, and the purpose of interim leadership. The first section of this literature review will provide a historical timeline of intercollegiate athletics and its emergence within higher education. The second section will outline the role of a director of athletics from an intercollegiate perspective. The third section will discuss turnover within higher education. The fourth section will describe the roles of interim leaders in higher education and in the business sector. The chapter will conclude with two sections that will address the benefits and challenges of interim leadership and its impact to the organization and individual.

Since there is a lack of scholarly literature available on the topic of interim intercollegiate athletic leadership, literature from the business sector will also be utilized throughout this chapter to compare and provide context to information that is relevant, similar, and transferable to the limited literature found within higher education. Literature will be identified by the respective sector so that the reader will recognize when information is being used from higher education, versus material that is from other sectors being applied to higher education.

Furthermore, the literature will be analyzed through the conceptual framework developed for this dissertation. Bridges' (2004) TTM and the HRF in Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM will provide a lens to assess literature in regards to how individuals transition through and how organizations are impacted by interim leadership appointments. Lastly, this literature review will provide the reader with a scholarly overview of available information that pertains to the topic of interim leadership that will inform this dissertation's research questions: what professional and

personal challenges do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment; what professional and personal benefits do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment; and what institutional resources are needed to support interim NCAA directors of athletics as they transition through the interim appointment?

### **Background of NCAA Intercollegiate Athletics**

Intercollegiate athletics has an essential role within the culture of higher education in the United States (Bass, Schaeperkoetter, & Bundsm, 2015; Fulks, 2003; Goff, 2000; Smith, 2000). Dating back to almost two centuries ago, organized athletic events have provided college students with the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities that have enhanced the pride of an institution to both internal and external constituents. Initially organized by students, intercollegiate athletics evolved into a complex system requiring campus administrative control. As campus leaders recognized the significance that intercollegiate athletics had on an institution, formalized regulations were implemented to provide a competitive environment that was safe, fair, and rewarding. Therefore, having a director of athletics with the appropriate managerial and leadership skills to successfully lead an athletics department is imperative (Baghurst, Murray, Jayne, & Carter, 2014; Schneider & Stier, 2005). In order to recognize the significance in the role of a director of athletics, it is important to understand the history of how intercollegiate athletics became an integral part of higher education.

Athletic participation within higher education dates back to the mid-1800s, when there was a growing popularity in student-organized athletic activities on college campuses (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004). In 1852, a rowing competition between Yale and Harvard marked the first organized intercollegiate athletic competition between students at different



colleges (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Oriard, 2012; Smith, 2000). This idea of athletic competition against other colleges expanded over the next 20 years, as more institutions began to participate in rowing, baseball, and football competitions (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004). Initially run by student associations (Bass et al., 2015; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1983; Thelin, 2004; Hums & MacLean, 2004), intercollegiate athletics quickly grew beyond the administrative capabilities of college students (Bass et al., 2015; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1983). Therefore, by the late 1800s, university administrators saw the value in supporting intercollegiate athletics and began to take control from the students (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004). Not only did this bring formalization and regulatory administrative controls to intercollegiate athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1983), but it also provided opportunities for higher education institutions to increase alumni support, branding, and student recruitment (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004). On January 11, 1895, university officials met in Chicago, Illinois to develop requirements for participation eligibility, scheduling, equipment, and funding for intercollegiate athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004).

As the popularity of intercollegiate football increased in the late 1800s and early 1900s, an alarming number of serious injuries heightened the need to bring even more control to intercollegiate athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Duderstadt, 2009; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Oriard, 2012; Smith 2000; Wiggins, 1995). In response to over 140 serious on-field injuries, including 18 deaths, in 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt called an emergency meeting with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton university officials to discuss safety issues with intercollegiate athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Seidler, Gerdy, & Cardinal, 1998). At this meeting, President Roosevelt urged university leaders to bring integrity and structure to intercollegiate

athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Duderstadt, 2009; Seidler et al., 1998, Smith, 2000; Wiggins, 1995). Additionally, the Chancellor of New York University convened a separate meeting with 13 other institutions to discuss intercollegiate football safety issues because it was apparent that college football safety, and the governance structure of intercollegiate athletics, was a major concern of university officials (Bass et al., 2015; Hums & MacLean, 2004). To address these issues, the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was established in March 1906, and renamed the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1910 (Bass et al., 2015; Duderstadt, 2009; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Katz & Seifried, 2014; Seidler et al., 1998; Wiggins, 1995).

Driven by the sport of football, the initial intent of the NCAA was to develop rules and regulations to ensure fairness and safety within intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 2000). Although the NCAA did not play a major role in governing intercollegiate athletics early on, it expanded beyond just making rules for various sports, and held its first championship in 1921 in the sport of track and field (Katz & Seifried, 2014; Smith, 2000). By the 1920s, intercollegiate athletics had become an integral part of higher education in the United States, as intercollegiate athletics was more competitive, entertaining, and increasing access to higher education for all segments of society (Smith, 2000).

In 1929, a report by the Carnegie Foundation brought awareness to concerns about the current state and future direction of intercollegiate athletics (Bass et al., 2015; Oriard, 2012; Seidler et al., 1998, Smith, 2000), and called for more regulation and governance as a solution. Driven again by the sport of football, as a first attempt of reform (Bass et al, 2015; Oriard, 2012), the Carnegie Foundation report identified the need to diminish commercialization of intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 2000), violations of amateurism principles, and compromises of

academic standards and presidential control (Seidler et al., 1998). However, little effort was made to follow up on the report's recommendations to the issues identified (Seidler et al., 1998). Over the next 15 years, there were no drastic changes made to the structure of the NCAA, except for the addition of more sports, national championships, and member institutions (Bass et al., 2015). Failure to address such concerns reflected the fact that college football had grown to become too important to local communities and higher education institutions to be governed solely by ethical and academic considerations (Oriard, 2012).

By 1951, the NCAA became more formalized and a hierarchal leadership structure was created (Bass et al., 2015). An office was established in Kansas City, Missouri for full-time NCAA personnel, and Walter Byers was elected as the first NCAA executive director (Bass et al., 2015; Smith 2000). Byers served as the executive director for almost four decades, while continuing to set the foundation for the NCAA in implementing regulatory principles to address professionalism, in-season and out-of-season time commitments, initial eligibility, and academic progress with its member institutions (Oriard, 2012). Byers also provided leadership throughout the 1970s and 1980s, during three key movements that brought dramatic systematic changes to the dynamics of the NCAA: (a) reorganization of the NCAA member institutions into three different divisions; (b) implementation of Title IX and the inclusion of women's athletics; and (c) the beginning of cable television (Bass et al., 2015).

### **Reorganization of Divisions**

NCAA member institutions were grouped into one large playing field for championships regardless of institutional size, budget, or other considerations, for nearly 50 years (Katz & Seifried, 2014). However, as the NCAA membership expanded, there became a clear divide between the opportunities for championships between members at larger-budgeted institutions,

versus those at smaller-budgeted colleges and universities (Katz & Seifried, 2014). Therefore, in order to provide championship opportunities for smaller-budgeted institutions, in 1957, the NCAA created a college division system and designed championships specifically for smaller-budgeted colleges and universities (Katz & Seifried, 2014). Although what constituted a smaller budgeted institution was never defined (Katz & Seifried, 2014), by 1973, the NCAA membership institutions were divided into three divisions for competition and legislative purposes (Bass et al., 2015; NCAA, 2017d) based on funding, scholarships allotted, and overall fan interest (NCAA, 2017a).

**Division I.** NCAA Division I institutions commit to maintaining high academic standards with a widespread variety of opportunity for athletic participation (NCAA, 2017e). Member institutions have to sponsor at minimum seven men and seven women sports, or six men and eight women sports (NCAA, 2017d). With a membership of nearly 350 institutions, NCAA Division I colleges and universities provide opportunity for more than 170,000 student-athletes to participate in one or more of the 6,000 athletic teams within the division (NCAA, 2017e). NCAA Division I institutions generally have the largest student body population, manage the largest athletic budgets, and offer the most generous dollar amount and number of scholarships among all three divisions (NCAA, 2017e). Most Division I institutions are able to devote significant financial resources to support their athletic programs as a result of large media contracts awarded to their conferences to showcase football and men's basketball (NCAA, 2017a). Divided into three subdivisions based on football sponsorship, NCAA Division I institutions are either a part of the Football Bowl subdivision, the Football Championship subdivision, or do not sponsor football at all (NCAA, 2017e). Since the subdivisions only apply to football, all other sports are considered simply as Division I (NCAA, 2017e).

**Division II.** NCAA Division II member institutions have to sponsor at minimum five men and five women sports, or four men and six women sports (NCAA, 2017d). With a membership of more than 300 institutions and over 119,000 student-athletes, NCAA Division II colleges and universities provide an environment for student-athletes to be recognized for their academic successes, athletics contributions, and community involvement (NCAA, 2017a). Although Division II student-athletes are just as competitive and skilled as their Division I counterparts, NCAA Division II institutions do not have the financial resources to place a heavy financial emphasis on their athletic programs (NCAA, 2017a). Division II student-athletes rarely are awarded a full athletic grant-in-aid that covers all educational expenses (NCAA, 2017b). In order to keep NCAA Division II department budgets in line with the institution's bottom line, most Division II student-athletes utilize partial athletic scholarships, academic scholarships, student loans, grants, and employment earnings to pay tuition costs (NCAA, 2017b).

**Division III.** NCAA Division III is the largest NCAA division with a membership of 450 institutions and more than 180,000 student-athletes (NCAA, 2017f). NCAA Division III member institutions have to sponsor at minimum five men and five women sports (NCAA, 2017d). Since academics are the primary focus for Division III student-athletes (NCAA, 2017f), institutions may not award athletically-based financial aid such as athletic scholarships (NCAA, 2017c). Division III institutions commit to minimizing conflicts between athletics and academics in order to help student-athletes progress towards graduation (NCAA, 2017f). NCAA Division III institutions have shorter athletic seasons and compete regionally to reduce the amount of time away from academic studies (NCAA, 2017f). NCAA Division III student-athletes are integrated into the campus community, treated like all other members of the general student body, and focus on being students first (NCAA, 2017f).

## **Title IX**

The implementation of Title IX and the inclusion of women in intercollegiate athletics was another major milestone in the history of the NCAA and its importance within higher education. The groundwork for gender equity legislation started on October 13, 1967, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive Order 11375 prohibiting federal contractors from employment practices that discriminated on the basis of sex (Kwak, 2012). Gender equity legislation later found its way into education on June 23, 1972, when President Richard Nixon, signed Title IX of the Education Amendment Act into law, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex in educational settings or in activities that received federal financial funding (Kwak, 2012; Thelin, 2011). Becoming effective on July 1, 1972, Title IX was ultimately designed to increase educational opportunities for women (Kwak, 2012). Not only did Title IX mandate nondiscrimination treatment in all educational programs, but it also provided means for gender equity in school-sponsored extracurricular activities, including intramurals, club sports, and varsity athletics (Lopiano, 2000).

In the early 1970s, Texas Senator John Tower presented a bill that would have exempted all athletic programs from Title IX (Cain, 2001). When the bill failed, Senator Tower then sponsored an amendment that would have exempted just revenue-generating sports from Title IX on May 20, 1974 (Kwak, 2012). This amendment also failed to pass; however, as a compromise, on July 1, 1974, an amendment from Senator Jacob Javitz was adopted authorizing the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to regulate athletics as long as reasonable provisions were considered in regards to the nature of the particular sport (Cain, 2001). Therefore, on July 21, 1975 the HEW accepted regulations that forced high school and college programs receiving federal funds to comply within three years with Title IX guidelines (Kwak,

2012). Since the NCAA strongly opposed Title IX being applied to college sports (Thelin, 2011) on February 17, 1976 the NCAA filed a suit that challenged Title IX under the grounds that no athletic program received direct federal funding, however, it was eventually dismissed (Kwak, 2012).

On December 11, 1979, the Office of Civil Rights outlined three ways that institutions could show compliance with Title IX as it related to athletics (Kwak, 2012). One option was to be assessed by the level of intercollegiate participation opportunities for male and female students that are proportionate to the institution's enrollment of males and females (Straubel, 1996). The second option for institutions to be in compliance with Title IX was to be demonstrably responsive to the developing interest in women's sports, and show a progressive history and continuing practice of program expansion for women in intercollegiate athletics (Straubel, 1996). The third and final option for institutions to be in compliance with Title IX was to demonstrate that members of the underrepresented sex among intercollegiate athletics had been fully and effectively accommodated by the present programs (Straubel, 1996).

### **Cable Television**

The dynamics of the NCAA were also significantly impacted by cable television. In 1951, the NCAA negotiated its first television contract in excess of one million dollars and televised a football game as its first event (Smith, 2000). As fan interest increased, and household radios were being replaced by television sets, intercollegiate athletics became even more commercialized (Smith, 2000). By the 1980s, the NCAA signed an all-important television contract with a major network for the network to broadcast its men's Division I Final Four games (Bass et al., 2015; Smith, 2000). As a result of this growing television presence, both the NCAA and member institutions benefited from the revenues produced through television rights of this

event (Smith, 2000). Since that time, the role of television within intercollegiate athletics, and the revenue generated by it has grown tremendously (Smith, 2000). As the NCAA and member institutions became increasingly reliant on the funds generated through television revenue for operational needs (Smith, 2000), the advent of cable television in the 1980s and 1990s provided the NCAA and its member institutions with the opportunity to further capitalize on the sport television market (Bass et al., 2015), including through regional athletic conferences selling the rights to broadcast their games on established sporting networks.

Even before the inception of the NCAA, the emergence of intercollegiate athletics provided an integral opportunity for higher education institutions within the United States (Bass et al., (2015); Fulks, 2003; Goff, 2000; Smith, 2000). As interest quickly increased with students, institutions, and fans, the need for a regulatory entity was necessary (Bass et al., 2015; Duderstadt, 2009; Hums & MacLean, 2004; Katz & Seifried, 2014; Seidler et al., 1998; Smith, 2000; Wiggins, 1995). Although the initial role of the NCAA was to provide rules and regulations to member institutions for a fairer and safer environment in intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 2000), the NCAA grew more complex as society's interest in collegiate sports expanded. The advent of collegiate divisions, of Title IX, and of television presence has all shaped a dynamic and complex environment in which directors of athletics must operate. What was once under the complete control of students, intercollegiate athletics developed into a unique opportunity and experience that required the need for institutional support and oversight (Bass et al., 2015; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1983). Since intercollegiate athletics has metamorphosed over time to a combination of entertainment and business within the mission and structure of higher education (Davis, 2008), intercollegiate athletic programs at all levels require director of athletics to have managerial skills (Baghurst et al., 2014).



## **Role of a Director of Athletics**

Literature on the role of a director of athletics suggests that a director of athletics has leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities that play a vital role in the overall success of an athletics department (Baghurst et al., 2014; Schroeder & Brasfield, 2015; Schneider & Stier, 2005). Defined as an “individual responsible for planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating an intercollegiate athletics program” (Branch, 1990, p. 162), director of athletics is imperative in managing and providing leadership to a department that plays an essential role within the culture of higher education.

### **Leadership Role**

A successful director of athletics must have a vision and create an environment where all members of the athletics program are working towards accomplishing the same goals (Baghurst et al., 2014). In a qualitative phenomenological study of 16 full-time California junior college directors of athletics, Baghurst et al. (2014) explored the lived experiences of junior college directors of athletics and how they used their leadership to overcome the financial challenges experienced in their athletic departments. Although this study occurred on a community college level, which is less complex than four-year universities, one theme that emerged that can be applied to NCAA institutions centered on leadership qualities and how directors of athletics had to encompass leadership characteristics that influenced the behaviors and actions of others to accomplish department goals (Baghurst et al., 2014). Baghurst et al. found that leadership characteristics of successful directors of athletics included strong morals and ethics, competency, self-confidence, and the desire to influence others. Furthermore, the researchers suggested that leadership of a director of athletics would influence the success of a program if members of the

department believed in the direction being led, as well as trusted in the decisions and behaviors of the director of athletics.

### **Financial Management Role**

One of the most important managerial skills of a director of athletics is fiscal responsibility. The second theme that emerged from the study of Baghurst et al. (2014) was the role and responsibility of a director of athletics to balance a budget, secure funding, and appropriately distribute resources. A director of athletics must be fiscally savvy in order to promote their institution in a way that draws community support and generates revenue.

Additional research also supports the importance of fiscal responsibility of a director of athletics. In a quantitative study utilizing a likert-type scale survey of 19 formal and informal areas of education, Schneider and Stier (2005) surveyed all 961 presidents from NCAA Division I, Division II, and Division III about their opinions on the specific content areas and levels of education that were essential to the success of intercollegiate directors of athletics. With an approximate 50% response rate, the study found that presidents thought that directors of athletics should receive education and training in budgeting and financing because it was one of the most important aspects of being a director of athletics. This cross-divisional study is consistent with the Baghurst et al. (2014) study that indicated that directors of athletics must have the ability and competence to secure funding, balance a department budget, and the ability to make financial decisions.

### **Human Resource Role**

A director of athletics must have the capability to create a department environment that helps administrative staff and coaches flourish (Baghurst et al., 2014). According to Schroeder and Brasfield's (2015) NCAA publication on how to be a director of athletics, the career of a

director of athletics depends on how well they manage their personnel. Directors of athletics must know how to hire good people, develop them, reward them, and occasionally terminate their employment. Since human resource management is a full-time responsibility, directors of athletics must provide career development and direction for their staff on a regular basis. Therefore, directors of athletics must be clear about their expectations, and be able to communicate to their coaches or administrators if they are not meeting them.

### **Academic Success Role**

According to Schroeder and Brasfield (2015), there is nothing more important than ensuring the wellbeing of student-athletes. Although winning and losing matter, the ultimate goal for a director of athletics is the academic and social development of student-athletes. The third theme identified by Baghurst et al. (2014) also corresponds with this goal and the need for a director of athletics to balance athletic success with academic success for their student-athletes. Baghurst et al. (2014) found that directors of athletics at community colleges placed academics above athletics. Additional findings also indicated the importance of the need for a director of athletics to work with coaching staffs in order to motivate and inspire student-athletes to do well in the classroom. Successful directors of athletics recognize that academic success is a reflection on the future of the student-athletes, and although athletics is important, earning good grades is even more important.

### **Institutional Responsibility Role**

Institutional control is an essential concept that links intercollegiate athletic programs with higher education (Schroeder & Brasfield, 2015). It is important for a director of athletics to lead a department that reflects the ideals of the institution, and to constantly inform the president of all relevant developments within the department. As indicated by Schroeder and Brasfield

(2015), a university president is ultimately responsible for the integrity of an institution, including compliance with NCAA rules and regulations. Therefore, a director of athletics has to be able to share with the university president when things go wrong, even when they may seem routine and understandable. A director of athletics must be willing to report small problems to the institution's president, and to the NCAA as secondary violations, which are isolated incidents that provide a trivial impermissible benefit or advantage to the team(s), before they become bigger issues. A director of athletics can demonstrate institutional control of a well-monitored athletics program when the department reports secondary violations to the NCAA, such as actions that result from misinterpretations of NCAA bylaws. When an athletics program is without secondary violations, the perception is that the institution is willing to "sweep problems under the rug" (Schroeder & Brasfield, 2015, p. 5). Therefore, a director of athletics has the role of creating a culture of compliance for the purpose of institutional control.

Managing and leading an intercollegiate athletics department requires an intercollegiate director of athletics to serve in leadership, management and finance, human resources, academic, and institutional responsibility roles (Baghurst et al., 2014; Schroeder & Brasfield, 2015; Schneider & Stier, 2005). An intercollegiate director of athletics that can successfully sustain these roles will have a department that will continue to grow and flourish. However, if an intercollegiate director of athletics lacks in any of these roles, an intercollegiate athletics department may not reach its maximum potential, which may ultimately result in the need for change in leadership.

### **Turnover**

Research has indicated that the turnover of senior leadership is frequent in higher education (Betts et al., 2009; Everley, 1994; Monks, 2012; Nehls, 2012; Song & Hartley, 2012).

Although the departure of a leader can either be planned or unplanned, Trachtenberg (2008) argued that certain positions result in higher turnover due to stressful conditions that result from high visibility and scrutinization. Since intercollegiate athletic programs can either bring honor or disgrace to an institution, high demands are placed on intercollegiate directors of athletics to create a culture of teamwork, accountability, and compliance. If any of those areas are compromised, intercollegiate athletics can have a negative impact on an institution. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that intercollegiate directors of athletics are similar to other senior administrative positions on campus, with significant pressures and responsibilities. Even though there is no research directly related to the turnover of intercollegiate athletic administrators, research has indicated that senior leadership populations within higher education experience turnover. Therefore, intercollegiate directors of athletics are likely to be susceptible to turnover as well.

Since turnover in leadership is expected, organizations deal with leaders transitioning in and out of leadership positions on a regular basis. Betts et al. (2009) projected that beginning in 2014 there would be a 50% turnover in higher education senior administrators. With 7,006 accredited higher education institutions in the United States (Klein & Salk, 2013), considerable turnover has been forecasted, and a leadership shortage in higher education is on the horizon (Betts et al., 2009). Song and Hartley (2012) supported this projection through their research of independent college presidents, who have confirmed their intent to leave their presidency within five years. Furthermore, Nehls (2012) concluded that turnover in presidents could be expected due to impending retirements. With only 9% of American college presidents under the age of 50, the average age of a president has risen from 52, to over 60, in the last 20 years (Nehls, 2012). The increase of presidential turnover due to retirement is further supported by Song and

Hartley's findings, which determined that 79% of community college presidents would retire by 2012, with a prediction of 84% retiring by 2016.

While retirement is a reason for turnover among college presidents, there are other factors that result in turnover within an organization. In a mixed methods study conducted by Everley (1994), 20 interim college presidents were identified and selected by a questionnaire that was sent to 134 public research/doctorate granting institutions. Everley found that turnover in college presidents resulted from (a) promotions to system-level jobs; (b) acceptance of another presidency at a different institution; (c) personal need to take an extended time away from the office; (d) assumption of a position outside of higher education; (e) dismissal from their duties; (f) retirement; or (g) death while in the position. Although this study is over 20 years old, due to limited research about interim leadership in higher education, this study is important in understanding reasons of turnover, demographic information, as well as the perceptions and experiences of interim college presidents.

More ever, Everley's (1994) findings are still relevant and supported by current research within higher education. Monks (2012) examined job turnover among university presidents by utilizing data collected in the American Council of Education's Survey of American College Presidents. Monks (2012) found four common reasons that college presidents left office and categorized them into (a) retirement, taking a new job or a new presidency, (b) university appointment, (c) non-academic appointment, and (d) other, such as forced to resign, resigned for health reasons, or died in office. Even though research about turnover in higher education is primarily focused at the presidential level, reasons for turnover are not exclusive to college presidents and can be applied to other senior level positions within higher education, such as intercollegiate directors of athletics.

