YOU CAN PLAY, BUT CAN YOU BE YOURSELF?: HOW LGBT AND NON-LGBT
STUDENT-ATHLETES PERCEIVE THE CLIMATE OF
NCAA DIVISION I ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS

A DISSERTATION IN

Education

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

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2016
YOU CAN PLAY, BUT CAN YOU BE YOURSELF?: HOW LGBT AND NON-LGBT STUDENT-ATHLETES PERCEIVE THE CLIMATE OF NCAA DIVISION I ATHLETIC DEPARTMENTS

Robert D. Greim, Candidate for the Doctor of Education Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2016

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the American public has offered growing acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities, as evidenced by the legalization of same sex marriage (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015), the coming-out of numerous celebrities, and the mainstreaming of LGBT issues in popular media. There remains, however, a need for current research to see if such acceptance has permeated the locker rooms, offices, and venues of National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) sports. While there is a growing body of non-academic, anecdotal portrayals of LGBT individuals in the world of sports (Babb, 2014; Burns, 2015; Fagan, 2014; Tuaulo, 2007), the availability of quantitative data on which to define the current LGBT climate on NCAA member campuses, as perceived by student-athletes, is limited. This study utilized Redcap software to administer a 53-item climate survey (Liddle, Luzzo, Hauenstein. & Schuck, 2004; Rankin et al., 2011) to compare responses of Division I student-athletes who do and student-athletes who do not identify as LGBT in order to examine the impact of many mitigating and mediating factors on student perception. Over 350 student-athletes from six Division I institutions participated in the survey. Results of Chi-square tests revealed a statistically-significant relationship for the predictor variables of *having an out LGBT coach or teammate* and for *perceiving a warm*
LGBT climate on the greater campus while no statistically significant relationship was found for the predictor variables of personally identifying as LGBT and for sport participation by risk of injury. The resulting data serves as a foundation on which team, departmental, institutional, and national organizational policies and practices can be structured, while providing the rationale for institutions to investigate their own climate, the methodology for replicating the study, and the resources and programming ideas to effect change.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Education have examined a dissertation titled “You Can Play, but Can You be Yourself: How LGBT Student-Athletes Perceive the Climate of NCAA Division I Athletic Departments,” presented by Robert D. Greim, candidate for the Doctor of Education, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no doubt that my partner, Jill, worked much harder over the past five years than I have. Although she was not reading journal articles or finishing a PowerPoint presentation at 2:00 AM the day it was due, her work was much more meaningful. She got the kids ready for school every day, took them to gymnastics and soccer, maintained the house, dealt with parent/teacher issues, helped with homework, and made dinner all while putting her own education on hold and working two jobs. She has sacrificed so much without asking for anything in return. I also need to apologize to my son, Bridger, for the times I had to lock myself in the bedroom and type when he just wanted me to push him on the swing. I also need to apologize to my daughter, Charlie, for not being there as often as I could for her games and events. I am the luckiest person in the world to have this family. I also need to thank:

My parents and my brother for their encouragement,

Dr. Jennifer Friend for keeping me on task,

Drs. Carolyn Thompson, Bonita Butner, and Nathan Lindsay for their support and guidance,

Dr. Eric Grospitch for giving me a much more realistic approach to my dissertation,

Dr. Sue Rankin for her ground-breaking research and expertise,

Dan Stroud for our weekly lunches, which kept me motivated,

Janet Justus for encouraging me to start the program and take this path,

Senator Elizabeth Warren for trying to lower student loan interest rates,

Jackson Browne for the background music I played while writing,
the forward-thinking athletics administrators who agreed to ask their students to participate, and the student-athletes who were brave enough to respond honestly to this study.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

While the public in the United States has increased support for the concerns of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities in recent years (“Gay and Lesbian Rights,” 2015; Halloran, 2015; Heffernan, 2011), there remains a need for current research to investigate if such acceptance has permeated the locker rooms, offices, and venues of National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) sports, which this study aims to provide. Such an examination is more important now than ever before considering the public’s growing skepticism toward major college athletics given recent college athletics controversies involving academic fraud, alleged sexual assault, using prostitution as a recruitment tool, and mistreatment of students (Hinton, 2009; Martin, 2015; Norlander, 2014; Schad, 2009; Zinser, 2009). While inappropriate behaviors enacted by athletics employees do not all directly involve the LGBT community, it is important to acknowledge such stories’ influence on the public’s paradigm with which they view the NCAA and its member institutions.

This research study adds to the currently limited, but growing, amount of literature pertaining to LGBT issues in major college athletics in the United States through administering a 53-item climate survey to a sample of current Division I student-athletes. Survey responses are compared between those who do and those who do not identify as LGBT in order to examine the impact of many mitigating and mediating factors on student perception. Examples of these factors include, but are not limited to subdivision, athletic conference, sport participation, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, year in school
and religious affiliation. The resulting data serves as a foundation on which team, departmental, institutional, and national organizational policies and practices can be structured going forward to provide a supportive environment for all students who participate in major intercollegiate athletics.

This Chapter states the problem addressed through this study within the context of intercollegiate athletics, introduces a theoretical framework based upon NCAA athletics as a microcosm of bioecological theory and student departure theory, and provides an overview of the research methodology. The purpose statement “incorporate(s) the rationale for the study” by identifying the central concepts, methods of inquiry, and research questions (Pajares, 2007, p. 1). Next, in explaining the study’s significance, I indicate how this study adds to the growing body of literature for this population and how practitioners and policymakers might benefit from the findings. Terms specific to this study will be defined, followed by a declaration of the study’s limitations. Finally, the remaining four chapters of the study will be detailed.

**Statement of the Problem**

Over three percent of adults in the United States identify as LGBT (Gates & Newport, 2012). Given that there are over 173,000 student-athletes currently participating in Division I intercollegiate athletics (NCAA, Sport Sponsorship, 2016) there is a strong likelihood that each NCAA college athletics department has a number of student-athletes who also identify as LGBT. Institutions have a moral obligation to create a welcoming climate for students (Kuh, 2001; Kuh, Kenzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010; Rankin & Reason, 2005) as well as a legal obligation to prohibit a hostile environment or a chilly climate for students (Hall & Sandler,
1982), especially given the expansion of protected classes to include sexual orientation and gender identity in many state and Federal matters (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). This research provides self-reported student-athlete data regarding the perception of LGBT climate in major intercollegiate athletics, thereby providing a measurable starting point for an institution to address both of these obligations. The rest of this section provides justification for a climate study, such as this, based on the following factors:

1) Research shows a hostile environment adversely impacts the development of LGBT students (Cass, 1984; Mays & Cochran, 2001; Szymanski, 2006)

2) Growing public skepticism over the conduct of athletics personnel (not limited to LGBT concerns) (Hinton, 2009; Martin, 2015; Norlander, 2014; Schad, 2009; Zinser, 2009)

3) Personal testimony based on the author’s twenty 20 years of experience working in Division I athletics, and

4) A comparison of the lived experiences of two student-athletes who identify as LGBT.

**LGBT Student Development**

As is typical for all college students, those who identify as LGBT experience significant identity development during their college years, including social, emotional, and sexual identities (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001; Erikson, 1968; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As members of an underrepresented group, however, LGBT students also experience identity confusion and suppression, often dealing with internalized homophobia resulting from
varying levels of overt discrimination and numerous microaggressions based on the dominant heterosexist culture (Cass, 1984; Moradi et al., 2010). As a result, students who identify as LGBT can experience bullying, discrimination, harassment, or pressure to keep their sexuality hidden, which can result in psychological distress and poorer mental health (Mays & Cochran, 2001; Szymanski, 2006). In combating the mechanisms which can lead to such stressors, an institution can support LGBT students to feel as though they matter and are involved in their educational experience, which can lead to personal growth and improved student learning (Astin, 1977, 1984; Gardner, 1989; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Schlossberg, 1989). These developmental concerns are discussed further in Chapter Two.

