

THE EXPLORATION OF THE “FLUTIE FACTOR” AND PHILANTHROPIC  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO NCAA DIVISION II FOOTBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIP INSTITUTIONS FROM 1997-2010

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the phenomenon, the “Flutie Factor,” and philanthropic contributions to NCAA Division II football championship institutions. This research expanded on a prior research, adding to the existing data on the subject. The study is mixed method in design, gathering quantitative data in numerous giving categories as well as the total number of donors from various sources. Qualitative research questions explored participant beliefs on staff size, the phenomenon and football championship effects on giving to the institution.

A review of literature examined a number of motivating factors for giving to institutions of higher education, providing conceptual underpinnings for the study. The quantitative findings suggested football championships can have a positive impact on total cash donations and the number of alumni donors to an institution. The study did not suggest a consistent impact on other types of gifts. The qualitative findings suggested, above all else, a football championship will heighten the amount of pride felt by a variety of stakeholders. It is unclear if the number of staff is believed to play a role on increased donations although a correlation can be found. Ultimately, the study suggests a football championship can enhance communications, marketing and visibility for the institution.