Furthermore, reasons for turnover in higher education (Everley, 1994; Monks, 2012; Nehls, 2012; Song & Hartley, 2012) are consistent with those that have been identified in the business sector (Farquhar, 1996a, 1996b). Although higher education institutions have different purposes than a corporate business, they still operate as a business entity and experience similar reasons for turnover that are worth exploring. Farquhar (1996a, 1996b) categorized turnover into four categories that included routine succession, unanticipated transitions, leadership vacuums, and leadership crisis. Routine successions, such as retirements, end of contract, or election cycles, were characterized by little surprise to the organization, in which they could prepare for leadership transition. Unanticipated transitions, such as unexpected job offers, reorganization, or transfers, are characterized by little forewarning with a limited capacity to plan for leadership transition by the organization. Leadership vacuums, such as leaders who still hold the position but are away dealing with a long-term illness, are characterized by little surprise to the leader's departure but lacked planning and preparation by the organization to replace. Leadership crisis, such as sudden deaths, wrongdoings, or leader misconduct, have no forewarning, and there is almost no planning to replace the leader on the organizations part (Farquhar 1996a, 1996b).

Although there is no research in regards to turnover of intercollegiate directors of athletics, findings from research of turnover in senior leadership in higher education (Betts et al., 2009; Everley, 1994; Monks, 2012; Nehls, 2012; Song & Hartley, 2012) and in the business sector (Farquhar, 1996a, 1996b) can be applied to the realm of intercollegiate athletics. Issues related to senior leadership turnover are reasonably inclusive, and applicable, to integral senior leadership positions on campus such as intercollegiate directors of athletics. From the perspective of the Bridges' (2004) TTM, turnover is the change that triggers the stages of transition within an individual. Although the concept of turnover is expected within higher

education, turnover can happen during unexpected times for an institution. For example, unlike planned retirements, which result in routine leadership transitions for organizations, non-routine departures can result in a crisis moment for the organization, due to the instability in planning for the leadership change (Farquhar, 1996b). Since turnover in institutional leadership can be a time of uncertainty and opportunity for an organization (Mundt, 2004), turnover serves as a time for institutions to transition from the old leader to the new. In times when leadership change occurs, interim leadership can be the solution for organizations to fill the gap between predecessor and successor.

### **Interim Leadership**

Alewell, Bähring, and Thommes (2005) defines interim leadership as a short-term assignment that is planned as being temporary from the start. When a gap exists in between the departure of a leader and the selection of a successor, an interim leader is often appointed to assume the duties of the former position (Mundt, 2004). Originating from the business sector in Germany (Alewell et al., 2005; Bruns & Kabst, 2005), the United States, and Europe (Goss & Bridson, 1998), the concept of interim leadership has provided organizations, of all types, with temporary leadership during times of transition (Farquhar, 1995b). Since interim leaders can be key players in maintaining stability, facilitating change, and providing a transitional pathway for the permanent leadership (Mundt, 2004), it is important for the short-term leader to clearly understand their purpose (Mooney et al., 2013). However, from the endings viewpoint of Bridges' (2004) TTM, when interim leaders are appointed they have to accept that something has changed and that there is a need to let go of the old ways of defining themselves by their previous position in order to transition to the neutral zone of understanding their role as a temporary leader.



## **Roles of Interim Leaders**

Research in higher education (Browning & McNamee, 2012; Everley, 1994) has identified multiple roles for interim leaders. For example, Everley (1994) concluded that interim presidents serve in one of three roles. The first role is described as a back-up player, in which the interim president is usually appointed from a position as a senior administrator, who is second in command, is well known at the institution, and is someone who could serve based on past experiences. The second role is described as a utility player, in which the interim president has usually served as interim before, and can easily step in to assume the duties and responsibilities of the departed president. Lastly, the third role is described as the pinch hitter, in which an interim president is brought in for a specific amount of time in between presidents, or when the president will be gone from campus for a specified amount of time (Everley, 1994).

Further research in higher education has condensed the multiple roles of interim leaders into two categories. In a single case study performed by Browning and McNamee (2012), the sensemaking process of 24 internal interim leaders at a single higher educational institution was explored. Findings revealed that the personal perceptions and interactions with colleagues and stakeholders influenced whether the individual's interim role would be as a caretaker or trailblazer. Interims perceived as caretaking were not engaged in long-term organizational planning. Their focus was on short-term issues, and maintaining the status quo. Interims perceived as trailblazing focused on issues affecting the university overtime. They were willing to temporarily dissatisfy members and stakeholders in order to bring massive change to the institution during their temporary appointment.

Although research in higher education has identified several roles of interim leaders, it is also worth looking at the roles identified for interim leaders in the business sector since that is

where the concept of interim leadership originated from. Whether interim leadership occurs at a higher educational or business entity, the role dynamics of temporary leadership are set by the needs of an organization (Mooney, Semadeni, & Kesner, 2012) and can be applied in both settings. Observations performed by Mooney et al. (2012; 2013) of interim CEO successions at various corporations such as Denny's Corp., Guardian Media Group, Proctor and Gamble, Omnicare Inc., and Yahoo, revealed six different types of interim CEOs that vary in the responsibilities in the type of leadership that is needed at the time. The roles that were presented by Mooney et al. (2012, 2013) are (a) seat warmers, (b) contenders, (c) groomers, (d) marketers, (e) fixers, and (f) cleaners. The seat warmer role manages the day-to-day operations of an organization, until a replacement can be found. The contender role operates as a permanent CEO replacement and is a viable candidate for the permanent position. The groomer role continues to lead the organization, while training an internal candidate to become the future CEO. The marketer role highlights the organization, and capitalizes on the company's success. The fixer role tries to avoid financial distress, by turning poorly performing companies around. The cleaner role improves organizational focus, by reorganizing the company's portfolio. Even though the roles of interim leaders expanded into six individual categories in the business sector, findings are similar to those found in higher education in which interim leaders can either serve as a placeholder, or actually provide organizational changing leadership during the brief tenure (Browning & McNamee, 2012; Farquhar, 1995b; Goss & Bridson, 1998).

### **Internally Appointed Interim Leaders**

Internal interim leaders are typically appointed from internal employees who are usually already serving as a fixture in an authoritative group within the area that experienced the leadership turnover (Browning & McNamee, 2012) because it is typically less disruptive to do so

for an organization (Ferrin, 2002). However, other employees from within an organization, such as board members, consultants, and other senior level staff, can be appointed as internal interim leaders as well (Gilmore, 1988). The advantage in internal interim leadership appointments comes from having a solid foundation of internal knowledge (Everley, 1994; Mooney et al., 2012; Topper, 2009), familiarity with campus communities (Everley, 1994), and the ability to handle the day-to-day operations without a major learning curve (Topper, 2009).

Since appointing a person into an interim position can be the result of a difficult situation, decisions to appoint an internal employee can be quickly and conveniently made by appointing authorities, with little regards to long-term issues (Gilmore, 1988). Quick decisions to hire an interim leader, or to accept an interim appointment, may lead to difficulties in the future for the individual and the institution (Alley, 2005) because when an internal employee is utilized to serve in an interim leadership position, a gap is created in the fulfillment of lower ranked organizational tasks (Draper & McMichael, 2002). As a result, and as a characteristic of the neutral zone of Bridges' (2004) TTM, internal appointments of interim leaders can cause difficulty for the individual appointed to meet the needs of the organization when uncertain of their role, and trying to balance dual positions.

### **Externally Appointed Interim Leaders**

External interim leaders, according to Ballinger and Marcel (2010), are individuals who are appointed to interim positions and (while they may or may not have held a similar role elsewhere) have not previously operated as an administrator within the organization. Although Everley's (1994) study of 79 interim college presidents concluded that only 9% were appointed from outside the institution, Everley determined that external interim leadership prevents disruption to the administrative hierarchy through not appointing an internal interim leader and

thereby creating an opening elsewhere in the organization. Further literature also suggested that external interim leaders can be more objective than internal appointees (Everley, 1994), arrive without attachment to the current staff and organization, and can make changes if need be (Medeiros, 2010; Mooney et al., 2012; Morris, 2004; Mundt, 2004; Topper, 2009).

Externally appointed interim leaders may also experience the neutral zone of Bridges' (2004) TTM because the organizational learning curve is much greater for them (Everley, 1994; Gilmore, 1988; Goler, 2004). Since externally appointed interim leaders lack the cultural understanding of the organization (Browning & Boys, 2015), it is important for externally appointed interim leaders to understand their purpose for serving as an interim leader. Although external interim leaders lack organizational identification, external interim appointments allow an organization to select from a larger pool of candidates to find a specific skill set that is needed by the organization at the time of transition, that internal employees lack (Browning & Boys, 2015; Everley, 1994). External interim leaders typically have proven track records (Duncan, 2006), have latitude to make necessary changes, no matter how unpopular, and have the ability to walk away once the permanent director is hired (Morris, 2004). Even though an external interim director serves as a bridge to the permanent position (Browning & McNamee, 2012), bringing someone in externally can result in unfamiliarity and disruption, and be impractical for an organization when stability is being sought (Everley, 1994).

### **Individual Impact of Interim Leadership**

Researchers have determined that serving in an interim leadership role can prove to be a professionally and personally rewarding experience for the individual (Ellis, Martin, & Wagner, 2005; Everley, 1994). From the new beginning standpoint of Bridges' (2004) TTM, interim leadership is an invaluable experience that can broaden the knowledge and perspective of an

individual, and can either reinforce the desire to obtain, or not obtain, the permanent position (Everley, 1994; Rud, 2004). Interim leadership provides a time for an individual to assess skills and career goals, provides good training for the senior leadership position, and gives a different perspective and appreciation for how an institution operates (Everley, 1994). Although there is no research specifically on the topic of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, it is reasonable to assume that their experience is like other senior level interim leaders as related to individual benefits and challenges.

### **Individual Benefits**

Serving as an interim leader can have a major impact on an individual as they embrace individual change and build the skills needed to be successful. Benefits of interim leadership include personal and professional growth to the individual serving in the temporary role (Ellis et al., 2005; Everley, 1994). Individuals serving in the interim role can gain experience and confidence (Ellis et al., 2005), and can utilize the temporary appointment as a test run to confirm if they want to pursue such senior leadership positions in the future (Browning & Boys, 2015; Everley, 1994). Interim leadership has been compared to an internship in which a similarity exists where an opportunity for individuals exists to be mentored and taught in a lower-stakes environment (Rud, 2004).

Furthermore, interim leadership speaks to the HRF of Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM because it can broaden an individual's knowledge and perspective of an institution, allows the individual to work with a large number of diverse constituencies and enhance the individual's ability to see the bigger picture (Everley, 1994). Interim leadership also provides experience to an individual in managing budgets and personnel issues, especially for an individual with a background in only staff work (Rud, 2004). In addition, individuals serving in interim roles can

become less judgmental of the institution as they gain more awareness of the factors and challenges that leaders face (Rud, 2004). Although any new job provides valuable experience, interim leadership is a relatively low risk way to try administration (Rud, 2004).

### **Individual Challenges**

Researchers have also found that serving as an interim leader has challenges for the individual as well. Although interim leaders in executive roles serve in positions that are at the top of the organizational chart, there is a lot of ambiguity that surrounds interim leadership (Browning & Boys, 2015). Furthermore, additional challenges to interim leadership also occur when this temporary form of leadership is not embraced as a typical leadership position (Browning & McNamee, 2012).

From the HRF perspective of Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM, challenges often exist with the identity of an interim leader because their title emphasizes less than full authority (Browning & Boys, 2015). The authority level of an interim leader is challenged because long-term organizational planning can be straining to individuals serving in temporary roles. In some cases, the interim leaders may not wish to do so lest they be seen as over-stepping their bounds; however, they also may not have institutional support to commit time, effort, and limited resources toward tasks that may be undone when the permanent leader is placed (Browning & Boys, 2015; Browning & McNamee, 2012). Furthermore, internal interim leaders who desire the permanent position may be challenged by the need to delicately balance relationships with colleagues that were once peers, while simultaneously desiring the respect that comes with the leader position (Browning & Boys, 2015). When interim leaders are asked to be leaders, but cannot take purposeful action as a leader, interim leadership can cause paralysis for an organization, and the identity of an individual (Browning & Boys, 2015).

## **Organizational Impact of Interim Leadership**

Interim leadership impacts an organization in many ways. Since interim leaders can serve during volatile, tension filled periods of transition, their adjustment to, and performance in, the temporary role has critical implications for the organization as a whole (Browning & Boys, 2015; Browning & McNamee, 2012). Researchers agree that the behaviors of temporary leaders can have long lasting consequences for the entire organization (Browning & Boys, 2015; Browning & McNamee, 2012; Everley, 1994). When viewed through the HRF of Bolman and Deals' (2013) ORM, interim leadership not only contributes to the sense of uncertainty regarding future leadership of an organization, but it also provides time for an institutional self-assessment to determine the appropriate successor.

Research in higher education regarding the organizational impact of interim leadership is limited in general, and nonexistent in relation to intercollegiate athletics. However, it is reasonable to assume that the organization experiences similar benefits and challenges that are comparable to when other senior level administrators serve in interim leadership positions. For example, in a descriptive case study of two community college interim presidents, Thompson, Cooper, and Ebbers (2012) found four shared themes from the experiences of those serving in an interim president capacity at a large urban institution, and a small rural institution, that impact the organization. The common themes that emerged from the findings included the organizational need of interim leaders to (a) repair institutional morale, (b) establish effective relationships, (c) facilitate strategic planning, and (d) manage fiscal control. Since this case study happened at two distinctly different institutions, this study showed the commonalities in the organizational impact of interim presidents regardless of size and location of the community colleges.

The impact of interim leadership on an organization has also been seen in research performed in the business sector. Ballinger and Marcel (2010) conducted a study on interim CEO succession to determine (a) how frequently firms utilized interim succession, (b) when and how boards utilized interim succession, and (c) how interim CEO succession influenced short-term financial performance and long-term firm survival. From a sample of 2,500 publicly traded firms between the years of 1996 and 1998, a total of 533 CEO successions occurred with a total of 89 interim CEOs appointments. Of the 89 interim CEOs, three interim CEOs were interviewed and the common themes across interim CEO succession were examined. Even though this study is limited by such a small sample, data analysis of the three interim CEOs revealed that boards appoint interim CEOs under duress, interim CEOs manage within the context of a formal CEO search process, and interim CEOs focus primarily on immediate crises.

### **Organizational Benefits**

Since interim leadership provides a fresh start to leadership, the success of an interim leader has critical implications for an organization (Browning & Boys, 2015). During leadership transition, interim leadership provides a downtime period for an organization to repair and rebuild after a crisis (Farquhar, 1995b). Therefore, interim leadership allows an organization to depart from its past in order to focus and move forward (Browning & Boys, 2015).

Literature has suggested that interim leadership can help organizations with smoother transitions of leadership when key members exit (Duncan, 2006). Interim leadership allows organizations the ability to temporarily replace leadership in a matter of days, versus the weeks or months it may take to do a search for the right successor (Duncan, 2006; Topper, 2009). Interim leadership allows institutions the time to rebuild their organizational structure (Duncan, 2006), reframe their identity for its stakeholders (Browning & Boys, 2015), and reevaluate their



financial management (Duncan, 2006). Although interim leadership is temporary in nature, interim leadership provides an organization with a segue into new permanent leadership (Browning & Boys, 2015).

### **Organizational Challenges**

Interim leadership can also be challenging to an organization. Röbbken (2007) indicated that continual short-term changes in leadership could have a negative impact on an organization. Literature has suggested that a lack of permanent leadership increases uncertainty about the current state of leadership, the future of leadership, and the direction of the organization (Mooney et al., 2013).

Literature has also implied that due to the short-term nature of interim leadership, long-term strategic planning can be hindered (Rud, 2004) and daunting (Browning & Boys, 2015). Since interim leaders may be reluctant to initiate deep change that will provide long-term effects after their temporary appointment is over, interim leaders will often focus their efforts towards problems that affect current performance (Röbbken, 2007). Ballinger and Marcel (2010) have also concluded that firm performance decreases, and the long-term risk of failure increases when utilizing an interim CEO, except when the chairman is appointed. Furthermore, staff morale may deteriorate if the interim does not have the authority, or desire to be effective (Medeiros, 2010). Short-term leadership that focuses on quick results and short-term expectations, may undermine the organization because it lacks focus on the long-term future (Farquhar, 1995a).

### **Conclusion**

Intercollegiate athletics has evolved into an integral part of the culture of higher education. What was once a simple set of athletic related activities organized by students quickly grew into a complex system that required administrative regulations. Therefore, the

incorporation of the NCAA provided a national governing body that brought formalization to intercollegiate athletics in regards to the health, safety, and overall wellbeing of student-athletes. As the development of divisional separation for championships occurred, the implementation of Title IX for gender equality happened, and the advent of cable television for revenue generation evolved, the role of an intercollegiate director of athletics has become an important part in managing the day-to-day operations of an intercollegiate athletics department. With managerial skills focusing on leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities, a successful intercollegiate director of athletics is able to balance all these roles in order to maintain integrity, accountability, and compliance within an intercollegiate athletics department and overall institution. However, if an intercollegiate director of athletics lacks in any of these roles, an intercollegiate athletics department may not reach its maximum potential, which may ultimately result in the need for change in leadership.

Literature on turnover directly related to intercollegiate directors of athletics is nonexistent. However, research on turnover of other senior level college administrators can be utilized as comparable reasons for turnover. Whether turnover is planned or unplanned, it results in a change that triggers transition for the individual and organization. When turnover of senior leadership occurs there becomes a gap in leadership that needs to be filled. Therefore, interim leadership provides organizations with a quick and convenient option to bridge the gap between permanent leadership. Interim leaders have to navigate through understanding if their purpose as a leader serves as a placeholder or change agent while in the temporary role.

Lastly, interim leadership impacts the individual serving in the role and the organization in a number of ways. For the individual, interim leadership can be a time of personal career discovery and growth as they gain experience and knowledge in a senior leadership position.

However, because of the temporary nature of the role and the level of prior job related experience, an individual may be challenged by the uncertainty that exist around the position. For the organization, interim leadership allows time to evaluate, readjust, and fix organizational functions before a permanent replacement is hired. However, challenges of interim leadership can have a negative impact to long-term planning for organizations because of temporary commitments and obligations.

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the reader to scholarly literature that was relevant to the history of intercollegiate athletics, the role of a director of athletics, and the purpose of interim leadership. The literature review started with a historical timeline of the NCAA in order to provide the reader with context on the emergence and importance of intercollegiate athletics within higher education. Followed by a section that outlined the role of a director of athletics through utilizing literature from an intercollegiate perspective. The remaining sections concentrated on the purpose of interim leadership, and the individual and organizational impacts interim leadership has on an institution. Since research is nonexistent on the topic of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, the remaining sections focused on interim leadership of senior level leaders within higher education and the business sector. The lack of literature on the topic of interim intercollegiate directors of athletics serves as a need to explore this matter even more.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

When changes in senior leadership occur institutions are left with the decision of how to fill the vacant position. Institutions can either recruit a new replacement for the permanent position right away, make a purposeful attempt to develop talent and promote from within through succession planning (Rothwell, 2005), or utilize an interim leader to temporarily fulfill responsibilities of the prior leader until a successor can be named (McLaughlin & Riesman, 1990). While interim leadership can be a quick and convenient option for institutions to bridge the gap between permanent leadership positions (Gilmore, 1988), little is known about the experiences of interim leaders and the impact temporary leadership has on an institution.

The purpose of this dissertation was to capture the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics. Through the use of a qualitative interview study, this dissertation explored and described the perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support experienced by those who have served in the interim role. A qualitative study utilizing one-on-one interviews were conducted to gain a clearer understanding of these experiences.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions for this qualitative study are:

1. What professional and personal challenges do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
2. What professional and personal benefits do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
3. What institutional resources are needed to support interim NCAA directors of athletics as they transition through the interim appointment?

## **Methodological Design**

The research questions for this study required the utilization of a qualitative interview design. As indicated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative interview research allows the researcher to explore: “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 24). Since qualitative interview research relies on the views of its participants (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015), data is collected through the use of asking open-ended questions in order to find out things that cannot be observed such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, perspectives, and interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative interview design was appropriate for this study because the purpose of this dissertation was to understand how interim NCAA directors of athletics make sense of their experiences as temporary leaders.

Additionally, qualitative research is used when “there is a lack of theory or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17). Since qualitative research is an inductive process in which the researcher gathers data to build upon concepts, hypotheses, or theories, a qualitative interview study will add to the limited literature on the experiences of interim leaders within higher education, specifically to the population of intercollegiate directors of athletics. Descriptive stories from those who have served as an interim NCAA director of athletics will begin to fill important gaps in the literature in regards to the perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support experienced by interim leaders.

Furthermore, the goal of this study was to make meaning and construct knowledge from the explanations about the experiences of those who have served as an interim NCAA director of athletics (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since this study utilized the TTM (Bridges, 2004) and the HRF of the ORM (Bolman & Deal, 2013), a qualitative method was needed in order to get the

perspective of those who had served as interim NCAA directors of athletics. A qualitative study allowed participants to describe their experience with transition as an interim director of athletics once change occurred. In addition, a qualitative study also allowed participants to describe how they perceived institutional support throughout their transition as an interim leader. Since research findings are derived from recurring regularities in the participants' responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), overarching themes were created to address the phenomenon being explored to add to the limited research about interim leadership within higher education (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015).

### **Participants**

Purposeful sampling was utilized for this dissertation because this study sought to discover, understand, and gain insight from a particular group of people from which the most can be learned about a particular topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The initial criteria for this study looked to recruit individuals who had served and completed their appointment as an interim directors of athletics at an NCAA institution for a minimum of six months during the years of 2014, 2015, and 2016. I targeted to recruit 25 participants for this study, however, expected that this would be a challenge from the start. Therefore, this study interviewed enough participants to reach a point of saturation where no new insights were forthcoming (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Once I heard redundant responses to my interview questions, which is a hallmark of saturation, I knew that I had reached an adequate number of participants needed to answer the research questions for this study. I recruited 15 participants that shared their stories about their experiences, which provided for rich-information for an in-depth analysis of the central phenomenon being studied.

Table 1 describes the demographic information of participants for this study. A total of 15 participants were interviewed. Ten participants were male and five were female. Eleven participants identified their race as White, one as Black, one as Hispanic, one as American Indian/Alaska Native/White, and one as two or more. Eleven participants served as an interim director of athletics at a NCAA Division I institution, three served at a NCAA Division II institution, and one served from a NCAA Division III institution. All but one participant was internally appointed within their intercollegiate athletics department to serve as the interim director of athletics. The other participant was a campus appointment who had worked within another department of the university.

Furthermore, the initial recruitment of participants secured 10 individuals who had served as an NCAA interim director of athletics for at least six months. With the anticipation of a low response, in order to expand the number of participants the criteria was adjusted to allow individuals who had served as an interim director of athletics for at least 5 months. This second round in the recruitment process acquired three individuals. Additionally, two more participants were obtained through snowball sampling. One of those participants had served as a NCAA interim director of athletics for one month, and the other served for six months. All participants completed their interim appointments so that they had an adequate amount of time to experience the challenges and benefits of transitioning through a temporary leadership appointment. Since this study did not focus on age, gender, or race, such demographic information on participants was collected but was not applicable as criteria for the topic being studied even though relevant themes could arise.