Public Skepticism toward Division I Athletics

Over the past few years, popular media, the public, and a number of advocacy organizations have called for increased transparency regarding the inner-workings of Division I athletics following a number of higher-profile misconduct enacted by students, coaches and administrators (Kirwan & Turner, 2010). Although not all cases have involved hostilities toward the LGBT community (Eder, 2013; Sternod, 2010), a growing sense of general distrust and skepticism has enveloped the NCAA, including accusations of sexual assault, hazing, academic fraud, rules violations, exploitation and mistreatment of students, coach infidelity, and in most cases, a cover-up of any malfeasance.

Perhaps no case exemplifies the secretive climate of major college athletics and the ensuing pressure for institutions to publically assess their climate like that of former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky, who, on June 22, 2012, was found guilty of 45 cases of child sexual abuse ("Media Information," 2012). Sandusky had served as coach for
30 years. He retired in 1999 following an investigation by campus police after the mother of a child in the Second Mile program, which Sandusky founded in 1977 to serve underprivileged youth, accused him of molesting her son. Oddly, the university offered Sandusky emeritus retirement status allowing him continued access to campus recreational facilities (Fontaine, 2011).

Since Sandusky’s sentencing, three senior university officials have been “charged with perjury, endangering welfare of children, obstructing administration of law, failure to report, and criminal conspiracy” (Mazzulo, 2012, p. 1) related to the scandal. According to University of Minnesota Law Professor Michelle Goodwin (2012), “[under the Cleary Act] Penn State officials disregarded their obligation to inform the public about crimes on campus” (Goodwin, 2012, p. 1). While not directly related with the current study’s focus on perceived LGBT climate, this case is illustrative of a secretive, team-first allegiance within athletics and gives credence to the possibility that individuals might not feel comfortable coming forward if they are the target or witness to hostility or abuse (Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Griffen, Perotti, Priest, & Muska, 2002).

Within weeks of the Sandusky decision, a Syracuse University men’s basketball assistant coach was accused of child molestation (Schwartz & Berko, 2011). Although these charges were later dropped (Red & O’Keeffe, 2012), the widely publicized accusations further reinforced an air of secrecy and corruption surrounding major college athletics as viewed by the American public. In addition, a video of Rutgers University men’s basketball head coach Mike Rice went public in April 2013 showing him pushing players and yelling derogatory slurs and obscenities at them. Further adding to the perception that major Division
I athletics departments intentionally cover up improper behaviors of their staff members is the fact that the university was aware of Rice’s behavior months before the video was released but did not fire the coach until the media made it available to the public (Eder, 2013). In 2014, an independent investigation found hundreds of student-athletes at the University of North Carolina were encouraged to enroll in “sham classes that gave out high grades for little work” (Russo, 2015, p. 1). Also in 2014, a District Court found that the NCAA had violated the Sherman Antitrust Act by arbitrarily capping a student-athlete’s athletically-related financial aid and not permitting student-athletes to receive compensation for the use of their name, image, and likeness (Givens, 2014). When considering the needs of student-athletes who identify as LGBT, accounts such as these contribute to considering whether the atmosphere within intercollegiate athletics is healthy for one’s development.

Any sport-related scandal or negative press can lead to a decrease in alumni support, a diminished reputation, and loss of student enrollment (Hughes & Shank, 2005). Moreover, students who attend schools whose leaders are embroiled in scandals might feel an effect within the team or department as:

[I]t is the leaders of the organization who play the dominant role in creating and maintaining climates regarding ethics. And it is the leader’s personal values and ethics that are embedded in and shape the emerging climate regarding ethics, as well as the climate that is maintained (Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004, p. 225)
As such, this study aims to provide insight as to the profession's climate as perceived by current student-athletes as that climate may have been tainted by media coverage of a few bad actors.

**Personal Testimonial**

Although more common in qualitative studies, there is credence given to the use of *heuristics*, or the use of one’s own experience to inform problem-solving, which is recognized by Gigerenzer & Todd (1999) as “an approach to a problem that is necessarily incomplete given the knowledge available, and hence unavoidable false, but which is useful nonetheless for guiding thinking in appropriate directions” (p. 26). For purposes of this dissertation, therefore, it is necessary to recognize the researcher’s own voice and experience can contribute to the construction of this study and the interpretation of results.

Having worked in Division I intercollegiate athletics for 20 years, I have witnessed many aspects of a workplace culture that can, at times, see itself as autonomous from the larger institution. From an institutional perspective, the perceived questionable use of taxpayer dollars from the university’s general revenue account and the ability for some athletics administrators and head coaches to hire employees without going through normal human resources protocol can lead faculty senates and student affairs professionals to view athletics departments as operating with little regard for institutional policy. Student-athletes are conditioned to have blind faith in coaches and team-first allegiances, even when a member of the team or staff does wrong. There is often a commonly-accepted mantra that *what happens in the team stays in the team*. There can be quick reprisal against whistle-blowers, or those who constructively voice opposing viewpoints. There can be intimidation
of athletic training and academic support personnel who have been charged with implementing student-athlete wellness initiatives if those efforts appear to interrupt a coach’s priorities of practice, travel and competition. There can be misplaced aggression and covert reprisal directed toward employees charged with monitoring rules compliance. The inflated salaries paid to upper-level athletics administrators and coaches can also increase cross-campus skepticism. As such, I believe that strong leadership and courage is needed to change the culture or the perception of this culture.

From the student perspective, when a student-athlete is recruited by a Division I coach, the student often visits the campus prior to making a commitment to play at that university. In most cases, the coach will pay for the student and parent(s) to travel to and from the institution as well as provide hotel accommodations and meals surrounding the visit. The student visits with the coaching staff, academic unit advisors, academic support personnel, strength and conditioning staff, and members of the team. Many times the team will do a fun activity with the prospective student or encourage teammates to host the student during the evening in the hopes of convincing them to become a part of the program. Toward the end of the visit, the coaching staff might make it known to the student that they intend on extending a scholarship offer to play for their program. In these situations, the coach and current members of the team have received the student as part of the team, accepting them with all their qualities.

From that moment forward, over the next four or five years of her athletic eligibility, the student and her team will experience many personal and collective ups and downs. On the court or the field, there will be tough practices, great victories, difficult losses, lucky breaks,
and bad bounces. In the classroom, there will be tough teachers, great lectures, difficult exams, epiphanies, and changes of majors. In life, there will be tough times, great friends, difficult break-ups, fun parties, and good and bad days. Each of these experiences, from the initial campus visit through the graduation ceremony, will impact the student by influencing who she is and who she will become.

During my time as an academic coordinator for student-athletes, I was the individual to whom four college student-athletes first came out. I witnessed these individuals struggle to deal with the adverse effects of internalized and societal homonegativity (Flood, McLaughlin, & Prentice, 2013; Jordan & Deluty, 1998; Reilly & Rudd, 2006) and search desperately, secretly for a safe space to find themselves and be themselves within the department that brought them to the university.

Having participated in many workplace conversations with the coaches in my office regarding LGBT issues, I decided to conduct a content analysis of annual college coaching convention educational sessions focusing on the needs of LGBT student-athletes. The search revealed only two sports offering such a training session out of a possible twenty-four (see Table 1.1). This analysis was conducted by searching coaching association websites and reviewing convention agendas, as available. It is possible that sessions were conducted, but not publically available by searching the organization’s website.