**TABLE 1. Participant Demographic Data**

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	NCAA Division	Nature of Appointment	Time as Interim	First Interim Appointment	DOA^^ Before
Adam*	Male	White	I	Internal	5 Months	Yes	No
Andre	Male	Black	II	Internal	13 Month	Yes	No
Bob*	Male	White	I	Internal	5 Months	Yes	No
Brenda	Female	White	I	Campus	6 Months	Yes	No
Chris	Male	White	III	Internal	12 Months	Yes	No
Daniel**	Male	Hispanic	I	Internal	6 Months	Yes	No
Don	Male	White	I	Internal	8 Months	Yes	No
Jason*	Male	White	I	Internal	5 Months	Yes	Yes
John**	Male	AIAN^/White	I	Internal	1 Month	Yes	Yes
Michelle	Female	Two or More	I	Internal	6 Months	Yes	No
Natalie	Female	White	II	Internal	12 Months	No	No
Patty	Female	White	II	Internal	6 Months	Yes	No
Rachel	Female	White	I	Internal	11 Months	Yes	No
Roger	Male	White	I	Internal	9 Months	Yes	No
Zach	Male	White	I	Internal	13 Months	Yes	No

\*Extended study to participants who have served as interim director of athletics for at least 5 months

\*\*Participants selected through snowball sampling

^ American Indian/Alaska Native

^^ Director of Athletics

### Data Collection Methods

Data for this study was collected through interviews because it allowed participants to “describe their experiences and articulate their reasons for action” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 3). An interview constructed of semi-structured open-ended questions allowed a participant to interpret and define the world in their own unique ways (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although there was an interview protocol that provided a list of questions to specifically explore a particular issue, the semi-structure nature allowed for flexibility in the order and wording of questions asked. This form of interviewing allowed the participants to freely answer the questions as interpreted and provided flexibility to the researcher to respond to the emerging worldview of the participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A semi-structured interview protocol was best for this qualitative study because it provided guidance to interviewing participants,



similar to structured protocols, however it also gave the freedom to adjust questions, follow-up, and probe as needed to clarify understanding and follow unanticipated comments. Additionally, a semi-structured approach also maintained consistency with the interview protocol that is lost with unstructured protocols.

I created an interview protocol (described below) that aligned with my conceptual framework and the literature reviewed for this dissertation. Participants were asked questions that focused on the benefits, challenges, and institutional support experienced (or desired) by those who had served as an interim director of athletics. The interview protocol allowed participants the opportunity to provide rich and thick explanations of their experiences.

Since participants were located nationwide, interviews were conducted over the phone. Prior to the interview, participants were informed about their rights throughout the research process and allowed to gain any clarification needed about the study and/or the interview process from myself, as the researcher. With the participant's consent, interviews were recorded. However, handwritten notes were also taken whether the participant gave consent to record or not. Interviews lasted approximately one hour in length. Participants were encouraged to interview in a quiet and private area so that they could be free of distractions and feel comfortable to answer questions openly and honestly. I also conducted interviews in a private and quiet location for similar reasons.

Furthermore, I also created a demographic survey (described below) that participants completed prior to their interview. The demographic survey collected basic information such as gender, age, race, and other general questions related to the study. This information was referred to and utilized to adjust the semi-structured interview protocol as needed based on the

individualized experience of the participant. Collecting this information upfront allowed for a maximization of time during the interview process.

### **Procedures**

Initial participants were identified from the National Association of Collegiate Director of Athletics (NACDA) Daily Review listserv. The NACDA Daily Review is a compilation of online news articles from respective intercollegiate athletic department websites on topics that pertained to intercollegiate athletics administration. The NACDA Daily Review provided the initial announcement of potential participants that had been appointed as interim directors of athletics. I tracked this information for 26 months and kept a working list of individuals who had been appointed as interim NCAA directors of athletics. As the study neared, I updated my list by checking the respective institutional websites to see if potential participants met the criteria of this study. If so, I also utilized respective institutional websites to indicate if potential participants were still serving as interim, were hired for the permanent position, returned to their prior position, or had left the institution. If a potential participant had left an institution, a general search on Google including the participant's name, last known institution, and last known working title was conducted to determine if they had transitioned to another institution as an athletics administrator. Since the nature of intercollegiate athletics is very open to the public, I did not have a gatekeeper to gain access to participants because contact information of my anticipated participants was found on their respective athletic department websites.

Upon Institutional Research Board approval an initial email (Appendix A) was sent to each potential participant explaining who I was, the purpose of the proposed study, their role in the research, and the length of the interview. This email also asked potential participants to contact me via email if they were willing to participate or have any questions regarding the

research. A follow-up email (Appendix A) was sent to potential participants one week following the initial email if I did not receive a response indicating interest in participating. No further emails were sent after the follow-up email. Once an individual agreed to participate in this study, I scheduled an interview with them via email to determine a contact telephone number and a mutually agreeable date and time that was considerate to school, work, and/or family obligations. I suggested that when being interviewed, the participant should be located in a quiet and private area free from distractions that they can feel safe and comfortable to speak in.

Each participant received an electronic copy of the informed consent form (Appendix B) via email at least one week prior to the scheduled interview in order to outline information regarding the study including (a) the purpose, (b) the procedures, (c) the potential risks and benefits, (d) the confidentiality measures, (e) the right to withdraw, and (f) the contact information for myself and my dissertation chair. The form also asked for the participant's written consent to participate in the study as well as to record the interview. I asked each participant to review and sign the consent form and to contact me via email or telephone to answer any questions that they may have regarding the consent form and/or the interview process. I also asked them to provide me with a scanned copy via email of their written consent prior to their interview. Since the consent form also required my signature, once I received consent from the participant, I returned an executed copy to the individual via email for their records.

When I returned the copy of the executed consent form to the participant via email, I also attached a demographic survey (Appendix C) for them to complete and send back to me before the scheduled interview. The demographic survey collected basic information such as gender, age, race, and other basic questions related to the study such as NCAA division of institution,

position held prior to interim appointment, internal or external appointment, length of interim appointment, length of time as an athletics administrator, if they applied for the permanent position, and if this was their first interim appointment.

Prior to conducting the scheduled interview, I verbally reviewed the consent form with the participant and provided the opportunity to answer any additional questions that the individual had regarding the consent form and/or the interview process. I confirmed their permission to record the interview (for those who agreed to this). The participant was made aware that I was in a private room by myself conducting the interview while on speakerphone, and that a recording device was utilized to capture the interview. Any participant who did not give consent to record could still participate in the study. Only two out of 15 participants did not provide permission to record. Whether or not the individual consented to audio recording, I took personal handwritten notes to record the interview data. Furthermore, to ensure confidentiality and to protect the participant's identity, a pseudonym was assigned to the interviewee at the beginning of the study. The participants were instructed to use their pseudonyms during interviews.

When all questions and concerns of the participant were addressed, I engaged in the interview protocol. The interview was guided by a semi-structured protocol consisting of open-ended questions. Each interview lasted approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in length and was performed through a telephone call. The interview explored their experiences as an appointed interim intercollegiate director of athletics at a NCAA institution. Since snowball sampling was utilized to recruit additional participants, at the conclusion of each interview participants were asked if they knew of anyone else that met this study's criteria that they think would be willing to participate.

I also reminded the participant that a professional transcriber would transcribe their interview word for word. I insured that the participant was aware of the transcriptionist confidentiality agreement (Appendix F). Lastly, I reminded the participant that after the interview that they could contact me at any time to share information, refine/clarify points made in their interview, or ask me any additional questions about the study. All participants received a hand written note with a \$10 Starbucks gift card to personally thank them for their participation.

Once completed, I provided them with a copy of the transcription for their review to make sure that what was said in the interview was captured correctly. The participant had two weeks to review transcripts in order to correct factual errors and to note things that may put them at risk. If I received no response, I assumed that the transcripts were okay. Any edits made by a participant was utilized when analyzing the transcribed interviews. Only two participants provided edits by removing names of individuals and institutions that could identify who they were.

### **Instruments**

For this study, a total of two instruments were utilized to conduct this research. The first instrument was a demographic survey (Appendix C) that asked basic information such as gender, age, and race. Additional demographic questions related to the topic of the study were also asked to maximize time in the interview process. These questions included (a) what NCAA division they served in as an interim director of athletics, (b) the title of the position held prior to the interim appointment, (c) whether they were internally or externally appointed, (d) length of time as an interim director of athletics, (e) length of time as an intercollegiate athletics administrator, (f) whether they applied for the permanent position, and (g) whether this was their first interim appointment.

The second instrument was the interview protocol (Appendix D). Since there was limited research on the topic of interim leadership, and non-existent as it relates to interim intercollegiate directors of athletics, the questions of this protocol aligned with my conceptual framework, research questions, and known literature about the topic of interim leadership.

The three stages of Bridges' (2004) TTM and the HRF of Bolman and Deal's (2013) ORM provided the organizational structure to this interview protocol. The intention of this interview protocol was to allow the participants the ability to describe their experiences as interim directors of athletics as it related to perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support received as they transitioned through the temporary role. A qualitative item rationale form (Appendix E) shows the relationship between the interview protocol, research questions, and related research for this dissertation. For example, a question asking what the participant believed the expectation was of them as an interim director of athletics was informed by the endings stage of the TTM (Bridges, 2004) and the status quo, change agent and/or fixer roles that interim leaders provide to their institutions (Everley, 1994; Browning & McNamee, 2012).

Two interim directors of athletics, one who has recently served and the other who is currently serving had reviewed the interview protocol. In addition, the protocol was also piloted on two individuals who had served as interim directors of athletics. These individuals were not participants of this study. The feedback received from these practitioners helped streamline the interview protocol to make sure the interview questions aligned with and solicited rich thick data to answer the research questions. The following changes were made to the interview protocol based on the review of those content experts: (a) eliminated and consolidated repetitive questions, (b) restructured protocol to follow theoretical framework, (c) reworded interview questions to ensure clarity and, (d) added additional probing questions.

## **Data Analysis**

Interviews were the primary source of data for this study and data analysis started the moment that data collection began. Although this initial form of analysis was less formal, the moment participants began to talk about their experiences was the moment that data could be compared to the conceptual framework and relevant literature for this dissertation. As a result, immediately following each interview a reflective journal was utilized in order to capture analytical thoughts throughout the research process (Glesne, 2011). The post interview reflective journal was a voice recording that was also transcribed and used for further data analysis.

In addition, a list of preliminary predetermined and emergent codes were created throughout the data collection process (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015). Predetermined codes were derived from topics of interest within the conceptual framework and literature; emergent codes resulted from interpreting meaning of the data, including the participants' words. Predetermined codes included things such as benefits, challenges, increased workload, uncertainty, prior experience, new experience, job duties, and relationships.

To capture emergent codes, an informal list of ideas that were heard from the participants was kept. To facilitate this process, the transcribed interviews were read several times to become familiar with and gain initial ideas about the data. Emergent codes included things such as opportunity, dual responsibilities, external expectations, internal expectations, and changed perception.

Once interviewing was completed, I compiled a full draft of 40 possible codes, including definitions, that was developed from the ongoing list of predetermined and emergent codes. My draft of the codebook was shared with the chair, in addition to several transcripts, so that he could familiarize himself with the data and provide input on finalizing codes. My codebook was

reevaluated four times in order to combine redundant codes, clarify codes, and better categorize codes. After receiving feedback from the chair to make code definitions more clear and concrete, and to incorporate codes that could be utilized simultaneously to describe the same data set (Saldana, 2013), the final codebook (Appendix G) for this study included 36 codes with definitions. Upon final approval of categorization and definitions of codes from the chair, exemplar quotes from participant data was added to the 36 codes. Furthermore, 16 attribute codes were also developed to categorize participants by basic descriptive information such as participant characteristics and demographics (Saldana, 2013).

NVivo was utilized to assign codes, analyze data, and develop themes. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software that helps manage data, manage ideas, query data, and visualize data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). All transcripts were uploaded into NVivo to facilitate the coding process. Codes from the final codebook for this study were assigned to the transcript data in Nvivo. A second cycle of coding then followed in order to identify thematic categories based off of the first cycle coding process (Saldana, 2013). Themes emerged from codes that were categorized by the TTM (Bridges, 2004) of the conceptual framework. For example, codes such as opportunity, status quo, change agent, external expectations, and personal expectations were utilized to organize data under a main theme in Chapter Four titled Ending - Becoming the Interim Director of Athletics. The major themes that emerged from the second cycle of coding became the main findings of the study.

### **Protection of Participants**

There were minimal risks for participants of this study. The first risk involved the risk that the interview could lead participants to experience some level of emotional discomfort due to recalling frustrating memories about difficult challenges and obstacles. The second risk



included that sensitive comments could be linked to the participant and could possibly lead to embarrassment or strain personal and/or professional relationships. The last risk was the potential risk of coercion.

To address these risks, I took multiple steps. Although all interviews were conducted remotely, I directly contacted participants while I was in a quiet and private area. I also strived to build rapport with participants so that they felt comfortable enough to give me honest and open responses. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant throughout the process. In addition, all consent forms, raw data, and any other related materials will be stored in a locked safe and/or a single password protected computer at my private residence and will be retained for a period of three years following the completion to the research. Furthermore, all interviews were transcribed and participants had the opportunity to review accuracy and flag any items that they felt may put them at risk. I also encouraged participants to communicate with me via their personal email rather than their work email account. Lastly, since this was a voluntary study, participants could choose to not participate at all or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Although these facts were stressed in both the consent form and verbally at the start of the interview, all participants fully participated through the entire process.

### **Positionality**

In 2013 I was hired to work as an associate director of athletics at a NCAA Division II institution. With approximately 10 years of professional experience, I had worked hard to achieve professional success, and I am very fortunate and appreciative of my career path. However, a year into my current position, my boss was abruptly released, and I was appointed as the interim director of athletics. I served in the position for almost a year. Although I have

grown tremendously personally and professionally from my experience, it was the most challenging time in my career.

During my tenure as interim director of athletics, I had a significantly increased amount of interactions with the campus senior leadership team. This is when I became interested in the topic of interim leadership because a number of senior leadership positions on campus were in an interim status as well. I would exchange stories with colleagues who were also serving in interim roles about my experience and soon realized that we were experiencing similar challenges.

The fact that my interest in this study stemmed from personal experience could be both hurtful and helpful in my research. My experience could potentially be a challenge because predetermined assumptions could surface. I could already anticipate the challenges that interim directors of athletics face such as crisis management, increased workload, ambiguity nature of the temporary position, personal doubt, etc. This could be problematic because it may lead to me making assumptions about the things my participants are saying, resulting in me not asking for concrete examples and/or misunderstanding what my participants may actually mean. There is the possibility that my assumptions could also result in an inaccurate interpretation of my participants' stories.

However, my experience could serve as a credibility factor to the participants that allowed them to feel comfortable enough to open up and be completely honest in sharing their story with me because we share similar experiences. Whether my experience as an interim director of athletics is helpful or hurtful to this study I needed to separate myself and act as a non-biased researcher. I had to make a conscious effort to not guide participants to answer questions in the interview process the way I think they should be answered. I also needed to

make sure that I thoroughly listened and asked appropriate follow-up questions to allow participants to fully share their experiences. Furthermore, as I analyzed data I needed to be mindful to not let my experience assume the findings of my participants' experiences.

### **Trustworthiness**

Several strategies were used to validate that the findings in this study were accurate and credible. As indicated by Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015), validating findings “ensures that the researcher used a good data analysis process while also acknowledging that this process is very interpretive and subjective” (p. 364). Therefore, trustworthiness was established by utilizing bracketing, triangulation, member checking, and auditing.

Bracketing consists of a process in which the researcher reflects on their own opinions, describes their viewpoints in writing, and works to set them aside (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015). Since I had previous experience serving as an interim intercollegiate director of athletics bracketing was accomplished in this study by completing a written reflection about my biases, my experiences, and my expectations of what I might find in the study or what the participants' experiences will be like before I began the process of collecting data. In addition, I also kept an ongoing research journal of my analytical thoughts, reflections, and a detailed log of decisions made throughout this study so that my presumptions would not overwhelm the perspectives of the participants.

Triangulation involves “corroborating evidence about a finding from different individuals [or sources]” (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015, p. 364). For this study, triangulation occurred by comparing participants' transcripts with one another, as well as with my research journal of my analytical thoughts and reflections. Doing so allowed me to ensure that as I developed findings

based on the perspectives of multiple individuals it reduced the likelihood that I was imposing my own experiences on the data.

Member checking results when the researcher asks participants to check the accuracy of the findings (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015). A very basic level of member checking was accomplished in this study by asking participants to review their transcribed interview for accuracy of the report. For more rigorous checking, two participants were asked to review a summary of major findings in Chapter Four to assure that the themes and findings were an appropriate interpretation and fair representation of the participants' perspective. The two participants responded by indicating that the summary reminded them of their experiences while serving as an interim director of athletics.

Auditing consists of the researcher asking a person that is not a participant of the study to conduct and provide input on procedures of the study (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015). For this study, auditing occurred in two ways. First, throughout this study, two cohort colleagues were utilized to peer review and discuss the research process, including data collection and analysis. The input received verified if this study was following the determined procedures. Secondly, since the research journal described above documented decisions made throughout the study, this guided twice a month conversations with my dissertation chair to determine if the choices made accurately reflected what was happening with the study.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of techniques that was utilized to explore the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics. Since literature is nonexistent on the experiences of this particular population, this study provided a platform for participants to have their voices heard and analyzed. Under the guidance of the research questions for this

dissertation, a qualitative interview study was utilized to explore the perceived challenges, benefits, and institutional support experienced by interim NCAA directors of athletics. Data was gathered through a semi-structured interview process guided by the conceptual framework and literature review for this research. Additionally, NVivo was utilized to manage and analyze the data in order to create thematic findings for this study. With Chapter One providing a contextual overview of the purpose and need for the study of interim NCAA directors of athletics, and Chapter Two providing a review of the literature related to this topic, Chapter Three outlined in detail the steps that were utilized to thoroughly explore the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

Turnover in leadership within intercollegiate athletics can result in an interim director of athletics appointment which allows an institution a quick solution to immediately filling a gap in leadership for the athletics department until a permanent successor can be named. Not only is interim leadership a convenient option for institutions, it can also provide an individual the opportunity to serve in a senior leadership position that may be difficult to obtain in other circumstances. Although there are a number of advantages to serving as an interim leader, those that serve as an interim director of athletics are also faced with a number of challenges that have implications to the individual and to the institution during the temporary appointment.

This chapter will provide an analysis of themes and sub-themes that have been derived from the data collected from participant interviews of this study. The themes and sub-themes are layered under the larger context of how interim director of athletics experience transition throughout their temporary appointments. From the point of change until the end of the interim appointment, interim NCAA directors of athletics experience letting go of a previous identity while eventually transitioning to a new perception of their self.

Organized around TTM (Bridges, 2004), three major themes emerged from the data. First, as an ending, all participants experienced some sort of change that triggered their transition into the interim director of athletics role causing them to let go of an old identity that they were familiar with. Second, as they moved through the neutral zone, participants experienced varying degrees of unfamiliarity as they adapted to new job tasks, experienced increased workloads, and managed new and old relationships. Finally, as a new beginning, participants eventually

experienced acceptance of their role as interim by building the skills needed to be successful as they transitioned out of the interim director of athletics position into their next role.

### **Endings – Becoming the Interim Director of Athletics**

Participants reported change with their prior leadership that resulted in them being offered an appointment as the interim director of athletics. Although the time for institutions to decide to appoint an interim director of athletics varied from immediately to about a month, participants had to transition relatively quickly from their prior role to their new temporary position once they agreed to serve. Whether participants felt it was an opportunity or obligation to serve, external and personal expectations of the role also guided their approach to being an interim leader that served as a placeholder or an agent of change.

### **Appointed as Interim: Departure of the Prior Director of Athletics**

All participants described some form of turnover with their prior director of athletics that resulted in their interim appointments. For the majority, including Andre, Don, and Patty, the most common reason among participants was that, as Andre said, “the director of athletics accepted another position at another university.” Similarly, other reasons involved the prior director of athletics leaving to take a position outside the industry or transitioning to a vice presidency position on campus, respectively for Adam and Roger. For Chris, retirement by the previous director of athletics was another reason, while for Brenda and Jason, their prior directors of athletics were terminated, and for Michelle and Rachel their prior directors of athletics unexpectedly resigned. Whatever the cause for the departure of the previous director of athletics was, the act that triggered transition in the appointed interim director of athletics was some form of turnover.

## **Time for Consideration**

The timing for institutions to decide to go with an interim director of athletics varied for participants. Some institutions knew right away that interim leadership would be the go to option to temporarily fill the gap in leadership, while other institutions took up to a month to decide. Although the decision was solely up to the institution to utilize an interim director of athletics, once participants were presented with the opportunity to serve in the temporary leadership role, participants had to quickly decide if it was a role they wanted to fulfill. Where some participants had to make that decision in a matter of days, other participants did not take much time in deciding to serve as the interim director of athletics.

After being presented with the opportunity to serve as the interim director of athletics, some participants had a day or two to ultimately decide if this was a role they wanted to step into. Bob shared his experience of when his predecessor departed and how his president took some time to think things through before asking him to consider serving as the interim director of athletics. When Bob was presented with this opportunity, he took a day to discuss things over with his wife before accepting the temporary leadership role. Bob described the process as:

The director of athletics announced they were leaving in the middle of [the month].

There were a couple of weeks that passed when the president tried to figure out what he wanted to do for the interim. He came to me the end of [the same month] or early [the next month] asking what I thought. And then I went home, talked about it with my wife.

Thought it out for a day or so and got back to him. So, it was a couple of days or so. It didn't take long for me to take responsibility and then I took over in [the middle of that next month] or so.



Similarly, Jason also took about a day to discuss with his wife if serving as an interim director of athletics was an opportunity he should take. Unlike Bob, Jason's predecessor was being terminated, and senior leadership had already decided that they wanted an interim director of athletics to immediately fill the gap in leadership. However, Jason was given the same opportunity as Bob by campus leadership to take a day or two to decide if this was really a role he wanted to assume. Jason explained:

I think they talked to me on Thursday or Friday and then I had to let them know in just a couple of days. It was a quick turnaround because the change hadn't been made yet with the director of athletics, but that was planned so they needed to know. Because the firing of the director of athletics was going to happen and this was what's going to happen so we know what we're doing. I think I had maybe one day, no more than two, that's for sure. And it didn't take me much. I said, "Look, I need to go home and talk to my wife and I need to think about this before I come back and before I respond immediately." They're like, "Certainly, we understand that. But, again, let's not drag it out too long." And I understood that as well, so I'm pretty certain whatever time they gave me, I did go home that night, talk it over and responded the following morning and said, "Yes, I'll step into the role."