In spring 2010, during a discussion of student activism and the influence of sport in society, a colleague mentioned the YouCanPlayProject.org website, which featured groups of athletes, coaches and administrators voicing their support for LGBT participation in sports. The You Can Play Project, a non-profit LGBT advocacy organization created in 2012, “seeks
to challenge the culture of locker rooms and spectator areas by focusing only on an athlete’s skills, work ethic and competitive spirit” (You Can Play, 2014). The organization offers professional, collegiate, and high school athletic institutions an opportunity to create a video in which athletes, coaches and administrators reinforce the idea that if an individual can play a particular sport, then they can participate at their institution, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The idea of such a public show of support became the catalyst for my entry into a doctoral program and the nexus of this dissertation, from which the title is inspired. With inspiration from this website, my reflecting on the four students who came out
Table 1.1

*Coaching Association Training Sessions Related to LGBT Concerns Offered at 2014 Conventions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Title of LGBT-related session</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>usfcca.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
<td>escaa.org</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>eteamz.com/nfhca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>avca.o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>afca.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Basketball</td>
<td>wbca.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Basketball</td>
<td>nabc.org</td>
<td>PDS Personal Clinic – You Can Play Inclusion Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>abca.org</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>itatennis.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Golf</td>
<td>collegegolf.com</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Golf</td>
<td>wgcagolf.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>nfca.org</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>nscia.com</td>
<td>Create a Safe Space for LGBT Athletes: Be a Winning Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>collegebowloach.org</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Equestrian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>ncwa.net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>collegewaterpoloach.org</td>
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<td>Bowling</td>
<td>collegebowling.com</td>
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To me, the increase in the number of states that legally recognize marriage equality, the strides made by the LGBT community over the past year in popular media, especially in the world of sports, and the lack of education offered by coaches associations, I thought the time
was right to evaluate what, if any, impact these factors have had on the climate for LGBT student-athletes at Division I institutions.

**Two Different Student Experiences**

In 2013, Baylor University women’s basketball student-athlete Brittney Griner was the number one overall draft pick in the Women’s National Basketball Association. As the second-all-time leading scorer in the history of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) women’s basketball, her university proudly paraded her name and face in press releases and on social media as she won many prestigious awards, including the Associated Press Player of the Year. However, after leaving the institution in May 2013, having completed her eligibility, Griner discussed her college experience as a closeted lesbian, saying “[H]er college head coach told players not to be open publicly about their sexuality because it would hurt recruiting and look bad for the program” (“Griner: No talking sexuality at Baylor,” 2013).

To the contrary is the case of University of Missouri football student-athlete Michael Sam, who, during the 2014 academic year, came out to his coaches and teammates at a team-building exercise at an assistant coach’s house.

When I got up there in front of my team, it was actually the first time I said the words to anyone: “I am gay,” he recalled. While he was nervous, his teammates didn't bat an eyelash: “Mizzou is a family. At another school, it might have been a different story.” (Glazek, 2014, para. 19)

That season, the team went on to a 13-2 record and a win in the AT&T Cotton Bowl. As for Sam, he was named Co-Defensive Player of the Year in the Southeastern Conference.
recognized as a unanimous All-American, and became the first openly gay athlete drafted into the National Football League. This study asks current student-athletes, both those who identify as LGBT and those who do not, about their perception of the climate within the athletics department and the larger institution, in the hopes of empowering an atmosphere healthy for student development.

Griner and Sam each attended institutions recognized by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as high undergraduate, selective, four-year, full-time, primarily residential, Doctoral universities with high research activity (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2016). Sam attended a public institution, while Griner attended a private institution that promotes itself as “the world’s largest Baptist university…(e)stablished to be a servant of the church and of society” (Baylor, 2016). This difference should be recognized as private religious institutions do have a greater degree of autonomy under the establishment and free exercise clauses than do public institutions (Kaplin & Lee, 2011), and students accepted for admission at such schools are made aware of such religious convictions and commitments. While such institution might be operating within its legal rights, this study examines to what extent the departmental climate informed by those traditions might impact the student.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Research Philosophy**

Recognizing the multi-tiered factors possibly impacting a student-athlete’s perception of LGBT climate, this dissertation employs a postpositive philosophy “in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes” (Creswell, 2009, p. 7) with a degree of an advocacy
or participatory worldview, which Creswell (2009) describes as an approach that “needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda” (p. 9). This approach is not surprising as “higher education research related to LGBT/queer people has evolved in tandem with activist movements, following trends seen in research on more readily identifiable populations of underrepresented campus groups (e.g., people of color, and female students through the 1980s)” (Renn, 2010, p. 133). Given trending national advocacy for LGBT concerns, this is an ideal time for such a study.

Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, and Karnik (2011) take an exhaustively critical look at the use of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework for Human Development and his revised version, the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) in current literature. The authors analyze over 20 published works in terms of the accuracy of application of Bronfenbrenner’s work and found many cases of incomplete or off-target application. According to the authors:

The meaning of theory in any scientific field is to provide a framework within which to explain connections among the phenomena under study and to provide insights leading to the discovery of new connections…for the clarity and integrity of scientific thought as well as for compatibility of findings, it is important to make explicit the theoretical framework on which the research is based. (Tudge et al., 2011, p. 198)

Accordingly, this study correctly applies the context aspect of Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Theory, as well as the person and process aspects of his enhanced PPCT version, to the developmental concerns of LGBT student-athletes in Division I
athletics; the study does not, however, evaluate the time aspect of Bronfenbrenner’s work, as the instrument to be used does not measure the passage of time.

**Bioecological Theory and the Process, Person, Context, and Time Model**

Having worked in Division I intercollegiate athletics for over 20 years, I have realized there are numerous factors influencing the student-athlete experience. Some factors, such as student-athlete preparedness, are influenced by a family’s socio-economic background. Other factors are interpersonal, such as the relationship between a coach and a student. Some factors are psychological, such as mental health and resilience. More factors are a result of regularly-occurring interactions, such as time management resulting from frequent travel for competition. Collectively, these different sources and forms of influence contribute to the development of the student. To illustrate, I will undergird this study using Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework for Human Development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and his revised version, the Process-Person-Context-Time Model (PPCT) (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) as detailed in this section.

To understand an event, whether it be in nature or in an organization, it is helpful to study each individual part that went into its occurrence as well as to study the interaction of those parts with each other (Banathy, 2000; Senge, 1990). This systems thinking recognizes that separate events or structures can have a reciprocally-influential relationship with other events or structures within the larger system, even if they might seem unrelated. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Framework for Human Development and his revised version, PPCT (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), suggest that a person’s development is influenced by their own biology (person), the numerous systems and multiple levels of their environment
(context), the interplay of the individual and the environment (process), and time. Moreover, just as the individual is influenced by these factors, these factors are reciprocally altered by the individual (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

As part of his early work establishing the bioecological theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified five systems of environment, which influence an individual’s development (see Figure 1.1). First, microsystems are those in which a person spends a great deal of time and in which the individual has direct interaction (e.g., face-to-face communication) with other members of the microsystem. In many Bronfenbrenner studies, this is exemplified by a child as the individual and his relationship with his parents as one of the many microsystems. For purposes of this study, the student-athlete’s microsystem could include his teammates, coaches, or the physical locker room, for example. Second, exosystems are those contexts that influence the microsystems, but with which the individual might not have direct interaction. A popular Bronfenbrenner example of this is a workplace policy or simple media coverage that pressures a mother to return to work within a short three months of having a baby, thereby having an adverse impact on the child. For purposes of this study, an exosystem might be LGBT-related presentations at national coaching conventions, the coming out of a professional athlete, or the repeal of discriminatory federal laws such as the Defense of Marriage Act.

Third, the mesosystem refers to the interplay between microsystems or between a microsystem and an exosystem. A common bioecological example of a mesosystem is a parent’s interactions with the child’s teacher. For purposes of this study, the mesosystem could include campus co-programming between the LGBTQIA Office and Intercollegiate
Athletics. The fourth sphere of environment according to this theory, the macrosystem, includes societal norms and values. For the purposes of this study, the macrosystem could consist of the nation’s shifting public opinion in favor of marriage equality. The final system in the bioecological frame is the chronosystem, which “encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 37).