Although institutions were understanding about Bob and Jason receiving input from their families prior to accepting the interim director of athletics role, the decision to serve in the temporary leadership role were made relatively quickly by some participants.

Where some participants had a couple of days to decide if serving as an interim director of athletics was something they wanted to do, other participants did not take any time for consideration and immediately accepted the opportunity to serve in the temporary leadership

role. When senior leadership approached Zach about serving as the interim director of athletics, he jumped at the opportunity and made an instant decision to accept the appointment. Zach shared:

When the old director of athletics mentioned that they were taking another job, senior leadership at the institution basically called me into the office and had me take over the position immediately...I don't know if I had any time. I met with the president, he offered me the [interim director of athletics] position and I accepted the role. I didn't contemplate the decision. I didn't have any moments that provided an opportunity to contemplate the decision. I just accepted the responsibility when it was offered.

John also experienced a similar situation to Zach, in which consideration for the interim position was immediate on his part as well when presented with the opportunity to serve in the temporary leadership role by campus leadership. John described:

When my boss took another job the chancellor called and said, "Would you be interested in being our interim"? And I said, "If that's what you would like me to do then absolutely." And he said, "Are you okay if we announce that here in about an hour because we're announcing that he's leaving." And I said, "Well I guess so."

Furthermore, like John and Zach, Andre jumped at the opportunity to serve as the interim director of athletics. However, unlike John and Zach, who had been approached by administration to serve in a temporary leadership capacity, Andre took the initiative and expressed immediate interest in becoming the interim director of athletics to his interim president when his predecessor announced they were resigning. Andre explained:

I sent the email to the interim president [expressing interest] on probably...right after the director of athletics turned in their letter of resignation. So the interim president had

about a month to mull over it. It wasn't anything immediate because the current director of athletics wasn't leaving until a month later. Probably two days before their last day I was appointed the new interim director of athletics.

Even though it took campus leadership about a month to make a final decision, Andre was more proactive than most by reaching out to the interim president ahead of time to express his interest in serving as an interim director of athletics.

Ultimately, when institutions decided that they wanted to appoint an interim director of athletics, participants had to decide relatively quickly if serving in the capacity of a temporary leader was something they wanted to do. Although some participants took a couple of days to consider the opportunity and talk it over with their family before making a decision, other participants immediately accepted the temporary position with little to no hesitation.

### **Reasons for Serving**

Participants expressed several reasons to serve as an interim director of athletics. When participants were offered the temporary leadership position, most felt that it was a great professional opportunity to serve in the temporary capacity, whereas others felt that it was their institutional duty to step up during a time of leadership transition. Whether participants felt that serving as an interim director of athletics was opportunistic or obligatory, it provided participants with invaluable experience.

**Opportunity to grow.** Participants easily realized that it was a great opportunity to serve as an interim director of athletics because they were able to gain experience in a leadership position that they may not otherwise get. Don straightforwardly explained, "I'm not naïve enough to think at the age of 34 that I would have an opportunity to get that experience as a [NCAA] Division I director of athletics. Pretty foolish to not take advantage of that opportunity.

Pretty easy decision.” Adam also reflected Don’s belief in the opportunity as an interim director of athletics, noting that the opportunity to serve in a permanent capacity is limited. Adam explained:

Interim leadership allows a lot of qualified individuals that need experience the opportunity to be in a position that they may not ever get. And with only 351 seats as a NCAA Division I director of athletics, there’s not a lot of opportunity for people to actually be in that position. It’s a very small percentage when you’re looking at the total of athletic administrators. So, interim leadership provides an opportunity for people that they may not otherwise get.

Thus, several participants saw interim leadership as an opportunity to serve in a role that is limited to most.

However, it also provided participants with the opportunity to prove themselves while in the interim position. Andre utilized his interim opportunity as an audition to be considered for the permanent position. He shared:

Well, it was a goal of mine. It was a goal to be a director of athletics and why not be one at the location where you are already serving. There was going to be an open search. I knew that going in that the president wanted to have a national search. Actually the day I applied to be, well sent the letter to be the interim, I also applied to be the permanent director of athletics with the university system. I just saw this as a proving ground for me to show that I can be an effective director of athletics right here where I am and implement some of the programming that I have begun to think about and implement as the assistant director of athletics.

Similarly, Natalie utilized her interim appointment as an opportunity for her to get her ultimate goal, which was to be a director of athletics, rather it be at her current institution or at another. Roger also felt that it was going to provide him with the opportunity to interview for the permanent position: “Over time, I did not think that my president was interested in doing any national search and I felt like my interim appointment was an opportunity for me to win the position.”

Other participants said they saw the position as an opportunity to gain additional job-related skills. Chris utilized his interim appointment as an opportunity to do something different than what he was doing in his previous role. Adam knew that his interim appointment would not give him the opportunity for the permanent position, he wanted to utilize his interim appointment as an opportunity to gain experience in the role for future professional pursuits. Adam said:

It was a great opportunity professional. It gave me a taste of what it would feel like to sit in the chair. It is a dream of mine to do on a permanent basis, at the right place, and at the right time. I just didn't think that this was a situation that I could take the position permanently at this institution. However, I did know that there would be a reasonable amount of time that I could help the institution and lay the framework for the new director of athletics. A, it was good practice; B, I got to stick a feather in my cap to say I've done this before and this is what I was able to do in a short amount of time; and C, it allowed me to grow in confidence in the role and be able to speak the language and do things the right way so that I can lean on that experience in the future if I have the opportunity to serve in a director role on a permanent basis.

Whether participants felt that their interim appointment allowed them to serve in a leadership role that was otherwise difficult to obtain, was an audition for the permanent position, or was just

a way to increase professional experience, serving as an interim director of athletics provided professional opportunity for participants that might be otherwise difficult to get.

**Obligation to serve.** Although participants felt that it was a great opportunity to serve as the interim director of athletics, there was also a sense of obligation to step up during a time of leadership change. For example, Rachel expressed a commitment to her institution that she said made it an easy decision to take on the role as interim director of athletics. Rachel shared:

I think when you make a commitment to an institution, you want to serve in a role that you feel is going to best support your athletes and your coaches and the school. That's the role they asked me to serve at that period of time. I felt it was important to step in and do so.

John expressed a similar commitment based on his place in the department hierarchy. "I think when you're second in command there's an obligation to provide leadership for whatever reason. Especially if there's a void in that spot ahead of you." Similarly, Natalie felt it was her responsibility to provide stability for her department. Natalie explained:

I felt that the university here had a lot of instability in their leadership over the past few years. They had been through a lot of directors of athletics and administrators, so I felt that it was important for the staff and the coaches and for the student-athletes to have stability.

Ultimately, there was a sense of duty from participants to serve as the interim director of athletics because it was their job to do.

Furthermore, Patty felt it was her obligation to serve as interim to better the institution, although she has been offered the role of director of athletics before. Patty shared:

I would've been able to have the job. I chose not to, so when this came around again, there was talk about an interim, and that was because for six or seven years I had sort of echoed that this wasn't the career path for me. So when the time came up for me, I decided again. And people were kind of shocked that I would even consider taking it as an interim at that time. I was kind of shocked myself; I'm going to be honest with you. But at the same time, I knew it was going to be a short-term thing. I was asked, not officially, to seriously consider taking on the job as director of athletics. I just stuck to my guns. That was easy for me to do because I pretty much knew who I was and what type of professional I was already and what worked for me. So I found it very easy for me to say yes to being interim. But I said yes to it because I knew that the search would begin in March/April. I knew that by June or July we would have somebody in place. So I was really looking at a about a six month stint as an interim. I just figured for the better of the school, because I've been here forever, I'll do this.

There was also the obligation to serve in the interim capacity because of the love of the field and the desire to serve not just the institution, but athletics more generally. Brenda loved intercollegiate athletics so much that she was willing to serve in any capacity asked of her. She explained:

I love intercollegiate athletics and for me honestly, I was honored. I'm born and raised in this city, I have two degrees from this university. It was my life dream. I said I'm willing to be a director of athletics at 30. It only took me 60 years to get that job. So...[the president] said, "I'd like to appoint you as the interim, but you can't go after the job." And I said, "absolutely, that's fine. Whether you want me there a day, a week, or a month. Whatever you want it's a dream come true."

Bob, reflecting his institutional loyalty, also expressed his obligation to serve as a result of reassurance from his president and the support he received from the institution during a challenging time in his personal life. Bob described:

I saw that the president had confidence in me, then I knew that I could do it. I wasn't quite sure if I could handle that position but when the president expressed what he saw, that I could handle it, and after talking to the other coaches, I thought that I could do the job. That was good for me. The school had been really. Well I went through some stuff with my family and everything, and they have been very supportive of me, allowing me to spend some time with one of my kids who had to spend, who had a longer stay in hospital after being born. And part of me was like, you know what? They were so great to me, here they are asking me to serve in this capacity, how can I say no to that? If they think that I can do it, then I'm going to do it.

For Bob, as well as other participants in this study, there was a sense of obligation to serve as the interim director of athletics due to their commitment to their institution.

### **Expectations of the Role**

Whether participants felt that serving as an interim director of athletics was a great opportunity or an obligation to serve, participants described the expectations of their interim role from external and personal perspectives. While some participants felt that they were given clear directives from campus leadership, others took it upon themselves to determine what their role would be as the interim. Participants were able to describe these expectations as either serving in the capacity of a placeholder or an agent of change. Whether participants described their experience as focusing on maintaining the day-to-day or making the necessary changes to clean



things up, all participants acknowledged that their roles in the temporary appointments were to keep the department moving forward.

**Placeholder.** Participants talked about the expectation that, once in their interim director of athletics role, they maintained the day-to-day operations of the department as a way to move it forward. For example, Bob expressed what he thought was expected of him while serving in the interim role.

I had to make sure that the train continued to run on time. I wasn't there to shake things up. We didn't really need that at that point in our history. We just needed to make sure that some steady progress was happening.

Andre indicated similar expectations:

I was to keep the ball rolling. To make sure that nothing dropped, make sure that I communicated up to the president, that our student athletes had a good time, and that we managed our budget effectively...It was pretty much just managing, making sure that nothing went wayward.

Similarly, Brenda said:

I was to keep the department afloat because intercollegiate athletics can be very volatile...I think the expectation was keep the department out of trouble, add to the program, and make sure we kept our budget balanced. Which I did.

For Zach, campus leadership indirectly expressed their expectation that he maintain the day-to-day while in the interim role through weekly meetings with his vice president. Zach shared:

I think at that time the expectation was that I would keep the department moving forward without any hiccups. Basically, to make sure that the staff as a whole felt good about

their job and stuff like that. Because our culture was a little shaky before and I think one of the top goals was to make sure that people understood that, hey I'm not going to make a bunch of changes. Right now I'm just trying to make sure that the department continues to move forward and that's what I did.

In contrast to those who needed to infer expectations, Daniel's campus leadership was very direct with their expectation that he maintain the organization while serving as interim director of athletics in order to prepare for the permanent successor. Daniel explained:

Well, the president was very clear. He wanted me to help fulfill the process for the next director of athletics. Make sure that the department continued to operate in the same manner that it had over the last few years. The president felt very comfortable with how our department operated.

Furthermore, Patty, who clearly knew she did not want the permanent director of athletics position, had a very clear expectation of her role as interim director of athletics to keep things moving along. Patty described:

I just wanted to keep us moving along, no long-range plans, just get us through the year...Since I came in saying, "I have no interest in this position. I will be your interim, and I know you will start the search [soon] to get a better candidate pulled," I think my viewpoint in how I went about my business was that I wasn't trying to impress anybody or buy people's vote of confidence. I wasn't trying to have all these neat and better ideas, and out with the old, in with the new, because I knew that that wasn't my place to do, and because I wasn't going to be the one that was going to be leading thereon. So, I chose the route of leading for now, and leading for the short-term, and leading for this particular period of time, and doing what we do and continue to do what we do and do it well.

Participants who served in a placeholder capacity knew it was their charge to keep things running as smoothly as possible by focusing on maintaining the day-to-day operations.

**Change agent.** Although the expectation for most participants was to maintain the day-to-day within their department, a few talked about serving in a change agent capacity. One participant who talked clearly about the need to make changes while in the interim role was Michelle. She knew from the start that if she was going to take on the interim position, things needed to change to get the department prepared for the hiring of the permanent director of athletics. Michelle explained:

My role was that I needed to get it cleaned up and fixed well enough that when we brought in a new AD, they did not have to deal with the crap that we were dealing with. It wasn't explicitly stated. I don't know if that was more of a personal expectation I put on myself, because I knew if I was coming into that role as the director of athletics, and I had to deal with all the stuff that had been ongoing, and there was people there that were capable of fixing it and they didn't before I arrived, I would be a little hot. My thing is, I needed to really get it cleaned up, the finances, the personnel and also just the morale was really, really, really bad morale, because of the budget and personnel stuff.

Additionally, Brenda, who initially served in a placeholder capacity because she did not want the permanent position and was told that she could not apply for it, noticed that changes needed to be made to the department once she served as the interim director of athletics for a short amount of time. In efforts to get the department ready for the next director of athletics Brenda shared, "After a month I went back to the president and I said, 'Dude, you need to make some changes in that department.' He said, 'Go ahead.' So then we made a lot of changes." Michelle's predecessor who unexpectedly resigned, and Brenda's predecessor who was

terminated, resulted in an environment that needed change prior to the new director of athletics taking over.

Participants had the opportunity to serve as an interim director of athletics as a result of predecessor turnover. Whether participants felt that serving as an interim director of athletics was a professional opportunity or an obligation to serve, they were eager to step into the role. While some stepped into the position knowing they would have to make change or fix problems (e.g., Michelle), or soon discovered the need to do so (e.g. Brenda), most came in with the clear expectation (both on their own and from their supervisor) that their primary role was to maintain the department and its functioning for the next director of athletics.

### **Neutral Zone – Serving as the Interim Director of Athletics**

The interim director of athletics appointment provided most (13 out of 15) participants with their first opportunity of serving in the lead position of an intercollegiate athletics department. As a result, participants got to experience a number of new job tasks, or at the minimum, a different perspective on job tasks that might have been familiar to them from previous job responsibilities. As participants described an increased workload because of these new job responsibilities, they also discussed their greater level of authority during their temporary appointment, and the impact on professional and personal relationships while serving as the interim director of athletics.

### **New Job Tasks**

For most participants, serving in the role of interim director of athletics provided an opportunity to experience and learn new job tasks. Some participants experienced similar job responsibilities in their prior positions; however, serving in a temporary leadership capacity provided a new perspective to old job duties. Although participants came from various

professional backgrounds, the most significant changes in job responsibilities revolved around budget, decision-making, development, human resources, compliance and community/media relations.

**Budget.** Budgeting was an area that 10 out of 15 participants felt that they had lacked experience. For example, Bob acknowledged his lack of comfort with budgeting.

I did not feel comfortable with the budget matters. It came pretty clear to me, and something I told myself that if that day comes where I get a job or I can run my own department, it will really be important for me to have somebody in place as a strong chief financial officer.

Bob further explained how he lacked experience with the entire budget because he only had to focus on a portion of it in his previous position.

I needed to brush up on budget matters. In my previous role as deputy director, I didn't have to worry about the entire budget. The only budget concerns I had to deal with were for my department and the sports that I had oversight of. Once I became the interim director of athletics, I needed to make sure I had a better understanding of our entire budget. I had to make sure I could tell how all the pieces fit together within the entire department and how it fit into the university structure.

Similarly, Michelle dealt with the budget in a much smaller capacity prior to taking on the interim director of athletics position. So when appointed as interim, her perspective on budgeting changed as well. Michelle explained:

Outside of doing little program budgets, your sport budgets, and those kind of things. When you're starting to look at an overall department budget and where those funds come

from, and how your revenue is generated, and where does that go, and what is your plan. I mean it's a science. So that was a big learning curve.

Additionally, Chris explained how becoming the interim director of athletics also provided a learning experience for him in regards to the budget process of which he had been unaware prior to his appointment.

I'm a very confident person, I feel like I knew the direction that we needed to go in in certain areas. I felt that I could look at some things and point to where I can make a difference here. Then I got the budget and I was like, holy crap! I didn't really realize some of the dire straits that we were in in certain areas. The whole budget process I think was a learning experience for me where I had an idea but I really didn't know the extent of everything that needed to happen in some of those short falls that we had and why some decisions were made previously to fill in some of those short falls.

Although participants described a lack of transparency with the budget prior to taking on the interim role, or transitioning from providing input about portions of the budget to making decisions about the entire budget, they gained a broader experience with budgets while serving as the interim director of athletics.

**Decision maker.** The role of decision-maker was a major transition for all participants. John, who had already served as a director of athletics before being appointed an interim, acknowledged, "By and large the biggest difference is you go from making suggestions to making decisions as the interim director of athletics." Even other participants who were serving as a director of athletics for the first time in an interim capacity agreed with this transition in decision-making.

Bob felt as a first-time interim director of athletics that the move to decision maker was a tricky adjustment for him because he knew going from making suggestions to making decisions was going to result in greater responsibilities on his plate. In addition, Natalie and Roger expressed similar feelings because they felt, as interim directors of athletics, they now had to come up with solutions all the time. As Roger described, “when you look around the room for someone to make a decision for you, you realize you’re the only one in the room.” Collectively, becoming a decision-maker was an adjustment for participants as interim.

Participants were aware that making decisions came along with being the interim director of athletics. However their approach to decisions changed while serving in this temporary role. Adam described, “I was put in situations that I had to make decisions that I knew was right for the institution and department that I may have advocated against had I been in another role.” While Michelle explained, “I slowed down a little bit on my thought process before I made a decision...I was a little more thoughtful maybe, in how I made my decisions than how I typically am.” Serving as the interim director of athletics gave participants a different perspective in how they approached decision-making.

**Development.** Development and fundraising were job tasks that nine participants also felt underprepared in when taking on the position of interim director of athletics. Although some participants, such as Andre and Zach, had fundraising experience in their prior roles, for Natalie this was a new area of work. She said, “I was not confident with fundraising and other development stuff.” Similarly, Michelle explained, “There was so much I just didn't know. I'm not a fundraiser. That is not my thing. I have no desire to go and ask people for money. However, I knew that I needed to do that, in the role as an interim.” Adam also described

fundraising as an area that he has not had a ton of experience in, but knew that in his role as interim director of athletics he was going to have to learn.

I have certainly generated relationships with numerous donors and been in settings that money has been asked for. But all of a sudden knowing that I may be asked to go sit with somebody in the near future to try and cultivate a gift, that was new territory for me. Furthermore, while Bob explained, “I’ve been a part of fundraising activities, have seen it done, but have never had to pull the trigger.” Development-related tasks provided a new experience to some participants while serving as interim director of athletics.

**Human resources.** Participants discussed the difference of being responsible for personnel, including the firing and hiring of personnel, during their time as interim director of athletics. Although Bob described firing a coach as a different experience, Rachel acknowledged that, “You’re responsible for staff decisions which you may have made recommendations before on, but as interim ultimately you are the hiring or firing authority.”

In their previous roles, participants had provided input on human resource matters. However, participants faced challenging decisions around personnel matters while serving as interim director of athletics. Andre described one of his biggest challenges was handling personnel issues that were budget driven.

It is one thing to fire a coach based upon their performance as a coach but it's another thing to try to set things up where at the end of a fiscal year you have to let go two, three, four people purely because of budget. I think that was the hardest struggle trying to manage still trying to lead that person knowing that in a couple of months I'm going to let them go. When do I let them know that this is going to occur without them shutting down or just go ahead and quitting or something like that. That was the toughest part to



me being able to manage that portion of it, which I know is part of the job depending on where you are. At the same time that was difficult because that's not something you can prepare for. You can be around it, you could see it but you're not necessarily the one, the axe master. Do it, execute and hold on to that secret for four, five, six, seven months. I think that was the toughest part.

Daniel also spoke about having to make difficult personnel decisions during the time that he served in a temporary capacity. He acknowledged that he was in an interim capacity and possibly waiting for the permanent appointment. However, his challenge arose because his interim timeline extended past the time a decision needed to be made to either endure another year of underperforming staff or to make a change. Daniel explained:

Making those decisions are difficult. At-will employment ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. That is when their contracts expire. Those are difficult decisions to make when you have areas that are under-performing especially at a timeframe when you are an interim or acting AD. Like anyone, I struggled with personnel decisions on whether to retain or re-up the at-will employees that we all manage. To be honest with you, I was an at-will employee. You don't have a contract as the acting director of athletics. I was working without a contract and had an agreement to be the interim but I was still a deputy director of athletics from an HR perspective. Understanding how to manage all that was not just for the people that I had to work with, but it was also part of my own reality. Do you wait for new leadership, a new director of athletics to make a decision on a staff member that has historically underperformed, or do you let them manage their own situation with a new person and endure a potential negative situation for another year? That was a struggle for me because deep down you want to give people the benefit of the doubt, but at the same

time you understand how long the person has been in a position to make a difference and you already know what to expect on performance...I didn't anticipate having to make those decisions. I did not anticipate that I would be asked to make personnel decisions. I thought we could get the search done in 60 days. It took significantly longer than that and then those decisions needed to be made, or rather I was being required to make them.

Not only did participants have to struggle with the decision of letting go of personnel but some participants also had the challenge of when and if they should hire new staff while in their interim role. For example Bob explained he needed to prepare for replacing his football coach during a vital time to get a quality candidate. However, because he was interim, Bob struggled with whether he should make the decision or wait and let the permanent director of athletics bring in their own hire. After not seeing any rush from campus leadership to get a permanent director of athletics in place, Bob knew that given the chance his football coach could leave, he needed a plan ready to replace him. Bob shared:

I was pretty upfront with the president that there was a chance that our football coach could get hired somewhere else. If that was the case I told him, "I'm just being honest with you, that if our football coach gets hired somewhere else, we're going to have a harder time getting really good candidates to look at this job if they don't know who their next boss is." I said frankly, "I'd be happy to participate in a search for a football coach. I had just done one with our basketball program a year earlier at that school. So I'm quite confident that I can run a search. However, out of fairness to the next coach, and in fairness to the next director of athletics, we need to get somebody implicit." The president heard that at first, but he wasn't willing to accelerate the time in trying to hire a

new director of athletics. It ended up that our coach didn't go anywhere that year, but I had to put some plans together just in case he did.

Overall, whether the task was to fire or hire someone, participants experienced a transition from being the person that made suggestions to being the person that was responsible for making decisions on personnel matters.

**Compliance.** Five participants already had experience with compliance prior to taking on the interim director of athletics position. So for Adam, Andre, Natalie, Rachel, and Zach, compliance was not an area of great concern. However, participants who did not have a compliance background, such as Roger, acknowledged that serving as interim director of athletics made him pay attention to things that he really never paid attention to before, such as compliance. Other participants, such as Chris, also talked about their lack of experience in this area and it needing to be something they educated themselves on while serving as the interim director of athletics. Chris explained:

I definitely needed to educate myself more on NCAA rules. Attending the annual convention was very helpful to me in that they had the new director of athletics orientation program for NCAA Division III. You can see those resources online and you can try to work through them and try to understand and agree with it. I had the NCAA compliance manual on my desk as sports information director for 12 years. I think I probably looked at three different things regarding marketing and communication. I didn't really educate myself before. So I had to educate myself on the inner workings of NCAA Division III compliance within the first six months of my interim appointment. There are just different things that I've never done before like rules for playing and

practices. I always had that nervous feeling that something was going to happen and I was going to be held accountable for it. So I needed to brush up on everything.

Zach also expressed his lack of experience in compliance and having to take the time to understand it.

What I wasn't as strong about and what kept me working long hours was I didn't have experience in for instance compliance. I was trying to basically learn the basics of compliance and just the right terminology of different areas that I had never worked in the trenches on. I would say I wasn't prepared on some of the areas that were critical, like legislation, especially during the period where the NCAA was creating the autonomy groups.

Zach also shared a unique challenge of having to be educated by his compliance staff to determine if that same staff had a compliance violation. Zach explained, "I basically had to have the people who were potentially messing up in compliance come in and educate me and then me determine if they messed up. That was one thing that was tough."

If compliance was not an area that participants had experience in before taking on the interim director of athletics position, ultimately it was an area that participants felt they needed to educate themselves on quickly.

**Community/media relations.** Serving as the interim director of athletics provided more community and media exposure for nine participants than they were previously exposed to. Natalie and Rachel shared that they were more in the public eye when serving as interim than ever before. Natalie explained, "I have always been more behind the scenes, the one greeting people at the door. But as interim I became the person in front of the group." Bob also shared

how he used to be the person that watched the director of athletics talk until he became that person when appointed as interim. Bob described:

I had to serve in a bigger role in the community in terms of speaking functions, being around, meeting people, representing the department, little things as we would have a pep rally before each of our football games and there was an emcee, then the school president would talk, then the director of athletics would talk. I had been at those pep rallies and I had seen my predecessor in that role but then once he left, it was me. Now the emcee would turn it over to the president, the president would talk, and then he would introduce me, then I had to go up there and talk to the crowd. There definitely was that public figure role that I had not had in my previous role.

In addition to the increased exposure, participants such as Daniel, also shared how he did not anticipate some of the questions that the media presented him with while he was interim.

I didn't anticipate a lot of the questions that I would get in the interim role. Good, bad or indifferent, the media's job is to inform the public even if sometimes the way they want to inform the public is by stressing something that's negative rather than something that's positive. Going into a meeting or accepting a phone call from a member of the media without a complete understanding of what they were going to ask, probably wasn't the best way to go about it. But I was just trying to be transparent and easygoing, and I knew it was only for a short period of time. Or I thought it was going to be for a short period of time. But I didn't overly prepare for media calls or inquires. I didn't have our media relations folks screen the call beforehand and ask, what are you going to ask him? I just took the call. I probably won't do that in the future.

Jason also expressed his surprise at the emphasis the media placed on his responses to minuscule topics.

I really wasn't quite expecting how much weight people placed on your every word. The public and press reaction to some of the most mundane questions and answers that people just went off on, that surprised me. There was a lot of vitriol there, not necessarily directed at me, although there was some of that, but a lot was just about the university and what was going on. Again, it was a bad situation. We had been losing, so we were dealing with really bad national press anyway. People were just very frustrated with the university and the athletics department. That blew me away. I didn't expect that you get critiqued for things you say or you don't say on every subject. That was a little surprising. And you can't be a director of athletics and not be in the public eye, not be a part of press conferences, or not talk to the media.

Ultimately, as an interim director of athletics the community and media presence greatly increased for participants when they transitioned to the temporary leadership role.

All participants experienced additional job tasks while serving as the interim director of athletics. Where some tasks were expected because of the leadership role, others served as challenging due to a lack of experience, and other tasks were a shock or surprise. For example, all participants expected the transition of becoming the primary decision maker for the department. However, because many participants lacked experience with budgeting, compliance, and/or development, participants felt underprepared in handling challenges that were faced in those areas. Additionally, participants also described being surprised by the nature of dealing with the community and media. Although participants expected an increase of

exposure to external constituents, the uncontrollable responses and/or interpretation from the community and media, especially about minor issues, was surprising to many participants,

### **Increased Workload**

Beyond new duties, a common experience among all participants was the increase in workload when serving as the interim director of athletics. All but three of the participants were expected to still serve in their prior role in addition to taking on the job tasks of being the interim. As Patty simply summarized, “Honestly, I did two jobs.” Other participants could easily relate because their prior role was not backfilled. Bob, Don, Michelle, Roger, and others mentioned that they still had the responsibilities of their old position in addition to the responsibilities of new job tasks while being the interim director of athletics.

Additionally, Bob, Michelle, Patty, and Roger discussed how their workload increased simply because their days were filled with meetings. Bob explained that there was more on his plate because not only was he serving in dual roles, but he also had to attend a number of meetings while serving in his interim capacity.

I still had to do my old job on top of having to take on all of the meetings and all the conversations that the director of athletics had. Managing my time became a challenge because my day became really planned for me. When I got to work, my day was jammed with a half dozen meetings. Anytime I had a brief second, I used it to just check voicemails and try to get back to people.

Patty also experienced increased meeting schedules while serving as interim. “My meetings doubled up in time, I was in more meetings than I cared to be in.”

Ultimately, serving in dual roles and attending additional meetings caused an increase in workload for participants and resulted in longer work hours, including taking work home. While

time management was key when serving as interim director of athletics, there were a multitude of things happening which, as Don expressed, “makes things tough from a work-life balance perspective.” Andre, Zach, and Michelle all noted the long hours that are put in as an interim director of athletics. Andre stated, “You come into the office really early, leave really, really late. That’s a part of the job.” Zach acknowledged that you put in a lot of hours anyway working in intercollegiate athletics, but that as interim, time spent working significantly increased. Zach shared:

Where it changed is I was working probably seven in the morning to, on average we're probably talking like eight o'clock at night most times, and then also every weekend I would pick one day where I went in and worked.

Not only did serving as interim director of athletics result in longer hours at work, for Michelle it also meant taking work home to get things done. Michelle explained:

During the day I wasn't able to get some of those things done because I would be in meetings, or dealing with the other staff that I was dealing with. I would get home. I would do my mom thing and then I would start working again at about 10:00 pm and then I probably finish working at about 2:30 am in the morning and I sleep for a few hours and I get up and do it all over again.

Additionally, simply trying to understand the job of being the interim director of athletics added to participants' workloads as well. Jason' said his workload increased because he wanted to be prepared to do his job as interim director of athletics. “My workload certainly picked up. Especially initially just because I had to get up to speed on a lot of things quickly, so I had a working knowledge in case something popped up, I could address it more expeditiously.” Similarly, Natalie explained that she wanted to do a good job as the interim director of athletics.



Physically and mentally it was draining because you're trying to do a good job and again you're trying to do a good job even when you don't have the official role. To have that on you, people asking you all the time about the official role and you're doing additional work. It is a big load doing my old position and this position both at the same.

In general, since this was the first time that most participants served in the capacity of director of athletics, even in an interim capacity, trying to get adjusted to the job, all while doing a good job in two roles required a lot of time. Overall, participants expected an increase in workload while serving as an interim director of athletics. Although Adam, Bob, Jason, Patty, and Don talked about being compensated for the extra work, and valued the overall experience, Jason expressed, "It's never enough given the headaches that you deal with."

### **Level of Authority**

Participants described experiencing different levels of authority while serving in the role of interim director of athletics. Although participants talked about transitioning from a role of making suggestions to a role of making decisions when becoming interim, some participants felt that they had the authority to act as if they were the permanent director of athletics, while others did not. There was general acknowledgment from participants that they had the authority to make the day-to-day decisions. However, Jason understood that as interim director of athletics the big decisions were not for him to make. His role as interim director of athletics was to keep things running as smoothly as possible. Since Jason had no intentions to run for the permanent position because "it was not the right place or time", he explained:

The big decisions were not mine to make. But certainly, the day to day, the simple signing of papers to keep projects moving, that kind of stuff, those were decisions I could make and I heard I was given the freedom to do so. I mentioned going through a

coaching change. That was not my decision to make. I understood that too when it all came down. In some ways, it depends on which decisions. Again, big decisions, no, and other, the day-to-day stuff, the usual decisions, and things you have to be on it within your department, yes. I had the freedom to make those decisions.

Don, who was directed by campus administration “to keep the boat floating,” also described his level of authority as an interesting dynamic because, “You don’t want to put yourself out there too far, if you do with any particular decision, you don’t know if it is going to stick. I wasn’t in a position to make coaching changes.” Like Jason, Don did not make any long-term decisions because he understood that he was serving in a temporary capacity and things could easily change when new leadership arrived.

Additionally, Rachel also expressed not making long-term decisions that would be impactful to her department. While Rachel felt that she was empowered by campus leadership to make long-term decisions, she chose not to do so because she wanted to remain mindful about the decisions that she made because she knew that the department would experience transition again once the permanent director of athletics was hired. Rachel described:

I think I was empowered but I think you also are very mindful about decisions that you make and how they're going to impact everybody. For example, just because I was empowered to make some decisions doesn't mean that's the right thing to do for the long-term. For example, when we had some openings, we didn't fill everything or reorganize or change assignments necessarily because we thought that would be difficult on other staff members or coaches if we knew another transition was coming a few months later. We knew we weren't making decisions that were going to be in place for a long time. If it was a long-term decision, then probably the right decision was not to do it. We made

short-term decisions, tried to focus on what was a necessity at that period of time or make decisions that we knew, hey, in any other given circumstances chances are that whoever is leading the department at that time would see this as a reasonable direction to go in.

Patty also shared how any long-term ideas that required a decision were delayed until the permanent director of athletics arrived. Patty explained:

Some things that came up that we would talk about as a department for the future, we just sort of wrote them down but didn't say too much about them or do too much about them because we obviously didn't want to make any decisions, because in essence we could not. We didn't do much of anything. We thought they might be good ideas to share, or maybe a decision that could be made at a later date. That being said, we just noted them and we ended up sharing that with the new director of athletics versus doing any action because it wasn't necessary at the time.

Some participants perceived having a low level of authority on long-term decisions because they were not authorized to, while others had broader authority but choose not to exercise it. However, other participants perceived their level of authority while serving as interim director of athletics as what it would be if they were the permanent replacement. Daniel felt he had full authority to make decisions mainly because he had a job to do and, secondly, because he had prior approval from his president of the athletics department's strategic goals that he and his predecessor worked on the previous years. Daniel described:

We have a department to run. There are lots of decisions that need to be made. We can't wait to make decisions in college athletics so we didn't. I understood the goals and objectives that we had put in place years ago that had presidential approval from our previous director of athletics, and we continued to apply those strategic goals. The team

that we had hired had all come in and many of the coaches, many of the support staff had been hired over the last five years. I was actually involved in all of those processes. I felt comfortable being able to make decisions as an interim director of athletics that needed to be made and we did that. So that when a new person came on, the department continued to move forward. We didn't wait for new leadership to get there. We made the decisions that we needed to make when we needed to make them. I think it served the university well and the athletics department well. It set the new director of athletics up to continue the success that we had developed over the previous five years.

Similarly, John also indicated a perceived high level of authority when making decisions as if he was the permanent director of athletics from a strategic standpoint. John shared:

I was pretty committed to I am not going to do this job every day like I'm trying to do the job politically and I'm scared to make decisions. I'm going to do the job like I know it needs to be done, and we had some projects that needed to move forward and I got right into those...I was convinced that trying to earn the job every day by making people happy isn't the way to do this job, you have to do what's right, you have to do what makes sense from a strategic standpoint.

Michelle, who only took the interim position because the department needed to make changes prior to the hiring of the permanent director of athletics, knew she had full authority from campus leadership to make tough decisions. Although Michelle was given full authority, her approach to decision making changed while serving as the interim director of athletics.

Michelle explained:

[When I became the interim director of athletics] I probably slowed down a little bit on my thought process before I made a decision. But also, I knew that I couldn't teeter too

much. I needed to make sure that a decision was made as quickly as possible and followed through because we did have limited time.

Additionally, Natalie was not hesitant and felt that she had full authority to make any decisions while in her interim appointment. However, Natalie indicated that whether she was interim or serving in the permanent role as director of athletics that she would still consult with senior leadership on bigger matters. Natalie described:

No, I did not feel that hesitation, I felt that I had the authority from the president to make decisions. I really didn't feel that way. There are some decisions though like regardless if I was interim or director of athletics, I would have to get permission from my president for certain things, so I don't think it did. I felt empowered to be able to make decisions.

Participants realized that serving as an interim director of athletics required them to be a decision-maker, however, the level of authority related to what type of decisions that could be made varied among participants. Some participants lacked authority because the nature of their role as a placeholder required them to remain status quo. Whether being a placeholder was a self-imposed expectation, or a directive from campus leadership, several participants felt that they could not make any decisions that would impact their department for the long-term. Others were empowered to make decisions but chose not to do so. Finally, other participants felt and acted as if they had full authority because they simply had a job to do or had received the go ahead from campus leadership to make necessary changes. Overall, the level of perceived authority varied for participants based on their perceived expectation of their role as an interim director of athletics.

## **Impact on Relationships**

Serving as an interim director of athletics had a significant impact on relationships, both positive and negative. Participants talked about their experiences with developing campus relationships, their shift in staff and coaching relationships, the challenge of managing family relationships, and the interactions with various others, including other intercollegiate directors of athletics, alumni, local businesses, and board of trustee members.

**Campus relationships.** Participants got the opportunity to develop new and expanded relationships with senior campus leadership while serving as the interim director of athletics. All participants indicated that they reported to the president/chancellor or a vice president at their institution. Although some participants indicated that they had working relationships with various members of senior leadership prior to taking on the temporary position, for most participants, serving as the interim director of athletics provided direct access to top campus leaders on a consistent basis. These relationships were developed and even enhanced by serving as an interim director of athletics and provided a network of support to participants while serving in the temporary leadership role.

Daniel shared his experience with existing campus relationships that provided him with support while serving as the interim director of athletics.

I was very fortunate in that I had a very good relationship with our faculty athletic representative, a very good relationship with our deputy provost, and a very good relationship with our general counsel. What the president encouraged me to do was to work with those three individuals throughout the experience. That I could really use them as a group to bounce ideas off of, as we worked to move the institution forward, for however long it took. That turned out to be invaluable advice and I did that.

Additionally, Adam shared the support received from the president's cabinet throughout his interim appointment.

The president's cabinet was great and checked in on me regularly. I reported to them and they let me know that I had direct access to whomever I needed to in order to accomplish the things I wanted to accomplish. I received support from the beginning. It just wasn't said and then I was sent away to go do this thing with a "but whatever you do don't ask us for help even though we told you that you could." If anything, people actually reached out to me...A couple members of cabinet checked on me every other week. I talked to general counsel every day. He was actually calling me, I didn't necessarily have to call him.

Furthermore, Patty also shared how she received support while serving in the role of interim director of athletics. However, it was more on an individual basis with her vice president of student affairs.

I had a great support, especially from the Vice President of Student Affairs. She was awesome. We had weekly meetings, where she would say, "What do you need from me and what can we do?" She was also a good person for me to kind of go and vent a little bit to. She was able to let me do some venting and see how things were going, keep tabs on me, and things like that so I felt very supported from that standpoint.

Most participants, including Andre, Bob and Michelle, also developed campus relationships that helped support them while serving in the interim director of athletics role. Bob summarized his experience with the support received from senior leadership on campus by utilizing a bowling alley lane analogy.

They have those inflatable bumpers they put in the gutters. That was kind of them and I was the bowling ball, rolling down the alley. The vice presidents and the president served as the bumpers there in the gutters to make sure that I didn't roll off the track.

They were so instrumental in allowing me to do my job and to grow at my job as interim.

Furthermore, participants indicated that the campus relationships developed from serving as interim director of athletics allowed them to develop a university perspective. For example, Roger acknowledged that as interim: "It's nice to be at the table and hear what's going on...it's good to be a part of the team. It's good to know what's going on on campus." Additionally, Daniel spoke in detail about the shift of perspective when appointed as interim and serving as a member of the president's cabinet.

I served on the president's cabinet in the position of an associate vice president/director of athletics. My meeting structure wasn't like it was when I was the deputy director of athletics. When I was the deputy director of athletics, my meeting structure was all about the internal and external efforts of the department of athletics. When I was the associate vice president, it was about the university's mission, goals, aspirations, their strategic plan, their efforts campus-wide.

Andre also shared how serving as interim director of athletics allowed him to be on the president's cabinet and work with other senior leadership to shape and grow the institution. For a number of participants, serving as the interim director of athletics provided an opportunity for more involvement with senior leadership on campus.

However, the development of campus relationships was not always clearly defined for some participants. Although Don felt that the support from campus leadership was there, it was not communicated effectively, so in his own words, "I had to jump in and just learn the job."



Similarly for Natalie, she ultimately knew the support was there if she needed it; however, she described her experience as a much more hands off approach by campus leadership.

Honestly, they just kind of left me alone. I took that as a good thing. When I would meet with our vice president, he would tell me the president is really happy and that he was concerned and wondering how long they were even going to be able to keep me...No one really bothered me and I didn't bother them. The only thing I would bother them with was all the good stuff we were doing. I figured they're letting me just run the show. They're letting me take care of what I need to take care of. If I hit a snag, that I am having trouble getting over, when I need their help, I would go ask, I would let them know. Otherwise, I just kept running things as normal.

Jason also felt he had proper support although he experienced some initial challenges with campus leadership simply because he had more experience serving as an intercollegiate athletics administrator than his first-time interim chancellor and first time president.

I think I received proper support. I think part of my challenge at the time was I had more experience in my, I want to say in my position. I had more experience as a director of athletics than the interim chancellor had as a chancellor. She had never been a chancellor before. In addition to a new president. Did I mention he had never been a president before and had only served one year as the president? I had more experience in my role than these folks did. It was a little hard to, again, find our way initially. They didn't know what they didn't know at the time. We had to figure that out. Once we got it, everything was fine. I had regular meetings, is there any questions or something, I had access. I was included in the cabinet meetings, social functions, that kind of stuff.

Overall, I think I got what I needed or what anybody in that position would have needed.

Again, once we got past that first rough patch.

Ultimately, serving as the interim of director of athletics increased exposure for participants to campus leadership. Whether campus relationships were new or existing, these relationships provided a means for support for most participants.

**Staff and coach relationships.** As participants transitioned through the role of being an interim director of athletics, most experienced a shift in relationships with staff and coaches. While staff includes administrators such as assistants, managers, and those in other support roles for the entire athletics department, coaches are solely responsible for oversight of their respective sport and student-athletes. Although Andre acknowledged that there was already a certain level of boss/subordinate relationships with staff and coaches in his prior role, “Serving as the interim director of athletics transitioned me from the go between person, to the role of I am.”

Ultimately, participants discussed how they relied on staff more, and how they were perceived differently by coaches, while serving in the position of interim director of athletics.

Participants discussed how their staff stepped up to help during this time of transition. Andre explained how he empowered his staff to make decisions for the department.

I really was able to get my team involved in a way that I gave them some extra responsibilities...I was able to pull them a little bit closer and let them know, “Hey, I'm going to rely on you a lot more and this is why.” I was unable to handle some situations and actually empowered them a little bit more to make some decisions, to make some things occur that they didn't need to feel like everything started and ended with me. I just wanted to be in the know of the things that they were doing. I think, that changed a little bit because they were empowered a little bit more. Especially my immediate assistant. I

had to tell her, “You're not just a secretary. You are my business manager, you are my gatekeeper, you are everything. You are my partner.”

Patty also shared how she heavily relied on her staff during her time as interim director of athletics.

I thank goodness every day that I have an administrative assistant who works with me on a daily basis in the department, and without her I don't know how I would've done it...I had to really sort of rely on a lot of other people as well. You have to really rely on your staff, because there's no way you can singularly do it. I wanted everybody to know that even though I'm stepping into this role as an interim, I cannot do it alone. There's no way. I'm going to need all of us. We're all in this together. We're committed to getting this done. And people just bought in and said, “Yes, we'll get this done.”

Participants that had supportive staff were really able to rely on them during this time of transition for the department and for the individual serving as interim director of athletics.

However, not all participants experienced complete buy-in from their staff while serving as the interim director of athletics. Bob explained that he struggled with staff members who did not respect his position as interim.

There were probably some staff members that just did not want to acknowledge me as the new head of the department unit. I knew that it was on an interim level, so I think there are some that just either refused to acknowledge it or just felt that all they had to do is bide their time until I was out of the interim role and things would go back to the way they were before. I won't say they didn't support, but there were some employees who just knew they didn't really have to, they just felt that things didn't have to change and that they didn't have to respect me in the new role.

Dealing with staff members that lacked full support of the temporary role creates an environment that is challenging for an interim director of athletics.

Not only did serving as an interim director of athletics impact relationships with staff, but participants also discussed their perception of changes in relationships with coaches as well. For example, Bob discussed how he transitioned from being a colleague to becoming the boss, while having to make a coaching change and gain the trust of his coaching staff.

It changed because I become their boss. Before where I was a colleague and we could talk about a lot of different things, it becomes just slightly different. I had to fire a coach when I was the interim director of athletics. I probably would not have had that role as a deputy, but we had to make a change on my watch with one of our positions. I think that the relationship with our high profile coaches changed some, but I had already established a pretty good working relationship with them. What I found was I had to develop maybe a stronger relationship with some of the other coaches. I needed to get with them more, just make sure that they understood that I was there to support them even though maybe I had not been in that position before.

Although Daniel felt that he treated his coaches in the same manner when he was the deputy director of athletics, he also acknowledged that the coaches recognized his role had changed when he became the interim director of athletics. Similarly to Bob, Daniel also had to reassure his coaches that even though he transitioned to the interim director of athletics position, he was still there to support them.

I treated people the exact same way I treated them when I was the deputy director of athletics. But I think the way they recognized my role changed for them where, obviously, those dynamics needed to be shifted a little bit, when I started to realize that

they saw me differently. But I think I did a pretty good job with that, making them feel at ease, making them feel like, we are all in this together, we are trying to do the same things that we had done before.

Furthermore, Daniel also explained a change in dynamics with staff and coaches while serving as the interim director of athletics that caused a slight strain on some relationships.

The reality of being a deputy director of athletics, a lot of times, is the role of the intermediary or communicator between the director of athletics and a coach or support staff member...In the role of the deputy director of athletics, when you are very approachable, people will tell you what they are thinking and hope that you do the right thing with the information. Over the course of five years, I think I did that quite a bit as the deputy. However, missing that person in the interim role probably made my relationship ability with everyone strained a bit because they weren't sure who they were talking to. Am I talking to the deputy director of athletics or am I talking to the acting director of athletics?

Natalie also discussed how she perceived a level of uncertainty with the coaches surrounding her role as interim director of athletics.