For purposes of this study, the chronosystem, or the influence of time, will not be explicitly addressed as such research would be better served in a longitudinal study which would require collecting data from the sample across different points in time (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Such research could be conducted by replicating this study with this sample at later dates. Figure 1.1 uses a common format for mapping Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory, with LGBT student-athlete concerns depicted within each of the remaining four contextual systems.
Having reassessed and revised his bioecological theory throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Bronfenbrenner expanded the factors he saw as vital to a human’s development beyond the context (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). He placed increased emphasis on the biological aspects of the person. He more critically analyzed the impact of time on development by introducing the additional subfactors of micro-time (specific interactions) and meso-time (the consistency of interactions) to his earlier chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge et al., 2011). Finally, and most important to development, he suggested the idea of “mechanisms of organism-environment
interaction…called proximal processes, through which genetic potentials for effective psychological functioning are actualized” (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p. 568). These revisions to Bronfenbrenner’s original bioecological theory are commonly referred to as the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Each of the multi-layered elements of context pertaining to an LGBT student-athlete’s experience are detailed above and depicted in Figure 1.1. Also previously explained, the scope of this study does not include Bronfenbrenner’s element of time. Chapter two will explore the bioecological aspect of the person, by reviewing current literature of college student development, identity development, stereotype threat, contact theory, critical race theory, power dynamics, LGBT legal considerations, and sport as social change agent. Finally, this study will use a revised instrument to examine the influence of proximal processes on the student-athlete experience.

**Connecting PPCT to Student-Athlete Experience with Tinto's Theory of Student Departure**

The components of Bronfenbrenner’s PPCT model can more concretely be connected to the development of a collegiate student-athlete who identifies as LGBT when inserted into Tinto’s (1987) Theory of Student Departure. Figure 1.2 illustrates Tinto’s Theory of Student Departure. Figure 1.3 is an illustration created by the researcher who envisioned a merger of Bronfenbrenner’s Person, Process, Context, and Time model into an adapted figure of Tinto’s (1987) Model of Institutional Departure, indicating those areas investigated by the current study.
Tinto posits that students enter college with their own skills, abilities, and motivation which are continually impacted by and refined over the course of their college career by the formal and informal academic and social structures and traditions within the university setting (Tinto, 1987, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Positive interactions with university personnel and processes lead a student to feel as though they belong and can succeed at the institution, referred to as “integration,” which commonly results in student retention and matriculation. Conversely, negative interactions can have the opposite effect, leaving the student to feel unwelcome and less successful, thereby leading to early departure from the institution.

While college students are often susceptible to both formal academic experiences (grades earned) and informal academic experiences (faculty interactions), the impact of these experiences on a majority of Division I student-athletes are mitigated by a very intrusive in loco parentis approach to within-department academic support programs and NCAA regulations. These policies and practices are designed to help student-athletes maintain eligibility and result in high graduation rates, but can also insulate student-athletes away from seeking support outside of the department (Watson, 2005). Oftentimes these efforts are manifest through mandatory study hall, class attendance checks, required mentor sessions, and grade checks conducted by departmental employees, all of which are reinforced by a head coach, who is often awarded annual bonus pay for achieving preset academic thresholds. For example, University of Louisville Head Football Coach Bobby Petrino received a $500,000 bonus in 2015 because his team had an Academic Performance Rate (the NCAA’s measure of academic success) above 935 on a scale of 1000 (Berkowitz, 2015).
fiscal year 2007, more than seventy-three athletics programs spent in excess of $1-million annually on academic services for student-athletes (Wolverton, 2008).

While some might argue these practices take ownership away from the student-athlete or blur the true mission of the institution (Grasgreen, 2012; Gurney & Southall, 2013), these modern traditions lessen the impact of any negative institutional experience in Tinto’s Academic System. Simply put, with this many academic safeguards in place, it is very difficult for a student-athlete to leave school for purely academic reasons. Moreover, as many Division I student-athletes receive significant institutional athletics financial aid as a reason for their attendance at a particular university, the risk/reward cost-benefit analysis of poor grades or a bad experience with a faculty member might not impact them to the point they would choose to give up their scholarship and depart the university. Therefore, this study is concerned with investigating the student-athlete’s integration into the institution’s social system, both within the department and the broader campus, as related to their satisfaction and perception of climate.
Figure 1.2. Tinto’s model of student departure. (Tinto, 1987)

Figure 1.3. This figure illustrates the researcher’s adaptation of Tinto’s (1987) model of institutional departure interpreted with a merging PPCT for DI student-athletes.
Purpose of the Study

Student behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs are shaped in large part by the culture of the institution (Lewin, 1936) and as such, should be examined through climate studies in the hopes of informing programming, policies and procedures (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Ottenritter, 2012). The purpose of this study is to identify variables within the athletics department which lead to a student’s perception of a hostile environment, a welcoming environment, or an environment somewhere along that spectrum.

Student affairs professionals use the growing amount of empirical LGBT-related higher education literature to base programs and services that create a healthy, safe educational setting, one in which LGBT students may develop their identity (Basu, 2012; Ivory, 2005; Renn, 2010; Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002). Results of this study can assist the athletics department at some institutions by defining its LGBT culture, gauging the degree of reform needed, and providing the campus with a measurable foundation on which to design such programs (Gall et al., 2007; Schueler, Hoffman, & Peterson, 2009; Shor, 1992).

One such finding of many climate surveys is an imbalance of power within the institution (Brown & Gortmaker, 2009). Most often, members of the majority culture are the beneficiaries of privileges at the expense of the underrepresented population (Moradi et al., 2010). Drawing from research on students of color and presupposing these populations’ identification issues and their struggle against an imbalanced power dynamic (Rankin & Reason, 2005) are similar to those of LGBT students (Anderson & McCormack, 2010), this study seeks to directly engage student-athletes from both the heterosexual and LGBT
population to gauge the current climate within Division I athletic departments. Further similarities and differences between the struggles of LGBT students and the struggles of other underrepresented students will be explored in Chapter Two.

Underrepresented populations on campus can experience intimidation, fear for personal safety, discrimination, and fear of repercussion (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin, 2004). In addition to these stressors, LGBT students also must face the increased stress of internalized homonegativity, identity concealment, and harassment (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Flood et al., 2013; Rankin, 2006). Student-athletes face a set of unique challenges as well, reporting physical exhaustion, struggling with time management, facing public scrutiny, career confusion, and conflicts related to dual role identities (Griffith & Johnson, 2002; James, 2005; Lu, Hsu, Chan, Cheen & Kao, 2012; Murphy, Petitpas & Brewer, 1996; Wolf-Wendel, Toma, & Morphew, 2001; Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2014). Considering the outcomes associated with stressors for each of these populations, it is possible that student-athletes who identify as LGBT could have these stressors amplified (Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Beamon, 2012). Those who identify as an underrepresented minority might have these stressors magnified even more (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin, & Reason, 2005). As learning and development outcomes are influenced by how students experience their campus environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005) and as discriminatory environments adversely impact student learning (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedron, 1999), this study will provide student-reported data as to what, if any, environmental factors are found to be perceived as discriminatory or hostile.
Despite the number of studies available concerning stressors for LGBT students and the number of studies available concerning stressors for student-athletes, this author found fewer than twenty sources using any mixture of the search terms of LGBT, climate, college, and student-athletes in the following databases dating back to 2000: Academic Search Complete; Academic Search Elite; Academic Search Premier; Education Full Text; ERIC; PsycARTICLES; Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection; Google Scholar, and PsycINFO. Sources include a profile of a student-athlete who identifies as LGBT (Langenfeld, 2009), a summary of an advocacy program created by women’s tennis champion Billie Jean King’s Women’s Sports Foundation (Winchester, 2007), a profile of student populations most likely to use synthetic stimulants (Miller & Stogner, 2014), and books addressing the counseling needs of student-athletes and LGBT students (Fitch & Marshall, 2011; Luzzo, 2000).

Of the remaining articles, only a handful contained quantitative data. Melton and Cunningham (2014) focused on the role of employee support in fostering LGBT inclusion for fellow employees. McKinney and McAndrew (2000) surveyed student-athletes and non-athletes to explore what factors led to awareness of and endorsement of stereotypes regarding sexuality of athletes. Southall, Anderson, Nagel, Polite, and Southall (2011) focused on Division I and Division III male student-athlete’s homophobic attitudes. Given the relatively small number of articles in contrast to the growing support for LGBT resources on campus, this study, specifically surveying student-athletes who do and those who do not identify as LGBT about their perception of LGBT climate, is needed at the present time.
Although not a common focus in peer-reviewed journals, this author found a number of dissertations, theses, and white papers sponsored by institutions and national organizations investigating LGBT climate within intercollegiate athletics using the search terms of LGBT, climate, college, and student-athletes in the following databases dating back to 2000: Academic Search Complete; Academic Search Elite; Academic Search Premier; Education Full Text; ERIC; PsycARTICLES; Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection; Google Scholar, and PsycINFO. There are also a small number of accomplished researchers whose work is prevalent in this field. These names include, but are not limited to, Sue Rankin, Geeney Beemyn, Eric Anderson, Kristen Renn, and Pat Griffin. Examples of LGBT climate research include a report sponsored by the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force that highlighted the work of Rankin, the preeminent LGBT college climate researcher, who found 36 percent of GLBT undergraduate students experienced harassment within the previous year (Rankin, 2003). Another example is the NCAA-sponsored Student-Athlete Climate Study conducted by The Pennsylvania State University’s Center for the Study of Higher Education, also headed by Rankin, which, although focused on all aspects of climate, found student-athletes who identify as LGBQ experience a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers (Rankin et al., 2011). These reports and others will be further detailed in Chapter Two. It should be noted that it is possible previous studies related to this topic do exist, but might have suffered the effects of publication bias if they produced null results (Ferguson & Heene, 2012). Similarly, prior to the momentum of widespread supportive-LGBT research initiatives of the last decade, athletics departments might have
previously resisted participation in such studies or students might have been hesitant to
discuss their opinions on LGBT issues.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

LGBT issues have advanced greatly in American society over the past half century,
from the American Psychiatric Association declassifying homosexuality as an illness in 1973
(American Psychiatric Association, 1973) to the United States Supreme Court’s marriage
equality decision in 2015 recognizing the right of all couples to marry, regardless of sexual
identity or gender expression (Obergefell v. Hodges, 2015). To emphasize the increased
velocity of pro-LGBT movements within the United States, it should be noted that at the time
this project was started in 2013, only nine states and the District of Columbia recognized
same sex marriage (“Timeline Gay Marriage Chronology,” 2015). Similarly, the field of
higher education has also moved forward regarding LGBT student concerns with an increase
in the number of student services offices dedicated to this population from about 100 campus
sites in the United States in 2003 to 193 in 2016 (“What Is Campus Pride?,” 2016; Marine,
2011; Rankin, 2003; Renn, 2010). To continue this progress, the current study will expand
the body of research into college athletics following the declaration of Renn (2010), who stated:

[S]tudies of campus climate focus on three areas: (a) perceptions and experiences of
LGBT people, (b) perceptions about LGBT people and their experiences, and (c) the
status of policies and programs designed to improve the academic, living, and work
experiences of LGBT people on campus. (p. 134)
The study addresses four key research questions by surveying a sample of current Division I student-athletes.

1) Do student-athletes who identify as non-LGBT report a warmer LGBT athletics climate than those who identify as LGBT?

2) Do student-athletes on teams with lower risk of injury report a warmer LGBT athletics climate than others?

3) Do student-athletes who report not having an out LGBT coach or team member perceive warmer LGBT climate than those who do report having an out LGBT coach or teammate?

4) Do student-athletes who indicate a warmer LGBT climate on the greater campus report a warmer LGBT athletics climate?

The following hypotheses will be tested using SPSS as detailed in Chapter Three.

1) There is no significant relationship between LGBT identity and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

2) There is no relationship between risk of injury in a particular sport and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

3) There is no relationship between having an out LGBT coach or teammate and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

4) There is no relationship between perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.
Significance of the Study

This study will be of significance to many stakeholders. Faculty in the fields of social justice, social sciences, gender studies, athletics administration, communication studies, and the like, will be able to analyze, critique, enhance, and replicate these findings as well as incorporate them into their course discussion. Faculty in all disciplines will be able to incorporate findings of this study into the way they conduct their courses, office hours, and research. Beyond the classroom, university employees in the intercollegiate athletics department, Counseling Center, Student Health, Student Affairs, LGBTQIA Office, and Student Life will be able to discuss the findings and consider any implications related to programming, staffing, or other interventions, as needed. Student-athletes like Edward Sarafin at Arizona State University or Derrick Gordon at the University of Massachusetts who, in 2014, became the first openly gay athletes actively participating in Division I football and basketball, respectively (Fagan, 2014; Marshall, 2014) will be encouraged to discuss with department leadership any perceived differences between the study findings and their personal experiences as will student-athletes like Harvard University’s Schuyler Bailar, the first openly transgender swimmer to compete in the NCAA (Borzilleri, 2015). Activists and advocates will be able to identify areas in which their efforts have begun to show progress as well as those areas which still need attention. Eventually, increased focus on LGBT issues in Division I intercollegiate athletics could also lead to an empowered recruiting process for prospective LGBT student-athletes by leading athletics departments to embrace LGBT issues publically in policy and in practice.
The need for such baseline data related to climate is supported by Elling and Janssens (2009) who cite a disproportionate amount of qualitative research regarding homosexual participation in mainstream sporting activities as compared to quantitative research. Renn (2010), referencing the work of Sanlo, Rankin, and Schoenberg, spoke to the usefulness of studies such as this, stating, “Climate studies provide baseline data on experiences of and attitudes about LGBT people and have often been used to provide evidence for creating, improving, or expanding LGBT programs and services” (p. 134). Climate research is also encouraged by Ottenritter (2012), who stated “[E]nvironments play a key role in supporting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; therefore, attending to environmental influences is critical in institutional life and change” (p. 531). Ivory (2005) identified a current lack of LGBT-related higher education literature available to student affairs professionals on which to base programs and services in the hopes of “promoting educational environments and experiences that may facilitate LGBT students’ sexual identity development” (p. 68). In response to such calls for empirical data, the current study seeks to first define the LGBT climate of Division I intercollegiate athletic programs in order to gauge the degree of reform needed and to provide campus personnel a measurable foundation on which to design such programs and services.

This study will add to the growing body of research that offers individuals within the institution an avenue to engage in forward-thinking and perhaps difficult conversations regarding the LGBT climate. Rankin and Reason (2005), stress the importance of strategically and intentionally pursuing such research:
Higher education and student affairs professionals must not only be interested and involved in analysis regarding issues of difference, but in practice, the organizational activities and actions that challenge dominance, critique the status quo, and have social justice as a central core value, that inform the strategic approach that runs through the fabric of the institution. (p. 59)

Not only might institutional programs based on data from this study promote a healthy climate for LGBT student-athletes, but they could also enhance professional collaboration between the athletics department staff and campus personnel and faculty, increasing transparency and hopefully diffusing the skepticism with which many people view major college athletics.