I think there was also that uncertainty with the coaches. I always felt the pressure that the eyes were on me like, what could she do? When is she going to make things happen? I think maybe I was putting more pressure on myself. Maybe that's not how they were thinking or feeling but I kind of always felt like I had to prove myself because I was in charge...But I think I probably put maybe more pressure on myself than the coaches were putting on me and none of them ever came and said that to me. None of it was direct or

anything but I guess I had that feeling over me like I needed to do that. And that was a little hard.

Ultimately, for participants, serving in the position of interim director of athletics changed their relationships to some capacity with staff and coaches. Although participants indicated there had been a supervisor/subordinate role with staff and coaches in their prior duties, when participants transitioned to an interim director of athletics this dynamic changed. Participants indicated that they no longer served as the go between person between staff, coaches, and the director of athletics, because they became the director of athletics in a temporary capacity. Some participants also shared that they relied on staff more to help them balance the increased workloads. Additionally, participants made an effort to show coaches that they supported them during a time of uncertainty as a result of leadership transition. Overall, participants acknowledged that they were perceived differently by staff and coaches while serving as an interim director of athletics and that this changed the nature of their professional relationships.

**Family relationships.** Although participants felt supported by immediate family during this time of transition, serving as the interim director of athletics also impacted family relationships. Participants had to maintain a balance between work and home, a difficult challenge given the long hours and workload described above. For example, Adam shared that he wanted to make sure that he was still present as a husband and a father while serving as interim director of athletics.

Athletics is a lifestyle, it's a daily deal, there is no time off, even when you are away, always something going on, always have somebody that has something to ask of you, text you, call you. I tried to balance it as best I could. I certainly had a supportive family, so

I was able to work hard. But at the same time, not to the point of pure exhaustion with no return. I was realistic about where this was going. I didn't need to be in there 24 hours a day knowing that after a six month period that I would not be the director of athletics. So I had a healthy understanding of the situation that allowed me to still be a good husband and dad during this time.

Although Adam's understanding of his interim appointment as a temporary assignment helped him keep his work and home life in balance, other participants struggled with that.

Participants such as Bob shared how balancing time between work and home was challenging: "I had to balance the time between family and work. Just making sure that I was able to still commit the proper amount of time both in the office and with the family. That was the biggest challenge. Trying to make sure I wasn't short changing to anyone unnecessarily." Similarly, Don also shared how balancing work and home was tough especially with young children. "Personally, serving as interim director of athletics was hard with young kids. The time commitment and dedication that was required, I had to miss some of their stuff. And that's very challenging. Balancing work and home life is hard." Additionally, balancing work and home was a struggle for Natalie as well, as she admits that serving as interim director of athletics "hurt my relationship with my family because I had to sacrifice a lot of that family time and attention to work."

However, for some participants, as indicated above, the time it took to serve as the interim director of athletics was no different from their previous role. Therefore, balancing work and home was no different than usual. Daniel shared how his family already understood and supported the time commitment it took for him to be an intercollegiate athletics administrator.

I'm always a 75 to 90 hour a week work person. My family understood my role. I continued to work at the same pace that I would've worked at as the deputy director of athletics. As a deputy, I went to everything, I was a part of everything, I was in every meeting. As the director of athletics, those things were no different...My family knew exactly what we were getting into. I've been in college athletics for 20 years. My schedule, my timeframe hasn't really changed. They knew that it was more responsibility. But the impact on me personally wasn't significant just because they are so familiar with the time commitment with college athletics.

Similarly, for Michelle, whose husband was also an intercollegiate basketball coach, the time commitment working in athletics was already understood, so she talked about how they just had to make it work.

I had to leave the office at two o'clock to pick the kids up from school at three o'clock and to drive them right back up to the university with me because we had a volleyball or basketball game Friday night at seven. And my kids were on board with that. My husband was on board with that. And to top it off he was a college basketball coach. And this was all during basketball season too. I don't know how we survived, I really don't...We just made it work. I mean, it is just all hands on deck.

Like Michelle, Bob had an inclusive approach to balancing home and work life. Although serving as interim director of athletics was an increase in work time for Bob when compared to his former position, his family was supportive in incorporating family time with Bob while at work. Bob explained:

While I was serving as interim director of athletics I asked myself, "how can I get my family involved in this?" I had three, I still have three young kids, but they were much



younger at the time. How do I make sure that I can continue to give as much at home as I have before without sacrificing anything in at work and vice versa?...Personally, I wanted to make sure that I still found a way to keep my wife and kids involved even if that meant that they would have to come to some of my athletic events. My son would attend dinners or pep rallies. The family would sit out with me in the suite during football games just to be around and go through this journey together.

Overall, serving as an interim director of athletics impacted family relationships when trying to balance home and work life. Ultimately families were supportive of participants serving in the capacity of an interim director of athletics, however participants were challenged with balancing their time between both the job and their family. Although one participant felt their family was used to him working long workdays, most participants wanted to keep a healthy balance between work and home, even if that meant sometimes bringing their family to work to spend time with them while watching a sporting event.

**Other relationships.** In addition to campus, department, and family relationships, serving as an interim director of athletics also exposed participants to other relationships as well. For example, Adam talked about how being appointed interim gave him instant credibility within the industry of intercollegiate athletics.

My phone blew up as soon as it was announced. Emails, phone calls, and people asking if I was going to go for it, and that I would be great. Or people just calling to say congrats, well deserved. I even started to get phone calls that summer from search firms and other people in the industry that said, “this would be a really good situation for you at this university if things don’t go the way you want them to at your current institution.”

Andre spoke about how serving as interim connected him with alumni and the local business community.

You know you hear about these big names. You begin to serve on this committee. Make connections with these alumni and a variety of different groups that are in your community. You are able to sit in meetings and be introduced and be held in a higher acclaim. Even in the local community, no matter how big or small the school is. That was eye opening just to see how people reverent athletics and the director of athletics and how instrumental athletics is to the community. You are the voice. You are the front porch for the institution.

Additionally, Bob explained how his temporary appointment provided him exposure to a number of influential people through his interaction with the board of trustees.

I had interaction with the board of trustees...There were people that were very influential there. Captains of industries and other people that I just did not have much exposure to in my prior role...But that is the role for a director of athletics.

Ultimately, participants gained exposure to a variety of constituents throughout their appointment as interim directors of athletics that they may not have otherwise experienced.

As participants transitioned through their appointment as interim director of athletics, there were a number of things that they had to get accustomed to. Participants experienced a variety of new job tasks, or at minimal a new perspective to prior job responsibilities.

Participants had to adjust to an increased workload schedule. Participants had to gauge and determine their level of authority serving in a temporary leadership capacity. Participants also had to navigate through both developing and maintaining relationships. Serving as an interim director of athletics provides great opportunity to an individual. However, balancing all these

different components was both a benefit to the individual serving as interim director of athletics and a hindrance.

### **New Beginnings – The End of Being the Interim Director of Athletics**

Participants experienced ongoing transition while serving as interim director of athletics. As participants transitioned into and through the temporary role, most of their energy and effort is focused on moving the department forward until a permanent successor is hired. Whether participants utilized this interim experience to either audition for the permanent spot, to gain experience for future professional advancement, or simply just to fulfill an obligation in a temporary capacity, the time spent as an interim director of athletics eventually came to an end for participants. As participants transitioned out of their temporary position into their next role, they reflected on the confidence that was gained while serving in the role of interim director of athletics.

### **Confidence**

Although participants were willing to serve as an interim director of athletics, for some there were reservations about how they would do in the temporary role. For example, Bob spoke about how he was not confident in himself initially to take on the interim role even though his president expressed that he would be good for the job. After serving as interim director of athletics, Bob learned that he was actually more prepared for the role than he had originally thought. Even though he acknowledged that there were areas that he needed to work on, he also realized that he was able to do a good job in certain areas where he thought he would lack:

Serving as an interim director of athletics confirmed a couple of areas that I felt I was more deficient in. However, some other areas that I thought that I wasn't as good at actually turned out that I knew more or could do a better job at it than I thought.

Overall, serving as an interim director of athletics gave Bob the confidence that if the right opportunity presented itself for him to serve as an interim director of athletics again, or obtaining the permanent position in the future, he would be able to do the job.

Similar to Bob, John had to experience serving in the position of interim director of athletics to realize that, “In moments of pressure and moments where leadership is needed, I can step in and fill that gap and be confident. However, you don’t know that until you get the opportunity.” Being in the role of interim director of athletics provided participants with experience as the top leadership position within the athletics department, which gave them an overall sense of confidence that they could do the job.

However, for Jason, he entered the interim position already with the confidence that he could serve in the temporary role. Serving as the interim director of athletics was just reinforcement to what he had already known about himself. Jason confidently stated, “If I learned anything, it just reinforced the fact that I know I could do this. I can bring value and leadership to a program and help the program, help the university.”

Furthermore, both Michelle and Natalie spoke about how, after their experiences as interim directors of athletics that they recognized, they were resilient and could handle doing the job. Once Michelle had some time to reflect on her time as the interim director of athletics, she was truly amazed with her capabilities throughout the temporary appointment.

The main thing I learned about myself is that I'm pretty resilient...And I think that is what helped me get through those hard situations. [You are faced with all these different challenges] and you are like oh my God, I'm kind of amazing...I think that I'm capable of more than what I gave myself credit for. I think I was my toughest critic. But good Lord, we got a lot of stuff done in a short amount of time. I mean we really did, and I think

going through that experience on some level it kind of boost my confidence... If I can survive as interim at this institution, I can survive anywhere, somehow. I mean, there is nothing you can throw at me right now that I'm not prepared for. I think it was a confidence boost and a realization that I can do things right and do them well.

Although the level of confidence perceived by participants varied going into their interim appointments, after serving as the interim director of athletics participants were confident that they could ultimately do the job.

### **What Happened Next**

Even though participants varied in the length of time they served as interim director of athletics, all temporary appointments eventually came to an end. All participants transitioned out of the interim role and either got the permanent position, gained the experience for future professional advancement, and/or returned to a secondary leadership role. For example, Roger, who eventually realized his president was not interested in running a national search to fill the director of athletics position, knew that every day that he served in his interim appointment was one day closer to him being hired as the permanent replacement. In contrast, Brenda and Don took the interim position with no expectations of becoming the permanent hire, and through doing a good job eventually assumed the role of the permanent director of athletics.

For other participants, such as Andre and Michelle, their experiences as interim directors of athletics allowed for professional advancement opportunities at other universities. Andre, who wanted to serve as the permanent director of athletics at the institution he served in the interim role, said that serving as an interim director of athletics put him in a position where he professionally stood out. He was recruited to a new intercollegiate athletics administrator role at

a different institution. Similarly, Michelle talked about how her time as the interim director of athletics provided her the opportunity to become the director of athletics at another university.

I would not have gotten my current job if I weren't for the interim director of athletics position at my last institution. So I am so grateful for that no matter how much of a mess or challenge it was. I learned so much in such a short time in different areas of our university campus. That skills set that I've learned in that very short time I'm going to carry with me forever. So that was probably the best professional offer I have ever had to be the interim director of athletics.

Participants such as Adam and Bob, utilized their time as interim director of athletics to gain experience and serve in a broader capacity when they returned to a secondary leadership position. For example, Adam talked about how serving as the interim director of athletics not only gave him more credibility, but also transitioned him completely from the internal functions of the department to the external side of things.

Had I not served as the interim director of athletics I may still be running the compliance office. It's not the worst thing in the world but I was ready to expand. I certainly enjoyed my time there, but to have the opportunity to help run the department and produce some revenue, and to see a side of the department that I needed some experience in to be a well-rounded administrator capable for competing for a job in the future. I needed that time as the interim director of athletics, and I needed the subsequent change with it after my time as interim was up.

Likewise, Bob shared how serving as interim director of athletics provided him with a global perspective he could use when he stepped back into his role as deputy director of athletics.

It gave me perspective that I did not have. Once I returned to my role as deputy director of athletics...it allowed me to contribute to meetings with my boss at a higher level than I had before because I've been privy to discussions with the school president, I've sat in the room with the vice president of the university to help make decisions for the campus. It allows me to have a better appreciation for the director of athletics role and how pressurized it can be. It also allows me to not just have a microscopic view of the areas in the department that I oversee. It gives me a better global view of how my area impacts the other areas within athletics and then how athletics impacts the university.

Lastly, although all participants felt that they benefited from serving as the interim director of athletics. Patty learned that personally and professionally that she is best being second in command. Patty expressed:

The 100% thing that I can say that I learned about myself both personally and professionally, which confirmed everything that I've been thinking my entire career...being second [in command] is really like my strong suit. I've known that pretty much my whole professional life. After this experience, I know I am right. I already knew I was right, but I had never had the opportunity to be in the role.

Daniel shared this same sentiment, as he described that “[he] enjoyed being the person behind the person.” Daniel was also the only participant who received a guaranteed contract to return to his prior role before the hiring of a permanent director of athletics.

At the end of it, I was awarded a guaranteed contract which I thought was nice. I'm pretty sure that it had everything to do with the outgoing president and the incoming president wanting to make sure that I felt that the [interim directors of athletics] role that I took on, that I had served well and they wanted to show me that my future employment

would be guaranteed. That they wanted me to remain at the university regardless and that was negotiated just before the new director of athletics was hired, and that felt good.

Daniel's contract was a recognition for what he had contributed in the interim role and provided stability (as well as some protection) during leadership changes both in athletics and at the university.

Overall, when participants look back upon their experiences as interim directors of athletics, it has helped them grow and develop as professionals within intercollegiate athletics. Although participants faced a number of challenges while serving in the temporary leadership role, ultimately, they were able to look back, reflect on the benefits, and express gratitude for their overall experience while serving as an interim director of athletics. As participants completed their transition cycle of an ending, neutral zone, and new beginning in a temporary leadership role, they started a new cycle of transition as they either got hired as the permanent director of athletics, returned to their prior role, or obtained another job at a different institution.

### **Conclusion**

All participants of this study acknowledged that serving as an interim director of athletics provided a number of advantages and challenges to the individual serving in the temporary role. Whether participants approached this temporary appointment as an opportunity to advance or obligation to serve, all participants expressed an increase in job tasks in order to keep the department moving forward. While participants shared how new relationships developed, or how old relationships were impacted, serving as an interim director of athletics provided an opportunity for professional growth and development.

All participants experienced a transition as they moved into the role of an interim director of athletics as a result of predecessor turnover. Although some institutions made an immediate



decision to fill the gap in leadership with an interim appointment, other institutions took up to a month to make that decision. Once participants were presented with the opportunity to serve as the interim director of athletics, participants had to quickly decide if it was a role they wanted to fulfill. Participants experienced an ending to their prior role as some jumped at the opportunity to serve in a leadership position that is limited to most, seeing it as an opportunity to gain professional experience for future career advancement or part of their obligation to step up and serve. Most participants were placed in the role of interim director of athletics by campus leadership to keep things running smoothly, and thus were given (and exercised) more limited authority in terms of making substantial change. However, a handful were directed or chose to make organizational changes to prepare for the permanent director of athletics, reflecting a greater level of authority or autonomy than some in interim positions.

As participants adjusted in the neutral zone to their interim director of athletics role, they experienced a number of challenges and benefits while serving in the temporary position. Ultimately, participants gained a wide array of experience in various job tasks while serving as the interim director of athletics. Although some job roles such as decision maker were expected, other job tasks proved to be challenging (e.g., budget, compliance) or shocking (e.g., public relations) experiences to participants. All participants dealt with an increase in workload, due in part to continuing to serve in their prior role in addition to the interim position, as well as additional meetings associated with the new role. As a result, participants experienced longer work days and the need to take work home. Although participants were able to overcome the challenges of handling new job tasks, they valued the overall experience gained.

Serving as an interim directors of athletics had an impact on relationships for participants. Serving in the temporary leadership role provided increased exposure to campus senior

leadership for participants, resulting in a greater perceived level of institutional support by participants. Additionally, the relationship with staff and coaches changed for participants. Most relied on supportive staff to offset their increased workload, although some were challenged with staff who perceived the role as less than full authority because of the temporary title.

Participants also felt they had to make an effort to show coaches that they truly supported them even though the dynamics of the relationship changed. Increased workloads also made it challenging for most participants to balance work and home, thus influencing family relationships. Overall participants' families were supportive; however, sometimes this meant that family time was integrated with work events. Lastly, participants also experienced increased interaction with other directors of athletics, alumni, board of trustees, and other constituents that they may not have come in contact with unless they served as an interim director of athletics.

Ultimately, participants reflected positively on their overall experience as an interim director of athletics. As a new beginning, participants overcame the challenges, acknowledged the benefits, and gained confidence that they could do the job while serving in the role of interim director of athletics. Participants were able to successfully transition through being an interim director of athletics and either applied and got the permanent job, returned to their prior position, or used their interim experience to get hired at another institution.

Through the interviews, participants shared their unique experiences on how they transitioned through an ending, a neutral zone, and a new beginning as an interim director of athletics. The findings from this study provided a foundation for implications and recommendations for future policy, research, and practice. This information will help NCAA member institutions better support those who serve as interim directors of athletics, as well as the institution, during times of temporary leadership.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of NCAA interim directors of athletics to gain a better understanding of the challenges and benefits that they faced, as well as the institutional support received, while serving in a temporary leadership capacity. In this chapter, the findings from 15 semi-structured interviews with former NCAA interim directors of athletics presented in Chapter Four are interpreted in response to the three research questions. Based on these findings conclusions were drawn, higher education policy and practices recommended, and areas for future research suggested. TTM (Bridges, 2004) and the HRF of the ORM (Bolman & Deal, 2013) served as the conceptual framework to interpret the findings of this study.

#### **Summary of Findings and Interpretation**

This section will answer the research questions for this study by summarizing and interpreting the findings from Chapter Four. The first research question addresses the professional and personal challenges faced by NCAA interim directors of athletics as they transition through their temporary appointment. The second research question addresses the benefits experienced by participants in the study. This section will conclude by addressing the final research question that focuses on the institutional support needed to support an interim NCAA director of athletics during a time of leadership transition.

#### **Research Question #1: What Professional and Personal Challenges do NCAA Interim Directors of Athletics Experience as They Transition Through the Interim Appointment?**

The TTM experience (Bridges, 2004) was triggered for participants in this study when turnover occurred with their predecessors. Although the reasons for predecessor turnover varied, all were consistent with research found in higher education (Everley, 1994; Monks, 2012; Nehls,

2012; Song & Hartley, 2012). In some cases, predecessors accepted a new job at another institution, within the institution, or outside of the intercollegiate athletics industry altogether. In others cases, they planned to retire, got terminated, or unexpectedly resigned. Ultimately, all participants experienced some form of turnover change with their predecessor to place them in the interim director of athletics role.

All participants were internal appointments from within the athletics department for this study except Brenda, who was a campus appointment within the university but from a different department. Since turnover of predecessors occurred relatively quickly, ranging from immediately to about a month, institutions relied on internal employees as a temporary appointment to quickly and conveniently fill the gap in departmental leadership. Findings from this study were consistent with research (Draper & McMichael, 2002) suggesting the internal appointments often mean interim leaders maintain some of their prior roles. Thirteen out of 15 participants in this study were left with the responsibilities to fulfill the duties of two positions, including their prior role within the athletics department and their new role as an interim director of athletics.

Not only did serving in dual roles play a part in increased workloads, but the demands of the interim director of athletics role were greater for all participants. As Bob and Michelle noted, prior to serving in their interim role they only had to be responsible for a particular area within the athletics department. While serving as an interim director of athletics participants were exposed to a variety of new job tasks that they had to get adjusted to quickly, or at minimum, old job tasks on which they gained a different perspective. Although all participants expected a transition in becoming the decision maker and responsible for certain human resource matters for the department as interim director of athletics, most participants were challenged with managing

and/or understanding areas that they lacked experience in such as the budgeting, compliance, and development. Additionally, Daniel and Jason even talked about how increased exposure with the community and media was a challenging experience because of misinterpretations of the things the interim directors said. When participants became the interim director of athletics, they became responsible for all aspects of the athletics department and needed to adjust quickly to get an understanding of all areas of the department.

Being appointed as an interim leader also resulted in participants playing a bigger role in numerous meetings across campus, with more campus visibility. Participants such as Michelle talked about how their work days got longer, and included taking work home in order to manage more meetings and the increased workload. Furthermore, participants also increased their own workload because they wanted to do a good job while in the temporary leadership position. As Jason said, his workload grew as a result of trying to understand the job and be good at it. Although Daniel indicated he worked 75 to 90 hours a week prior to taking on the interim director of athletics role, even for him transitioning into the role of interim director of athletics increased his workload, because, like other participants, there was more to be responsible for.

This increased workload had a direct impact on participants in regards to their family relationships. Overall, participants felt supported by their family while serving as interim director of athletics. Jason had even sought approval from his wife prior to accepting the director of athletics role because he anticipated the impact that serving in the temporary role could have on his family. Whether or not they consulted with their families prior, for most study participants, balancing work and home was often described as difficult to do. Although there is no research speaking to the impact that interim leadership has on family dynamics, it is worth noting that participants were challenged with making sure they spent enough time committed to

their job while making sure they did not neglect the responsibilities that they also had with family, even if that meant participants had to incorporate family time while at work watching sporting events together.

Furthermore, as suggested by Browning and Boys (2015), in this study challenges often existed with the identity as an interim leader because the title suggested less than full authority. Serving as an interim director of athletics changed how participants were seen by and interacted with staff and coaches. Although participants had to get used to this transition of perception, sometimes they were challenged by others as a result of their interim title, while other times they might even have limited themselves. Where Bob spoke specifically about staff members not respecting their interim director of athletics position because they knew it was in a temporary capacity, Natalie described it as having a self-imposed sense of uncertainty by the coaches and having to constantly prove themselves in the interim role. Overall, participants realized that there was a change in how their role within the athletics department was perceived by those who they worked with on a day-to-day basis. As indicated by Browning and Boys (2015), serving as an interim director of athletics created an environment where individuals had to delicately balance relationships with colleagues that were once peers, while simultaneously desiring the respect that comes with the leader position.

Overall participants in this study expected an increase in workload. However, the challenges that came with the increased level of work were not realized until actually serving in the interim director of athletics role. Participants had to balance the duties of two jobs, adjust to additional work tasks, and attend more meetings all while trying to do a good job while serving as the interim director of athletics. The increased workload experienced by interim directors of athletics not only impacted them at work, but also affected the dynamics of family life as well.

Participants were challenged with balancing work and home with the increased responsibilities. Furthermore, the interim directors of athletics also had to carefully balance colleague relationships during an interim appointment because of changed perception of others, or even of self. Although participants managed to deal with the challenges that presented themselves during their interim director of athletics appointment, interim leadership appointments were nonetheless a stressful time during one's career journey.

**Research Question #2: What Professional and Personal Benefits do NCAA Interim Directors of Athletics Experience as They Transition Through the Interim Appointment?**

Serving as an interim director of athletics provided the opportunity for participants to gain experience in the top leadership position of an intercollegiate athletics department. Whether participants took the role of interim director of athletics as an opportunity to move ahead or obligation to serve, participants' responses were consistent with the findings of research performed by Ellis et al. (2005) and Everley (1994), who said that individuals serving in a temporary leadership role benefit from personal and professional growth. Participants gained exposure through their interim role to new job tasks or, at minimum, a new perspective to familiar job tasks, gained confidence in the position, and were provided exposure to campus leadership. Participants recognized the value of serving as an interim director of athletics and how the experience could benefit future career goals.

Although participants came from various professional upbringings within intercollegiate athletics, all experienced new job responsibilities and a new perspective to familiar job duties while serving as an interim director of athletics. Participants who lacked experience in budgeting, decision-making, development, human resources, compliance and/or community/media relations saw these areas as a challenge when having to manage and quickly understand things. However, participants ultimately felt that they benefited from their overall

interim experience because it provided them with additional job related skills that they may not otherwise get. As Adam and Chris described, serving as an interim director of athletics provided them with an opportunity to learn something new and do something different than what they were accustomed to. Consistent with research performed by Rud (2004), interim leadership expanded these participants' past staff work and provided them with experience in managing areas such as budgets and personnel issues.

The exposure to new job tasks and/or a new perspective to old job responsibilities built confidence within participants, which is consistent with research performed by Ellis et al. (2005) who found that individuals serving in an interim role gained experience and confidence. Bob, who did not initially have confidence in himself, only took the interim director of athletics position because his president felt he could do it. By the end of his temporary appointment, Bob realized that he was actually more prepared than what he had given himself credit for, and if presented with the opportunity to serve in such a leadership capacity again, he would. Ultimately, like Bob, once participants had a chance to reflect back on their overall experience, they realized that even though they were given new job tasks to learn relatively quickly while serving in the temporary role, they gained the confidence that they were able to handle the position of director of athletics, even if it was in an interim capacity.

Furthermore, serving as an interim director of athletics provided participants with increased exposure to campus leadership. As Roger described, serving as the interim director of athletics provided him with the opportunity to regularly attend meetings with senior leadership. Even though participants talked about the challenges related to having an increase in attendance at campus meetings, serving as an interim director of athletics provided participants with the opportunity to gain understanding from campus leadership about university initiatives. Not only



did Roger experience the benefit of sitting at the table and being involved with senior leadership about campus initiatives, but other participants, such as Daniel also expressed how interaction with campus leadership provided them with a more global university perspective and approach to every day matters. In this regarding, the study echoes findings by Everley (1994), who found that serving as an interim leader broadened one's knowledge and perspective of their institution and enhanced their ability to see the bigger picture.

The benefits of serving as interim director of athletics made the challenges experienced while serving in the temporary role tolerable for the limited time. Participants were able to gain new professional experience, and enhance their university perspective by getting exposed to campus leadership. While in the role participants felt the burdens of serving as interim director of athletics. However, once the temporary appointment was completed, participants self-reflected on the overall experience and focused on the benefits received while serving in a temporary leadership role.

### **Research Question #3: What Institutional Resources are Needed to Support Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics as They Transition Through the Interim Appointment?**

Access to campus leadership was presented as an extremely valuable institutional resource that helped support participants of this study while serving as an interim director of athletics. Just as Everley (1994) concluded that interim leadership allows an individual to work with a number of diverse constituencies in senior leadership positions, findings from this study confirmed that participants had access to their presidents/chancellors, vice presidents, other members of the president's cabinet, legal counsel, etc. that they did not have while serving in their prior role. Participants such as Adam valued access to the president and cabinet members, and expressed the value of this access by consistently communicating with and receive guidance from their senior leadership. Patty spoke about how she met at least once a week with her vice

president to make sure she was meeting expectations. Participants that were able to meet on a consistent basis with campus leadership said that it gave them a clear sense of what their expectations were while in the temporary leadership role. Conversely when, campus relationships were not as clearly defined, that sense of clarity and direction suffered. For example, although Don and Natalie felt they had support from campus leadership, it was much more hands off, on an as needed basis which can ultimately lead to a lack of direction for interim directors of athletics by campus leadership. When participants had access to senior leadership to discuss department happenings, they felt supported by the institution because they were continually provided with the guidance they needed to be successful as the interim director of athletics.

Another resource of institutional support, not talked about in prior research but brought up by participants in this study, was the ability to rely on staff members to step up and help out during times of leadership transition. Andre shared how he had to delegate more responsibilities to his staff while serving as an interim director of athletics to balance their increased workload. Patty also acknowledged that she would not have been able to serve as an interim director of athletics if she did not have the support of key staff members who helped out during her time in the temporary appointment. Ultimately, institutional support for the interim directors of athletics of this study came in the form of relationships with senior leadership on campus and with staff members within the department.

### **Conclusions**

The TTM (Bridges, 2004) and the HRF of the ORM (Bolman & Deal, 2013) composed the conceptual framework utilized to analyze findings of this study. The TTM was useful as a framework to explore the transition of NCAA interim directors of athletics because all

participants experienced a change that triggered them into transition as a temporary leader and through the three stages of the TTM: (a) the endings, (b) the neutral zone, and (c) the new beginning.

All participants experienced an ending as they transitioned from a prior role to becoming the interim director of athletics. They had to let go of an identity that they held in order to adjust to their new interim leadership role. Although most participants had to keep all or part of their old job while serving as an interim director of athletics, they had to transition from being in a supportive role to being in the lead role. Ultimately, participants had to deal with a transition in perception of self, by themselves and from others.

In order for participants to transition through an ending, they had to accept that change occurred, and that they needed to eventually adjust to their new role in order to move the department forward. In this stage of transition, the neutral zone, interim directors of athletics experienced an increase in workload because they were trying to figure things out. Participants were battling with letting go of the old ways of doing things (something hard to do to the extent they retained old duties and roles) while trying to adjust to the new ways of doing things. Participants experienced new job tasks, and even gained new perspectives to familiar job responsibilities while serving in the interim director of athletics position. As participants gained more experience in their roles as interim directors of athletics, and as they gained more guidance through increased exposure to campus leadership, they were able to make sense of their temporary role, eventually accepting a new identity as a leader in the temporary role for the department, and for themselves.

Furthermore, once participants accepted that change occurred and truly understood what their purpose was while in the interim director of athletics role, they embraced the experience of

change and transition while in the stage of new beginnings. At the end of the temporary appointment, the interim directors of athletics remarked that they had built the skills they needed to be successful in the future both personally and professionally. Whether the end result was obtaining the permanent position, leaving to another institution, or returning to their prior role, participants left with the confidence knowing that they were able to do the job of an intercollegiate director of athletics.

The HRF of the ORM provided an additional lens to analyze the findings in regards to the institutional support received by participants while serving as the interim director of athletics. Throughout the participants' experience as interim directors of athletics, institutional support came with the ability of being able to establish relationships with campus leadership, as well as the ability to rely more on department staff. Participants who had continual access to campus leadership and the unconditional help of department staff throughout their interim appointment, perceived to have the necessary institutional support in order to be successful while serving in the temporary role. Constant communication with campus leadership provided participants with continual guidance on how to run the athletics department during a time of temporary leadership transition. While supportive staff helped the interim director of athletics with easing the burden of balancing an increased workload.

### **Implications**

NCAA interim directors of athletics are triggered into transition once turnover occurs with their predecessor. As they go through the transition of an ending, a neutral zone, and a new beginning, interim directors of athletics experience a number of challenges and benefits while serving in the temporary leadership role. Although some challenges and benefits were

anticipated, others were not realized until actually serving in the role or after completion of the interim appointment.

Findings suggest that interim directors of athletics are challenged with the level of increased workload which ultimately impacts their transition while serving in the temporary role. Instead of being responsible for a certain area within the department, when the transition is made to the interim role, there is also a shift of responsibility of the entire department on the individual. Although they may have staff and coaches to handle the logistical day-to-day side of things, interim directors of athletics have to have a general understanding of everything that is going on within the department. Some of these areas may be new to the individual, while others may be tasks that were performed in their prior role. However, depending on the level of familiarity with the tasks involved depends on how big the learning curve will be. Additionally, as individuals get familiarized with new job tasks as the interim director of athletics, findings also suggest that increased workloads result from internally appointed interims because they still are responsible for some, if not all of the responsibilities of their prior role as well. Internally appointed interim directors of athletics may not completely transition to what the typical role of what the director of athletics position would be. They may keep all, or a portion of, what they had and pick up additional duties as well.

Findings also suggest that interim directors of athletics heavily rely on staff during times of leadership change. Staff can play a key role in the successful transition of interim directors of athletics. Although interim directors of athletics experience an increase in workload, it is nearly impossible for them to do everything by themselves. Interim directors of athletics have to delegate responsibilities to staff members in order to maintain daily functions within the athletics department. While support from staff can be a key dynamic for interim directors of athletics,

staff can also challenge those in the interim role and not grant them full authority. This finding suggests that, even though interim directors of athletics experience transition during times of temporary leadership, it is important to attend to the transition that staff experience during this time as well.

Furthermore, interim directors of athletics have to struggle through deciding what is appropriate, and not appropriate for them to do while serving in the temporary role. Findings suggest that the title interim director of athletics indicates a title with less than full authority. When clear expectations are given to interim directors of athletics by campus leadership, it provides them with the guidance they need to get the job done. However, when expectations from campus leadership are not as clear, it leaves a level of uncertainty that causes delay, or paralysis, on how to proceed forward for the interim director of athletics, hindering long-term planning for the department.

Although interim directors of athletics face a number of challenges, findings also suggest a number of benefits to individuals who serve as interim directors of athletics. Firstly, interim directors of athletics get to gain experience in a position that they may not otherwise obtain. Secondly, can provide them with exposure to other senior leaders on campus resulting in an enhanced university perspective to department and campus initiatives. Lastly, serving as an interim director of athletics can give an individual the confidence that they can do the job in a temporary and/or permanent capacity. Serving as an interim director of athletics can be an invaluable experience that results in personal and professional growth for all who have the opportunity to serve in the temporary leadership role.

## **Recommendations**

This study explored the experiences of interim NCAA directors of athletics. The findings answered the research questions regarding the challenges, benefits, and institutional support experienced by participants as they transitioned through their temporary leadership appointments. Through the interpretation of these key findings recommendations for policy, practice, and research are suggested so that individuals and institutions can know what to expect from internally appointed interim NCAA directors of athletics appointments and ways the temporary role can be supported.

### **Recommendations for Policy**

Turnover in senior leadership occurs in higher education (Basinger, 2001; McLaughlin & Riesman, 1990). Although turnover is expected, research has concluded that higher education institutions do not plan for the transition of leadership caused by turnover (Klein & Salk, 2013). Since traditional succession planning as presented in the business sector is not ideal for higher education environments (Barden, 2010; Everley, 1994), interim leadership has become a growing trend within higher education during times of leadership transition (Browning & Boys, 2015).

Creating policies to support interim directors of athletics is unrealistic due to the uniqueness of each turnover circumstance. Since turnover can happen during unexpected times, decisions surrounding interim leadership appointments are subjective. Each situation varies, and who will serve as the interim leader, how long the appointment will be, and when a search will be performed, will be different every time and cannot be generalized by policy.

However, since appointments of interim directors of athletics are not uncommon at NCAA member institutions, guidelines from the NCAA should be created in order to encourage institutions to be more proactive and supportive of individuals who serve in the temporary

leadership role. Guidelines of best practices should include communication strategies with senior leadership prior to, throughout, and at the conclusion of the appointment to clearly determine expectations, roles, and goals for the individual. Further guidelines should also consider temporary reorganization of prior duties, especially when an internal employee is appointed, in order to manage the level of increased workload, maximize the ability of the individual to perform the interim role, and minimize burnout. NCAA guidelines of best practices can give institutions and individuals a go-to-guide of things to consider to efficiently and effectively handle temporary leadership roles.

Although the NCAA does not have the control to govern how institutions manage the appointment of an interim director of athletics, the guidelines created by the NCAA can assist institutions in creating guidelines that support the temporary leadership position. Institutions should create guidelines that fosters continual communication with senior leadership to ensure that the interim director of athletics has the direction and support needed to succeed. In addition, institutional guidelines should be created to ensure that interim directors of athletics are not asked to do two jobs at the same time.

Since developing guidelines would serve as a model of best-practices for how institutions support interim directors of athletics, the development of institutional policies to ensure retreat rights to a prior position can be considered. Typically, interim directors of athletics serve in senior level positions within the department that are at will and are not protected by bargaining unit agreements. Higher education policies could be created for internal interim directors of athletics that guarantee return to their previous position, but this is already assumed because of the temporary nature of interim leadership. However, since interim leaders can either be



appointed internally or externally, such policies would not be applicable if an institution decides to appoint an external interim director of athletics.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The research on interim leadership has concluded that many interim appointments are quickly decided upon, with little regards to long-term issues (Gilmore, 1988). Therefore, interim directors of athletics should have consistent communication with a supervisor who provides the support and guidance needed to be successful while serving in the temporary role. Since there can be a lot of uncertainty surrounding the role of an interim director of athletics, having standing weekly, or bi-weekly, meetings with their immediate supervisor can help set expectations of the temporary position. Not only should expectations be clear going into the role, but having consistent communication with campus leadership will provide clear guidance to the individual, as well as the organization, in understanding what the goals are of the interim leadership appointment.

Additionally, the interim position is an opportunity for professional growth and institutions should treat it as such. Therefore, institutions should provide development and learning opportunities for interim directors of athletics. While participants in this study did not remark on getting evaluated formally, institutions may wish to consider doing so as a way to promote learning and growth. Even though serving as an interim director of athletics is a temporary appointment, it is still a leadership position that supports the overall mission of an institution. Therefore, performance evaluations will provide an assessment opportunity for the interim director of athletics. Another recommendation for development opportunities is that institutions should provide mentoring opportunities for interim directors of athletics, especially if appointed internally. When individuals begin to supervise colleagues that were once peers, there

is a change in perception of self in the role by the individual and of others. If there are senior leadership mentors in place to assist and develop the interim director of athletics, a support system will aid the individual and institution through the transition process.

Furthermore, since internally appointed interim directors of athletics typically serve in dual roles, a gap is created in completing other organizational tasks originally done by the new interim leader (Draper & McMichael, 2002). For institutions to avoid gaps in organizational tasks, and/or burnout of multiple employees because of increased workloads during times of leadership transition, a temporary hire from an agency can help support the department in lower level, easy to learn, basic day-to-day functions. When an internal interim director of athletics is appointed, it does not only impact that individual, but it also impacts staff members in the department because there is an expectation for others to also step up and help during times of leadership transition to cover whatever gaps there are in organizational tasks. Therefore, not only does an internal interim director of athletics transition to a higher role within the department hierarchy, staff also can experience opportunity for learning and growth during times of temporary leadership. As staff members receive more responsibilities to help the interim director of athletics, some of their lower level duties go undone as well. Temp agencies can provide immediate support at a reasonable cost for an anticipated temporary amount of time with minimal to no strings attached. Having an extra person around to help with day-to-day office functions can help support the interim director of athletics in their role, as well as the staff that support the interim director of athletics during this time of transition.

Lastly, institutions should take a more proactive role in helping staff deal with the transition of an interim director of athletics as well. Campus leadership should also clearly communicate to staff about the role of the interim director of athletics. Clear communication

from senior leadership can help staff make sense of the change, as well as be accepting to the level of authority that comes with being the interim director of athletics.

### **Recommendations for Research**

In general, interim leadership has received little attention from scholars, even though it has been prevalent in the practitioner community since the 1980s (Bruns & Kabst, 2005; Browning & Boys, 2015; Browning & McNamee, 2012; Everley, 1994; Goss & Bridson, 1998). Since the concept of interim leadership was developed in the business sector (Alewell et al., 2005; Bruns & Kabst, 2005; Goss & Bridson, 1988), there is a decent amount of literature available on this topic within corporate settings. However, the topic of interim leadership in higher education will benefit from further quantitative and qualitative studies from researchers. Quantitative studies can examine the impact of turnover rates, the number of interim leadership appointments, length of temporary appointments, and hiring results of the permanent position. This information will be important to practitioners in indicating trends when utilizing interim leadership through times of transition.

Furthermore, higher education will also benefit from additional qualitative studies around interim leadership. Qualitative studies on the topic of interim leadership can further explore the experiences of interim leaders. Studies that get the perspective of staff members who serve under interim leaders can provide another viewpoint to the experience, since staff are impacted by interim leadership. In addition, studies that examine the decision process by campus leadership to appoint an interim director of athletics (or any senior interim position), and the outcome of that decision (e.g., whether there is competition for the position internally, how the decision-making process affects both the person selected and others at the institution), can also provide another viewpoint to better understand how interim leadership effects institutional

progress. This information will be important to institutions and to the individual serving in, or considering an interim leadership position, to better understand the impact of temporary leadership to the organization, and to the individual.

Furthermore, research could also focus on the influence that serving as an interim director of athletics has on family dynamics from both a male and female perspective. Balancing home life with work life was consistently a challenge for interim directors of athletics regardless of gender. However, there is no current research on the strains that families endure while individuals serve in an interim leadership capacity.

Although this study did not focus on gender or race, additional research specifically addressing the experiences of interim director of athletics would benefit from differentiating the experiences of men versus women and of minorities serving in the temporary role. Since intercollegiate athletics is a male-dominated field, research would benefit in gaining a better understanding in how women navigate through such a male heavy environment, especially in a temporary leadership capacity, where one's credibility is likely to be further questioned by staff. Additionally, research would also benefit from exploring the experiences of minority interim directors of athletics. Since minorities are generally underrepresented in leadership positions in intercollegiate athletics, understanding the minority perspective can help institutions promote an inclusive environment.

Lastly, research would also benefit from getting the perspective of externally appointed interim directors of athletics. The voices of externally appointed interim directors of athletics were not heard in this study and can provide a different perspective to institutions when weighing the pros and cons of appointing an internal or external interim director of athletics.

## **Conclusion**

Interim directors of athletics have the unique opportunity to serve in a leadership role that they may not otherwise obtain. Even though interim directors of athletics experience a number of benefits while serving in the temporary role, there are also a number of challenges that occur as well. Benefits include the ability to gain invaluable professional experience, gain exposure to campus leadership, and develop a sense of confidence that they are able to provide guidance during a time of leadership transition. Challenges include adjusting to a rapid increase in workload, struggling with balancing work and home life, and dealing with the perception of the interim title emphasizing less than full authority. Although the interim directors of athletics in this study were able to manage through these challenges, the perceived level of institutional support received impacted the overall experience as well. When interim directors of athletics have consistent access to campus leadership, and/or have the ability to delegate additional responsibilities to staff, there is a perceived sense of support that helps the interim director of athletics successfully transition as a temporary leader.

Although interim leadership occurs often, it is surprising that little is known about the unique experiences of and approaches to temporary leadership appointments (Browning & McNamee, 2012), especially within higher education. This research, and future research performed on the topic of interim directors of athletics is a worthwhile conversation to have in order to better understand the benefits, challenges, and institutional support needed to be successful in the temporary appointment. Since serving as an interim director of athletics provides a strategic opportunity for institutions and individuals, having a thorough understanding of the concept will help benefit both during the transitional time.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**INITIAL AND FOLLOW-UP CONTACT EMAIL**

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Jamie Bouyer and I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at California State University, Long Beach. I am doing my dissertation work on the experiences of interim NCAA intercollegiate directors of athletics and would like to invite you to participate in my research regarding your recent experience as an interim leader. This study is both personally and professionally important to me because I am employed as an associate director of athletics at a NCAA Division II institution, and have also recently served as an interim director of athletics.

If you participate in this study it will involve an interview lasting about 1 to 1.5 hour(s) via telephone, or Skype video calling, where I will ask you a series of questions about the benefits, challenges, and institutional support you experienced as an interim director of athletics. You will also complete a brief demographic survey (about 5 minutes long) and have the opportunity to review a transcript of your interview.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to participate in my study. If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at [jamie.bouyer@student.csulb.edu](mailto:jamie.bouyer@student.csulb.edu).

I appreciate your assistance in advance and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

### **Follow-Up Contact Email**

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Jamie Bouyer and I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at California State University, Long Beach. I recently contacted you to see if you would participate in my research regarding the experiences of interim NCAA intercollegiate directors of athletics. A copy of the original email is below for your reference.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to participate in my study. If you are interested in participating or have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at [jamie.bouyer@student.csulb.edu](mailto:jamie.bouyer@student.csulb.edu).

I appreciate your assistance in advance and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,



**APPENDIX B**  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

## **Temporary Leadership in College Athletics: The Experiences of Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As a doctoral student from California State University, Long Beach, I am inviting you to participate in a Doctoral Project on *Temporary Leadership in College Athletics: The Experiences of Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics*. Your involvement will be of great value.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support structures experienced while serving as an interim NCAA intercollegiate director of athletics.

### **Procedures**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will do the following things:

- Participate in one (1) in-depth one-on-one interview lasting approximately 1 to 1.5 hour(s) in length. The objective of this interview will be to explore the perceived benefits, challenges, and institutional support provided during your interim appointment. The interview will be conducted via telephone, or Skype video calling, on a mutually agreeable date and time.
- The interview will be audio recorded only with the permission from you by written consent and verbally at the start of the interview. A professional transcriptionist will transcribe narrative responses verbatim after signing the Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement.
- I will take personal/handwritten notes whether or not you agree to be audio recorded.
- You will be provided with a copy of the transcript for your review to make sure that what was said in the interview was captured correctly. You will be provided two weeks to correct factual errors and make note of things that may put you at risk. If any edits need to be made, I will make the edits and provide you with an updated copy to make sure the edits were accurately recorded.
- You may be asked to read a draft of my findings chapter to review my broader findings and to provide feedback on the accuracy of my conclusions.

### **Potential Risk and Discomfort**

While no research is entirely risk-free, this study poses minimal risk to you. The most likely risk is that the interview could lead you to experience some level of emotional discomfort due to recalling frustrating memories about difficult challenges and obstacles. Furthermore, sensitive comments can be linked to you and it could possibly lead to embarrassment or strain personal and/or professional relationships.

However, I address these concerns in several ways. First, although interviews will be conducted remotely, I will directly contact participants while I am in a quiet and private area. However, you are free not to respond to any question in the study if it makes you feel uncomfortable. Secondly, all data collected will be stored in a locked safe and/or a password protected computer at my private residence. Thirdly, all interviews will be transcribed and you will have the

opportunity to review accuracy and flag any items that you feel may put you at risk. Fourthly, pseudonyms will be assigned to you at the start of the process and used throughout. Lastly, I also encourage you to communicate with me via your personal email rather than your work email account.

### **Potential Benefits to Subjects and/or Society**

You will benefit from the opportunity to explore and reflect on your experience as an interim NCAA intercollegiate director of athletics. This process can provide you with the opportunity to discuss the benefits, challenges, and support structure provided during your interim appointment. As a formerly appointed interim intercollegiate director of athletics at an NCAA institution, I expect the interviews to be more of a conversation where I may provide some level of validation of your experiences and perceptions.

Further, I may share findings with you as they are analyzed, presented, and/or published. I anticipate that linking findings to the literature will further validate both the challenges and benefits that individuals in interim appointments often experience.