Despite student-athletes being one of the most diverse subpopulations on a college campus, Wolf-Wendel, Toma, and Morphew (2001) argued that college athletics has accomplished a great deal of the community-building mission that the larger institution is attempting to achieve. The authors found participation in intercollegiate athletics, given the shared wins and losses and large amount of time spent with teammates, leads student-athletes to recognize team members’ commonalities and also accept their differences. Although the article highlights the camaraderie and support within and amongst collegiate athletic teams, the authors did, however, find sexual orientation to be the lone remaining area of intolerance within the department:

[I]t is clear that students, coaches, and administrators alike in athletics are generally unwilling to confront and accept homosexuality. [Some individuals] avoid consideration of the issue altogether, instead pointing out the presence
of gays or lesbians in other sports. Another response is to argue that it would be impossible for gays or lesbians to be productive members of teams given the reaction that “straight” coaches and teammates would have to them. The bottom line is that, although people in athletics are progressive and successful in building community from other diverse groups, they lag considerably in recognizing the place of gays and lesbians on their teams. (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001, p. 387)

If college athletics had set the bar for the larger campus in terms of community-building outside of LGBT concerns a generation ago, perhaps this study could demonstrate an evolution of acceptance on the part of the athletics climate in the fourteen years since. If such is the case, perhaps college athletics could serve as a role model for other offices, departments and organizations in terms of investigating LGBT climate, should the profession choose to champion the cause.

The hint of a burgeoning, forward-thinking stance on inclusiveness was recently on display by the NCAA and a number of high profile member institution athletics programs who quickly and loudly spoke out against the Indiana Religious Freedom Bill (Wetzel, 2015) that could have resulted in allowing individuals or business to exercise discrimination against individuals who identify as LGBT, in the name of exercising their religious beliefs (Stromberg, 2015). NCAA President Mark Emmert’s very public concern regarding the law and its possible impact on the 2015 Men’s Basketball Final Four Tournament in Indianapolis provides more impetus for the current study to examine if major college athletics’ public
displays of support for the LGBT community in the media has translated to private displays of support in the locker rooms and offices of college teams.

In spring 2016, an internet content analysis revealed over fifty universities, ten high schools, and twenty professional teams had posted a You Can Play video to YouTube, and in so doing, have taken a significant step toward affecting a positive LGBT climate with their public declaration of support.

**Definition of Terms**

For this study, it is important that this author clearly define key terminology for the reader (see Table 1.2), especially that which could be confusing to or outside the common vernacular of the reader (Creswell, 2009). For purposes of this study, this author intentionally maintains the LGBT acronym as opposed to the less inclusive LGB, as is somewhat common in similar research. LGB refers to a person’s sexual orientation, or “the kind of person or thing toward which the sexual aim is directed” (Harek & Garnets, 2007, p. 355) with L representing lesbian, G representing gay, and B representing bisexual identities.

T, on the other hand, indicates a transgender individual whose biological sex, or one’s anatomical and reproductive structures they were assigned at birth does not match their gender identity, or “one’s subjective sense of congruence with an attributed gender” (Dragowski, Scharron-del Rio, & Sandigorsky, 2011, p. 360). Zandvliet (2000) defines gender as “the sum of a person’s non-physical and non-biological characteristics that determine their sense of being male, female or neither or any combination” (p. 178).

Although not yet a common topic of discussion in Division I intercollegiate athletics, issues important to the lives of individuals who identify as transgender have received greater
attention including formal study in institutions of higher education (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011). As evidence of such concerns beginning to work their way into major college athletics, transgender participation is now a specific aim of the NCAA’s Office of Inclusion as addressed in the NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student-Athletes handbook:

Though the needs of transgender college students have received some attention in recent years, this issue has not been adequately addressed in the context of athletics. Few collegiate athletics programs, administrators, or coaches have been prepared to fairly, systematically, and effectively address a transgender student’s interest in participating in athletics. The majority of intercollegiate athletics programs have no policy governing the inclusion of transgender student-athletes, and most coaches have not received any direction for accommodating a transgender student who wants to play on a sports team. (Griffin & Carroll, 2011, p. 4)

Although the historical male/female distinction of sports participation is well-established in Division I intercollegiate athletics, the recognition of transgender student-athletes by the NCAA, the 2010 coming out of Kye Alumns, the first transgender man to play women’s college basketball at George Washington University (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Thomas, 2010), and the recent wave of sporting associations that have created affirmative policies related to transgender student participation (American Civil Liberties Union, 2013) gives credence for maintaining the T in LGBT for purposes of this study. Although researchers recognize the needs and experiences of transgender students do differ from those of their LGB peers (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012; Renn, 2007), the current study will investigate climate for the entirety of the LGBT population within major
college athletics and will allow the researcher to bifurcate findings along sexual orientation and gender identity lines by adding demographic identifiers, discussed further in Chapter Three.

While not used in this study, sources will likely appear throughout this dissertation mentioning I, Q, and A alongside LGBT as indicators of terms commonly used by multicultural student service professionals in higher education. Should a study refer to I in this context, the author most likely uses it to represent intersex people, which refers to “individuals whose anatomical features do not fit the prescribed definitions of male or female” (Dreger, 2007, as cited in Dugan et al., 2012, p. 720). Should a study refer to Q in this context, the author most likely uses it to represent queer. Barber and Hidalgo (2009) note:

Labeling people whose sexual identities fall outside of heterosexuality [as queer] may create solidarity among people based on commonality, which may in turn encourage them to identify with one another and create a community in which they find support and organize to initiate a political movement. (p. 298)

Should a study refer to A in this context, the author most likely uses it to represent ally, an individual who identifies as heterosexual, but serves as an advocate for the rights of people who identify as LBGT. Other authors might refer to A to represent asexual, individuals who identify as having no sexual attraction to anyone, regardless of gender identity (Zimmer, Solomon, & Carson, 2014). Furthermore, as an acronym, this author found no academic difference between LGBT and GLBT; the order used in this paper is simply a result of the author having worked on three campuses with a student support office named for the former.
Homophobia refers to the “irrational and intense fear, dread and disgust for GLBTDQ individuals” (Smith, Oades, & McCarthy, 2012, p. 39). Heterosexism is the normalizing and privileging of heterosexuality manifest through societal customs and individual attitudes and behaviors (Smith et al., 2012). In her study on the LGBT climate of counseling psychology training programs, Bahner (2007) suggests refocusing on a broader term like heterosexism verses homophobia to allow researchers to identify more subtle individual and structural barriers that might be adversely impacting members of the LGBT community in their interactions with the counseling profession. Similarly, this study will maintain focus on heterosexism while also searching for signs of more overt homophobia, so as to address a broader spectrum of perceived discriminatory actions, policies and behaviors.

Methodology

Site and Participant Selection

Senior compliance officers at fifteen Division I institutions, all professional colleagues of this researcher, expressed an interest in participating in the study (with approximately 4,500 possible participants) during the 2015-16 academic year. These institutions span all three Division I subdivisions, nine conferences, and thirteen states, and are spread throughout the continental United States. Participants must be eighteen years old and recognized by the NCAA as a student-athlete.

NCAA member institutions are divided into three Divisions, I, II and III, based on the institution’s resources and mission by “matching its enrollment, financial situation and fan support with the requirements for each division” (NCAA, “Division I Facts and Figures,” 2016). Within Division I, there are three subdivisions based on the level of sponsorship in the
Table 1.2

*Definition of terms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological sex</td>
<td>one’s anatomical and reproductive structures they were assigned at birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>the kind of person or thing toward which the sexual aim is directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>one with a sexual orientation to the opposite sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>one with a sexual orientation to the same sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian (L)</td>
<td>a woman with a sexual orientation toward women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay (G)</td>
<td>a man with a sexual orientation toward men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual (B)</td>
<td>a man or woman with a sexual orientation toward both men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>the sum of a person’s non-physical and non-biological characteristics that determine their sense of being male, female or neither or any combination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender identity</td>
<td>one’s subjective sense of congruence with an attributed gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender (T)</td>
<td>individual whose biological sex does not match their gender identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>irrational and intense fear, dread and disgust for GLBTIQ individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexism</td>
<td>the normalizing and privileging of heterosexuality manifest through societal customs and individual attitudes and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heteromasculine stratification</td>
<td>the practice of considering masculine sports more prestigious than feminine ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homohysteria</td>
<td>the fear a heterosexual might have of being perceived as lesbian or gay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sport of football, which is the primary revenue-generating sport in college athletics totaling over $4 billion in 2014 (“Revenues by Team,” 2016). Table 1.3 details the differences between the three divisions as well as the subdivisions within Division I. Division I student-athletes were selected as the focus of this study as their service to the institution, talent required for participation, work hours performed per week, and scrutiny of performance leads
them to appear most similar to that of an employee (Cavico, Mujtaba, & Rosenberg, 2015), which is the audience for the original survey instrument.