In addition, you will be able to help expose the unique benefits and challenges to serving as an interim intercollegiate director of athletics at an NCAA institution. Educational leaders can utilize this information to better support those in interim appointments, and help individuals and institutions understand what to expect from temporary leadership.

Finally, as findings are presented and/or published, research findings will add to the literature on the experiences of interim leaders within higher education, specifically to the population of intercollegiate athletic administrators. Findings will expand on the current understanding of benefits and challenges of temporary leadership appointments and what institutional support structures need to be in place to make interim leadership appointments successful for the individual and the institution. In addition, findings will inform policy, practice, and future research of interim leadership within higher education.

### **Payment for Participation**

In exchange for your time, I will compensate you with a \$10 Starbucks gift card. You will receive the \$10 Starbucks gift card via mail at the completion of our interview. You may skip questions or withdraw from interviewing at any time without penalty and still receive the \$10 Starbucks gift card.

### **Confidentiality**

I will maintain the confidentiality of all data. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. I am addressing confidentiality in several ways:

- To ensure confidentiality, a pseudonym will be assigned to you at the beginning of the study. I ask that you use your pseudonym in all interviews. I encourage you to use a personal email rather than your school/work email account for correspondence.
- I will be the only one with access to both electronic and hard copy data. A professional transcriptionist will have access to interview digital data after signing a Transcriptionist

Confidentiality Agreement. The transcriptionist will know participants only by pseudonyms. I will share some of the pseudonym identified transcript data with my dissertation chair.

- All interview data and related materials will use your pseudonym and will be kept completely confidential and secured.
- All consent forms, raw data, and all related materials will be stored in a locked safe at my private residence to maintain confidentiality.
- All electronic data will be kept in a single password protected computer.
- All consent forms and raw data will be retained for a period of 3 years following the completion to the research. After 3 years, I will destroy all data.

### **Participation and Withdrawal**

You can choose whether to be in the study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and will remain in the study. I may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which in my opinion warrant doing so.

### **Identification of Investigators**

If you have any questions or concern about the research, please feel free to contact:

- Principal Investigator  
Jamie Bouyer  
(216) 470-2245 (cell)  
jamie.bouyer@student.csulb.edu
- Dissertation Chair:  
Don Haviland  
(562) 985-7157 (work)  
don.haviland@csulb.edu

### **Rights of Research Subject**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office of University Research, CSU Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840  
Telephone: (562) 985-5314 or email to [ORSP-Compliance@csulb.edu](mailto:ORSP-Compliance@csulb.edu).

**Signature of Research Subject**

I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of the form.

Name of Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Research Subject for Audio Recording**

I agree to have the interview audio-recorded (optional)

Signature of Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement and Signature of Investigator**

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**Temporary Leadership in College Athletics: The Experiences  
of Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics**

1. What is your gender?  
 Male  
 Female  
 Other  
 Decline to state
  
2. What is your age?  
 Under 20  
 21-29  
 30-39  
 40-49  
 50-59  
 60-69  
 70 and over  
 Decline to state
  
3. Race  
 American Indian/Alaska Native  
 Asian  
 Black/African American  
 Hispanic/Latino  
 Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander  
 White  
 Other race  
 Two or more races  
 Decline to state
  
4. How long have you served as an intercollegiate athletics administrator?
  
5. What was the NCAA division of the institution that you served as an interim director of athletics?  
 Division I  
 Division II  
 Division III
  
6. What best describes the nature of your interim appointment?  
 Internal (came from within the department)  
 Campus (came from outside of the department but within the institution)  
 External (came from outside the institution)
  
7. What was your working title of the position held prior to serving as the interim director of athletics?

8. How long did you serve as the interim director of athletics?
9. Was your prior position temporarily filled while you served as the interim director of athletics?
- Yes (go to Question 11)
  - No (go to Question 10)
10. If no to #9
- A. Were you expected to perform the job duties of both your previous role and the interim director of athletics role?
- Yes
  - No
  - Other
11. Did you have the opportunity (were you allowed) to apply for the permanent director of athletics position?
- Yes
  - No
12. What best describes what happened after your interim appointment?
- Applied for and got the permanent position
  - Returned to previous position
  - Left institution
  - Other
13. Was this your first appointment as an interim director of athletics?
- Yes
  - No



**APPENDIX D**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Temporary Leadership in College Athletics: The Experiences  
of Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics**

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent (Title, Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Research Question:**

1. What professional and personal challenges do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
2. What professional and personal benefits do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
3. What institutional resources are needed to support interim NCAA directors of athletics as they transition through the interim appointment?

**What I Want To Find Out:**

- What are the benefits and challenges experienced by NCAA interim directors of athletics?
- What are the institutional support needs of those serving as a NCAA director of athletics?

## Interview Questions

### Warm Up Questions:

1. Can you please briefly describe your career path as an athletics administrator?

#### *Follow-up Question(s):*

1. How did you get into the field?
  2. How did you advance?
  3. What was your role in the athletics department prior to taking on the interim director of athletics position?
2. How did you come to be the interim director of athletics?

#### *Follow-up Question(s):*

1. What occurred with the prior director of athletics that resulted in you being appointed as the interim director of athletics?
2. Why do you think you were asked to become the interim director of athletics?
3. Why did you accept the opportunity to be an interim director of athletics?
4. What did you anticipate the responsibilities involved to be?
5. How long did you have when considering accepting the interim role?
6. Who did you report to as the interim director of athletics?

### **Bridges (2004) Transition Theory Model Stage 1: Endings**

3. From your perspective, what do you believe the expectation was of you as an interim director of athletics for your department/institution? (i.e. status quo, change agent, fixer)

#### *Follow-up Question(s):*

1. Were these expectations clearly communicated by campus leaders? Why/why not?
2. How did your expectations of yourself (or of the role) as an interim director of athletics effect your decision making capabilities?

3. What professional goals did you hope to accomplish while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personal?
4. What was your anticipated outcome from serving as an interim director of athletics?
4. How prepared were you professionally to take on the role as an interim director of athletics?

***Follow-up Question(s):***

1. What areas did you feel underprepared in when you took on the role of being an interim director of athletics? Well-prepared? (i.e. leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities)

**Bridges (2004) Transition Theory Model Stage 2: Neutral Zone**

5. Did your expectation as an interim director of athletics for your department/institution change throughout your appointment? Why/why not?
6. What challenges did you face while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?

***Follow-up Question(s):***

1. Did you ever find yourself in a place of not knowing what to do? Please explain. (i.e. leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities)

***Follow-up Question(s):***

- i. How did this make you feel?
2. How did your workload change when you became the interim director of athletics? (i.e. quantity, quality/value)

***Follow-up Question(s):***

- i. What type of decisions did you have to make as an interim director of athletics that you did not have to in your previous role?
  - ii. What were the nature of the problems that you were being asked to solve as an interim director of athletics?
  - iii. How did your new workload make you feel?
3. How did you overcome/adjust to these challenges?
  4. What did you learn about yourself when dealing/overcoming these challenges?  
Personally? Professionally?

**Bridges (2004) Transition Theory Model Stage 3: New Beginnings**

7. Did your anticipated outcome change throughout your time as an interim director of athletics? Please explain.
8. What advantages/benefits did you experience while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?

***Follow-up Question(s):***

1. How do you think the nature of your appointment (internal, external, campus) effected your experience?
2. How has serving as an interim director of athletics impacted your career?
3. Are there other ways that you grew while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?

**Bolman and Deal (2013) Organizational Restructuring Model: Human Resource Frame**

9. What type of support did you receive from your institution when appointed as an interim director of athletics?

***Follow-up Question(s):***

1. What type of support from your institution do you wish you had that was not offered while serving as an interim director of athletics?
2. How would your experience as an interim leader be different if you would have had that institutional support?

**Wrap Up Questions**

10. What do you wish you would have known before accepting the interim director of athletics position?
11. What were you most proud of accomplishing while serving as an interim director of athletics?
12. What advice do you have for someone who has an opportunity to serve in an interim leadership role?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add about your overall experience of being an interim director of athletics?
14. Do you know of any other athletic administrators who have recently served as an interim director of athletics that meet this study's criteria?

**APPENDIX E**  
**QUALITATIVE ITEM RATIONALE FORM**

**Primary Research Question:**

1. What professional and personal challenges do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
2. What professional and personal benefits do NCAA interim directors of athletics experience as they transition through the interim appointment?
3. What institutional resources are needed to support interim NCAA directors of athletics as they transition through the interim appointment?

**Qualitative Item Rationale Table**

<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Literature Reference</b> (theoretical, conceptual and/or empirical)
Can you please briefly describe your career path as an athletics administrator?	Rapport Building	
How did you get into the field?	Rapport Building	
How did you advance?	Rapport Building	
What was your role in the athletics department prior to taking on the interim director of athletics position?	Rapport Building	
How did you come to be the interim director of athletics?	Rapport Building	Bridges (2004)
What occurred with the prior director of athletics that resulted in you being appointed as the interim director of athletics?	Rapport Building, 1, 2	Bridges (2004) Everley (1994) Monks (2012)
Why do you think you were asked to become the interim director of athletics?	Rapport Building, 1	
Why did you accept the opportunity to be an interim director of athletics?	Rapport Building, 2	
What did you anticipate the responsibilities involved to be?	Rapport Building, 1, 2	
How long did you have when considering accepting the interim role?	Rapport Building, 1	
Who did you report to as the interim director of athletics?	Rapport Building	
From your perspective, what do you believe the expectation was of you as an interim director of athletics for your	1, 2	Bridges (2004) Everley (1994) Browning & McNamee (2012)



department/institution? (i.e. status quo, change agent, fixer)		
Were these expectations clearly communicated by campus leaders? Why/why not?	1, 3	Bridges (2004) Bolman & Deal (2013)
How did your expectations of yourself (or of the role) as an interim director of athletics effect your decision making capabilities?	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
What professional goals did you hope to accomplish while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personal?	2	Bridges (2004)
What was your anticipated outcome from serving as an interim director of athletics?	2	Bridges (2004)
How prepared were you professionally to take on the role as an interim director of athletics?	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
What areas did you feel underprepared in when you took on the role of being an interim director of athletics? Well-prepared? (i.e. leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities)	1, 2	Bridges (2004) Baghurst, Murray, Jayne, & Carter (2014) Schneider & Stier (2005) Schroeder & Brasfield (2015)
Did your expectation as an interim director of athletics for your department/institution change throughout your appointment? Why/why not?	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
What challenges did you face while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?	1	Bridges (2004) Browning & Boys (2015) Browning & McNamee (2012)
Did you ever find yourself in a place of not knowing what to do? Please explain. (i.e. leadership, financial management, human resource, academic success, and institutional responsibilities)	1	Bridges (2004) Baghurst, Murray, Jayne, & Carter (2014) Schneider & Stier (2005) Schroeder & Brasfield (2015)
How did this make you feel?	1	Bridges (2004)
How did your workload change	1	Bridges (2004)

when you became the interim director of athletics?		
What type of decisions did you have to make as an interim director of athletics that you did not have to in your previous role?	1	Bridges (2004)
What were the nature of the problems that you were being asked to solve as an interim director of athletics?	1	Bridges (2004)
How did your new workload make you feel?	1	Bridges (2004)
How did you overcome/adjust to these challenges?	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
What did you learn about yourself when dealing/overcoming these challenges? Personally? Professionally?	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
Did your anticipated outcome change throughout your time as an interim director of athletics? Please explain.	1, 2	Bridges (2004)
What advantages/benefits did you experience while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?	2	Bridges (2004) Browning & Boys (2015) Ellis, Martin, & Wagner (2005) Everley (1994) Rud (2004)
How do you think the nature of your appointment (internal, external, campus) effected your experience?	2	Bridges (2004) Browning & Boys (2015) Browning & McNamee (2012) Everley (1994)
How has serving as an interim director of athletics impacted your career?	2	Bridges (2004)
Are there other ways that you grew while serving as an interim director of athletics? Personally? Professionally?	2	Bridges (2004) Browning & Boys (2015) Ellis, Martin, & Wagner (2005) Everley (1994) Rud (2004)
What type of support did you receive from your institution when appointed as an interim director of athletics?	3	Bolman & Deal (2013)

What type of support from your institution do you wish you had that was not offered while serving as an interim director of athletics?	3	Bolman & Deal (2013)
How would your experience as an interim leader be different if you would have had that institutional support?	3	Bolman & Deal (2013)
What do you wish you would have known before accepting the interim director of athletics position?	Wrap Up, 1	
What were you most proud of accomplishing while serving as an interim director of athletics?	Wrap Up, 2	
What advice do you have for someone who has an opportunity to serve in an interim leadership role?	Wrap Up, 1, 2, 3	
Is there anything else you would like to add about your overall experience of being an interim director of athletics?	Wrap Up	
Do you know of any other athletic administrators who have recently served as an interim director of athletics that meet this study's criteria?	Wrap Up	

**APPENDIX F**  
**TRANSCRIPTIONIST CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (transcriptionist), agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentations received from Jamie Bouyer related to her research study titled *Temporary Leadership in College Athletics: The Experiences of Interim NCAA Directors of Athletics*. Further, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents.
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized titles of the transcribed interviews texts, unless specifically requested to do so by the researcher, Jamie Bouyer
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession.
4. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back-up devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally responsible for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX G**  
**CODEBOOK**

<b>Attribute Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	
<b>Male</b>	Indicated as male on demographic survey	
<b>Female</b>	Indicated as female on demographic survey	
<b>Division I</b>	Indicated as Division I on demographic survey	
<b>Division II</b>	Indicated as Division II on demographic survey	
<b>Division III</b>	Indicated as Division III on demographic survey	
<b>6-10</b>	Indicated 6-10 years as an athletics administrator on demographic survey	
<b>11-15</b>	Indicated 11-15 years as an athletics administrator on demographic survey	
<b>16-20</b>	Indicated as 16-20 years as an athletics administrator on demographic survey	
<b>21-25</b>	Indicated as 21-25 years as an athletics administrator on demographic survey	
<b>26-30</b>	Indicated as 26-30 years as an athletics administrator on demographic survey	
<b>Applied</b>	Indicated applied and got job on demographic survey	
<b>Returned</b>	Indicated returned to previous role on demographic survey	
<b>Left</b>	Indicated left institution on demographic survey	
<b>Other</b>	Indicated “other” happened on demographic survey	
<b>AD Before</b>	Has served as a director of athletics before	
<b>AD Never</b>	Has never served as a director of athletics before	
<b>Operational Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Benefits</b>	Benefits experienced from serving as interim	“A benefit. I would say exposure. Like I said I’m pretty outgoing anyhow. I probably knew a bunch of these people beforehand, but for them to be able to

		see me in a different light, really helped to elevate me professionally.”
<b>Challenges</b>	Challenges experienced from serving as interim director	“I think the biggest challenge was handling personnel issues that were budget driven. It is one thing to fire a coach based upon their performance as a coach, but it's another thing to try to set things up where at the end of a fiscal year you have to let go two, three, four people purely because of budget.”
<b>Impact Of</b>	How the role of being interim impacts someone/something (others)	“I knew in my gut that there was a financial decision that I had to make that would potentially adversely impact a unit within my department while serving as the interim director of athletics. However, it was ultimately going to make us better from a department financial standpoint and morale boosting standpoint at the time.”
<b>Impact On</b>	How the role of being interim impacts the individual serving as interim (self)	“I was able to position myself to be a viable candidate in the future as a director of athletics or another senior level position at another institution by serving as the interim director of athletics.”
<b>New Experience</b>	Gained new experience in the duties	“While serving as the interim director of athletics obviously it's a new experience career wise.”
<b>Prior Experience</b>	Already had experience in the duties	“My first professional job was as a Director of Compliance. So, I still had oversight of compliance as assistant director of athletics and oversight of some sports.”
<b>External Expectations</b>	What others expected of person in interim role to be/do	“I was told in my initial meeting with the president when he offered me the job that he didn't want someone to just babysit, that there were things that needed to get done, and he wanted some continued movement.”
<b>Personal Expectations</b>	What individual in interim role expected their role to be/do	“I don't want to be seen as a placeholder, a guy to hold this in neutral. Instead of considering myself as interim director of athletics I'd like to go at this like I am the director of athletics for an interim period of time.”
<b>Changed Perception</b>	Whatever the view initially	“I did have a little a moment that I was



	that has changed over time	getting used to serving as the interim director of athletics and thought that I needed to go for the permanent position.”
<b>Functional Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<i>Expectation/Purpose of Serving as Interim: Reasons for serving as an interim</i>		
<b>Desired Outcome</b>	What did individual serving as interim hope to get out of serving as interim (i.e. Purpose for taking the position; Why did the individual take the job as interim; End goal for serving as interim)	“I served as an interim director of athletics to better position myself to be a viable candidate in the future as a director of athletics or another senior level position at another institution.”
<i>Expected Institutional Role: What was expected in terms of the role the individual serving as interim was to play for the institution</i>		
<b>Change Agent</b>	Correct problems (i.e. fire old personnel, clean up budget issues, etc.) and/or improve the athletics programs in specific ways	“My role was I need to get it cleaned up and fixed well enough that when we brought in a new director of athletics they wouldn’t have to deal with the ‘BS’ that we were dealing with.”
<b>Status Quo</b>	Maintain the day to day	“My role was to just keep things moving. Keep sure that the day-to-day operations are being met, and that we’re still moving ahead.”
<i>Institutional Support: Institutional support received, or lack thereof, while serving as interim</i>		
<b>Given Institutional Support</b>	Institutional support received while as interim	“The president’s cabinet was great. They checked in on me and I reported to them. They let me know I had direct access to whoever I need to in order to accomplish the things I wanted to accomplish. The support was given to me from the beginning.”
<b>Institutional Support Desired</b>	Institutional support perceived as being needed (but not received) by individual to succeed while interim	“If I could go back, I would have liked the vice president to be a little more clear on expectations and where he was comfortable with me moving the ball forward on some things and where he was less comfortable with me doing that.”
<i>Job Duties: Job responsibilities</i>		
<b>Budget</b>	Money management/decisions	“When you’re starting to look at the overall department’s budget and where those funds come from, and how your revenue is generated, and where does that go, and what is your plan. I mean

		it's a science so that was a big learning curve as interim director of athletics.”
<b>Community/Media Relations</b>	Interaction with community and media	“I had to serve in a bigger role in the community in terms of speaking functions, being around, meeting people, representing the department.”
<b>Compliance</b>	Learning about it, Monitoring it, Staying ahead of it	“Well, it gave me more experience. It gave me broader experience. You know, it made me pay attention to things that I hadn’t really paid attention to before, such as...the inner workings of our internal operations like...compliance.”
<b>Decision Maker</b>	Make final decisions in the best interest of department	“When you look around the room for someone to make a decision for you, you realize you’re the only one in the room to make that decision when you serve as the interim director of athletics.”
<b>External Relations</b>	Development and alumni relations	“Well, first thing as interim director of athletics was I wanted to make sure that we had some sort of connection with alumni to bring them back in the fold.”
<b>Human Resource</b>	Hiring/Firing/Supervision/Evaluation of staff and coaches	“I had to fire someone. I had to fire a coach. That was a different experience.”
<b><i>Relationships: Impact on/of relationships</i></b>		
<b>Campus Relationships</b>	Relationships with on-campus administrators (i.e. President/VP/other colleagues)	“I met weekly with the president. Typically, he was only meeting once a month with the prior director of athletics to me but I said, ‘Hey, if you want me to do this right I need to be in here constantly.’ We had a standing weekly meeting. However we probably spoke every single day and we probably were in a meeting together at least every other day in addition to our standing meetings.”
<b>Coach Relationships</b>	Relationships with athletic coaches	“I think that the relationship with our high profile coaches changed some, but I had already established a pretty good working relationship with them. What I found was I had to develop maybe a stronger relationship with some of the other coaches. I needed to get with them more, just make sure that they

		understood that I was there to support them even though maybe I had not been in that position before.”
<b>Family Relationships</b>	Relationships with family (sacrifice/support)	“I had to balance the time between family and work. Just making sure that I was able to still commit the proper amount of time both in the office and with the family.”
<b>Other Relationships</b>	Relationships with external constituents (i.e. Mentors/Other ADs/Alumni/Donors)	“You know you hear about these big names. You begin to serve on this committee. Make connections with these alumni and a variety of different groups that are in your community.”
<b>Staff Relationships</b>	Relationships with athletic staff members	“You have to really rely on your staff, because there’s no way you can singularly do it.”
<b>Additional Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Compensation</b>	Extra money received for extra duties	“From a personal standpoint, I received compensation. I received an interim raise that went along with my interim title.”
<b>Dual Responsibilities</b>	Balance job duties for two positions as interim	“I was expected to serve in my previous capacity as well when serving as the interim.”
<b>Increased Workload</b>	Quantity/Quality of additional work	“My workload definitely increased because the involvement that you have in every area of the department.”
<b>Opportunity</b>	Ability to experience something new/better	“Serving as an interim director of athletics provides opportunity for qualified individuals that need experience the opportunity to serve in a position that is hard to compete for and get”
<b>Uncertainty</b>	Operating in an unknown state	“There is a feeling of uncertainty that every decision that you make could not get you the position, but could dang sure cost you the position.”
<b>Conceptual Framework Codes</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Transition</b>	What people internally go through when change occurs	“I brought my staff in because they knew that there was going to be a transition so we started getting to work together. I wanted to build that bond so we could have an easy transition. So we could move forward. Even though we were losing our leader at the time,

		we were gaining a lot more. It was a come together moment.”
<b>Change</b>	Incident that occurred to make individual interim	“Well, the director of athletics took another position at a NCAA Division I institution.”
<b>Endings Zone</b>	Placed into a position where an individual has to break old connections to the world they are used to, and let go of the old ways of defining themselves by their previous position held	“I didn’t want a title to change who I was, so I tried to be more self-aware when I became interim director of athletics.”
<b>Neutral Zone</b>	Bridge between people being attached to the old while trying to adapt to the new (experience unfamiliarity while taking on a new position and additional responsibilities)	“You find yourself in that spot of not knowing often but we have friends, we have good mentors that you can call on, just pull a cord on, ‘Hey, have you dealt with this, that?’ I think that’s the thing that you have to have in order to get through. Those conversations went a long way with being able to manage the stress and manage the everyday pressures of being the interim director of athletics.”
<b>New Beginning Zone</b>	Experience acceptance, embrace change, and develop skills needed to be successful	“It’s a growth opportunity in every aspect. From the leadership opportunity, from a knowledge base, all the different types of things you’re involved with, in your department, on your campus, in your community. All those things were a great way to build relationships with different people. Those were all of some great benefits.”
<b>Human Resource Frame</b>	How organizations support their employees and how it impacts their experience as interim	“They have those inflatable bumpers they put in the gutters. That was kind of them and I was the bowling ball, rolling down the alley. The vice presidents and the president served as the bumpers there in the gutters to make sure that I didn’t roll off the track. They were so instrumental in allowing me to do my job and to grow at my job as interim.”

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