Table 1.3

Requirements of NCAA Member institutions by Division and Subdivision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Subdivision</th>
<th>Minimum # of Sports Sponsored</th>
<th>Offers Athletic Scholarships</th>
<th># of Football Scholarships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Football Bowl</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Football Championship</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Non-Football</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not sponsored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10 (5 if single gender)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 if &lt;1,000 enrollment</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 if 1,000+ enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NCAA, “Divisional Differences and the History of Multidivision Classification,” 2016; J. Vaughn, personal communication, January 11, 2016)

Data Collection

Upon approval of the institutional review board, a solicitation email was sent to the chief compliance officer of these fifteen institutions with an embedded link to the survey instrument. Completion of the survey was estimated to take fifteen minutes, based on a pilot test of five student-athletes from the author’s home institution who represent five different teams, two gender identities, two sexual orientations, and four ethnicities. Participants were offered the opportunity to be included in a random drawing for one of sixteen Amazon gift cards valued between $100 and $25. The survey, created in REDCap software, collects data anonymously, instantaneously and integrates into SPSS seamlessly.

Only six of the fifteen administrators who had voiced support for participation in the study were successful in convincing their coaches and senior administrators to distribute the
survey link to their student-athletes, decreasing the possible sample to 1,660 student-athletes. Having worked in Division I athletics, the researcher can speculate as to the reasons those nine remaining institutions eventually yielded no participants. It is possible that coaches and administrators might resist participation in a study focused on a topic that was socially taboo a generation ago. Coaches might also be guarded against motivating one of their student-athletes to call out for social change after having participated in such a study. The culture of major college athletics might also consider struggling against oppression and harassment as a rite of passage or something to be overcome, rather than alleviated systemically through policy changes (Coakley, 2004; Lopez & Levy, 2010).

**Data Analysis**

Using SPSS, the researcher originally planned on providing descriptive analysis for all outcome and predictor variables. All assumptions of multiple regression were to be completed (Osbourne, & Waters, 2002) and analysis of covariance would reveal meaningful group differences in perception of LGBT climate. Variances would be further examined using hierarchical and stepwise linear regression. Upon collection of responses, however, given the lower number of participating institutions, the researcher amended his analysis by dichotomizing variables and running Chi-square descriptive stats and conducting binary logistic regression. Farrington and Loeber (2000) support such a method of recoding when there is a need to make results digestible to non-academics. This approach was chosen for the current study because the ultimate aim of this work was to identify factors that could lead a student to perceive a hostile climate, given a very specific set of variables, and given the resistance of Division I coaches and athletics administrators to
base their accepted best practices on peer-reviewed research. Data analysis, descriptive
statistics, inter-item correlations, post-hoc analyses, along with a broader description of data
collection, sites and participants is included in Chapter Three.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

With any study, there are influences that the researcher will not be able to control.
Self-reported data are being used increasingly by institutions, higher education accrediting
agencies, the National Survey of Student Engagement and the Cooperative Institutional
Research Program (Gonyea, 2005); however, this author would like to acknowledge the
nature of self-reporting as a possible limitation for this study, as some authors have recently
questioned the validity and reliability of college student self-reported data (Porter, 2011).
This study relies on self-reported data from college-aged student-athletes, which could be
influenced by social desirability and halo error. Bowman and Hill (2011) describe social
desirability bias as occurring “when students overreport desirable attributes and
behaviors…or underreport undesirable attributes and behaviors” (p. 74). The authors describe
halo error as occurring when a student perceives a certain outcome on one variable and
expresses that same outcome for all variables, even though the others might not have the
same outcome. Halo error could specifically impact this study if a respondent “give[s] similar
scores to different domains…even when the domains are clearly separate” (Thomas,
Beckman, Mauck, Cha, & Thomas, 2011, p. 761). Time constraints are also a possible
limitation to the study as student-athletes are often overburdened with practice, competition,
classwork, travel and study time and might not take the time necessary to accurately reflect
on the items contained within the instrument.
In terms of delimitations, this author will not survey subpopulations on campus that might impact, directly or indirectly, the department climate, but rather, will rely solely on the input of current student-athletes. The groups not surveyed include coaches, athletics administrators, team managers, campus LGBT student organization members, campus student affairs professionals, and the like. These populations, while each playing a role in defining the culture of the institution, could weaken the focus of the study by overextending its breadth. This study is also not employing a mechanism for anecdotal feedback from participants. While such qualitative data could add a thick and rich description to the personal stories of respondents, this author envisions pursuing such research in a future study. The goal of this dissertation is to establish a measureable, quantitative baseline definition of LGBT culture within Division I athletics departments as perceived by current student-athletes, including those who identify as LGBT and those who do not. Finally, this study is not measuring the impact of time, which is Bronfenbrenner’s fourth element of his mature PPC bioecological model. It would be possible to gain this measure should a researcher wish to replicate the study longitudinally, but for the purposes of this dissertation, time will not be used as a variable.

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

Chapter One establishes the setting for this study, illustrating the timeliness of the topic while explaining the need and significance of gathering self-reported perceptions of LGBT climate in intercollegiate athletics. Chapter Two takes an in-depth look at current literature exploring factors that impact the development of the student (person), and those that impact multiple levels of the student’s environment (context). Of the topics to be
reviewed in Chapter Two are student identity development theory, the influence of climate, power dynamics, bullying, and to a lesser extent, contact theory, attachment theory, queer theory, stereotype threat and higher education legal studies. Such a wide net of developmental, theoretical, and practical considerations is necessary for the foundation of this study, as it aims to make the efforts of coaches, athletics personnel, student affairs professionals, faculty and staff more effective in engaging and assisting student-athletes.

Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998) support such a broad spectrum, using a systems thinking approach:

- Rarely is an issue in student affairs so straightforward that one theory will adequately explain it or provide sufficient guidance to address it. Looking at concerns from a variety of perspectives can help practitioners understand the dynamics involved in situations they face and come up with a number of possible strategies to consider. (p. 265)

Chapter Three details the questionnaire-based study, which will reveal student-athlete perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics. Chapter Four will provide statistical analysis and translate the results through the lens of proximal processes (process) those activities that enhance or inhibit the student in reaching their true potential. Chapter Five will discuss the implication of these findings in the hopes of providing actionable steps for institutions.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The timeliness of this study, given the increased national dialogue surrounding LGBT individuals in sports and the passionate advocacy for LGBT issues in current media, fits the natural pattern of formal higher education research “[E]volv[ing] in tandem with activist movements, following trends seen in research on more readily identifiable populations of underrepresented campus groups” (Renn, 2010, p. 133). In furtherance of the timeliness of this study, Green & Trent (2005) suggest institutions of higher education have an obligation to re-evaluate their educational mission and social role as the nation’s values, culture, and demographics evolve. This literature review will provide an overview of identity development theories for the college student. Research for the specific subpopulations of LGBT students and student-athletes will be examined further. Focus will also be placed on the role of climate as it relates to the well-being of LGBT student-athletes. Other topics concerning the experience of today’s LGBT student-athletes at Division I institutions to be reviewed in this section include the institution of sport as an agent of social change, recent legal considerations in higher education, and power dynamics. Together, the review of these works will establish the setting and reinforce the need for the current study to examine the current LGBT culture within major college athletics.

Bronfenbrenner’s Process, Person, Context, and Time Model as Framework

The meaning of theory in any scientific field is to provide a framework within which to explain connections among the phenomena under study and to provide insights leading to the discovery of new connections…for the clarity...
and integrity of scientific thought as well as for compatibility of findings, it is important to make explicit the theoretical framework on which the research is based. (Tudge et al., 2009, p. 198)

Urie Bonfrenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological theory of human development and the enhanced Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), both explained in Chapter One, serves as the theoretical framework for this study. The theory describes a person’s development in relation to multiple environmental levels, focusing on the reciprocal interaction between the individual and the context of each independent environment as well as the collective impact of all environments on the individual. The theory works well for examining the perceived developmental impact of climate for a collegiate student-athlete who identifies as LGBT. The multiple levels of context, from teammates, to coaches, to the university, to the nation’s evolving views on gender identity and sexual orientation, all fit into the bioecological model (see Figure 1.1). The mature version of the bioecological model, PPCT, also detailed in Chapter One, provides a further avenue for examining perceived LGBT student-athlete climate by placing an emphasis on the internal qualities of the person which can influence the perceptions of lived experiences.

Concerns related to proximal processes, the regular occurrences which inhibit or encourage individuals to become the person they have the potential to be (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998), also lend themselves to an examination of student-athlete perceptions of LGBT climate. This is because experiences related to athletic participation can impact a student-athlete’s future trajectory for growth, health, identity, behavior, and career (Dodge & Jaccard, 2006; Huang & Humphries, 2012; Long & Caudill, 1991; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003;
Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013). These proximal process concerns are explored somewhat in this chapter, but more thoroughly in Chapters Four and Five, as the results of the study’s instrument are revealed and examined. This study does not measure the *time* aspect of PPCT; this dimension, which is outside the scope of this dissertation, would likely require a longitudinal study consisting of sample participants completing the instrument on multiple occasions over a certain period of time in order to investigate changes in the sample’s characteristics (Gall et al., 2007).

**Person: Identity Development**

A number of factors impact an individual’s identity development during the college years. Like most young adults, college-aged student-athletes are experiencing internal conflicts, referred to by Erikson (1968) as an identity crisis, struggling to find their role in life and establish their character, sexuality, and career path, as well as attempting to develop friendships and intimate relationships. Chickering and Reisser (1993) further compartmentalized student development during these years into seven vectors including: 1) developing competence, 2) managing emotions, 3) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, 4) developing mature interpersonal relationships, 5) establishing identity, 6) developing purpose, and 7) developing integrity (Valentine & Taub, 2011). It is important for students to be actively involved in their higher education environment in order for growth to take place (Astin, 1977, 1984; Schlossberg, 1989). Involvement on campus leads to improved student learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) and improves the quality of campus life (Gardner, 1989). Providing a student with a sense of belonging also contributes to his
personal development and can lead to increased community involvement throughout his college career (Akens & Novak, 2011).

In his survey of identity development theories, Arnett (2000) reviewed volumes of previous research and established emerging adulthood as distinct from adolescence and young adulthood in cultures that allow for such role exploration during what most would consider traditional college years. The author found support from multiple sources, including Levinson (1978), who interviewed men 17 to 33 years old and found them struggling to establish relationships and choose a life path. Also, Keniston (1971) identified a tension between a person’s self and society experienced during their youth. Further strengthening Arnett’s theory, Erikson (1968) asserted individuals in industrialized societies at this stage of their life participate in role experimentation prior to adulthood. Thus, Arnett’s (2000) theory applies to the experiences of LGBT student-athletes in that they are experiencing role exploration at a stage of life between adolescence and young adulthood.

**LGBT identity.** Rankin, Case, Windmeyer, Eberly, Hesp, Miller and Molasso (2007), cite the work of Pascarella and Terenzini in discussing identity development of LGBT students stating “[S]exual identity formation is generally recognized as one of the many facets of individual development influenced by the experiences and interactions associated with college life” (p. 1). Many students who identify as LGBT experience stressors unique to the population during these years including suppression of identity and internalized homophobia as a result of self-loathing based on society’s classification of them as a member of a minority group (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011; Smith, Oades, & McCarthy, 2012; Zubernis & Snyder, 2007).
Researchers have used a wide range of models for exploring LGBT identity, each of which offers guidance to the current study. For example, although not a scientific study, Zubernis and Snyder’s (2007) suggestions seem to come from more of an intuitive approach based on their experiences as assistant professors in counseling and educational psychology as they employed only three sources in their article, while Smith, Oades, & McCarthy (2012) reach their findings through an extensive historical literature review tracing the evolution in the definition of the concepts of homophobia and heterosexism. Whether a literature review, a qualitative testimonial, a focus group summary, an observation, or an empirical climate survey, LGBT identity literature provides a foundation for the current study.

Bilodeau and Renn’s (2005) review of literature related to identity development for LGBT individuals noted sexual identity exploration and identification seemed to be occurring at earlier ages. The researchers reviewed opposing theories that suggest LGBT identity is reached in clearly-d discernable, rigid developmental stages while others theories indicated identity is reached along a more fluid continuum throughout the individual’s lifespan. The researchers offered student affairs practitioners a list of strengths and weaknesses for each of a myriad of developmental models while stressing the importance of the individual institution’s political and sociohistorical contexts when considering the design of LGBT student support initiatives.

In her frequently-cited article focused on theoretical foundations of identity formation for homosexual students, Cass (1984) assessed the validity of a six-stage model of identity acquisition. Through use of the Stage Allocation Measure and the Homosexual Identity Questionnaire, she found greater support for distilling the six stages to four in an effort to
more accurately understand the homosexual perspective. These stages include Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, and Identity Acceptance. Although the sample was small (n=166), the findings should prove beneficial by providing a predicted order of identity development for LGBT individuals.

In their study of LGBT people in fraternities and sororities, Rankin et al. (2007) discussed the identity development of LGBT students. To attract participants, the researchers astutely solicited media outlets, LGBT advocate websites, and attendees of LGBT- and higher education-related national conferences. Once an individual agreed to participate, the researchers encouraged snowball sampling to grow the number of participants. The survey asked about participants’ personal experiences as well as the climate within their fraternity, between fraternities and within the campus at large. The authors noted the likely impact of self-selection bias, which acknowledges that generalizations from responses gathered might not be generalizable to individuals who choose not respond (Sedgwick, 2011). The authors also recognize the influence of history for some respondents reflecting on their time in college from more than 25 years prior. Overall, the study found respondents entering college after the year 2000 were more likely to come out during college, attend LGBT venues and events while in college, engage in same-gender sexual activity during college and report a more hospitable fraternity and campus climate that those participants who attended prior to the year 2000.

Callahan’s (2001) article encouraged schools to invest in additional counselors trained in LGBT issues in order to assist the students’ personal development while protecting them from harassment. Maintaining a theme in the literature, this article is not an experiment,
does not attempt qualitative research and does not involve observations or interviews. The author reviewed court cases related to legal action against schools and offers hindsight suggestions as how best to avoid repeating those errors. The field has advanced a great deal since the printing of this article, but Callahan (2001), nonetheless offers four strategies “to facilitate the development and safety of this population” (p. 9) that are still valid today. The author suggests counselors complete formal LGBT training, push to infuse curricula with LGBT individuals and issues, make the counseling office a safe environment for LGBT students and be empowered to address issues impacting the population without fear.

In researching career identity development for LGBT students, Schmidt, Miles, & Welsh (2011), solicited participation of LGBT students by email list serve announcement to LGBT campus groups across the country. Respondents completed instruments to measure social support, career decision, perceived discrimination and adjustment to college. Schmidt et al. (2011) found that “social support plays a critical role in career indecision and college adjustment for LGBT undergraduates” (p. 304).

Student-athlete identity. It is possible the increased popularity of athletics in society along with increased scrutiny of major college athletics in popular media has coincided with an increase in publication of student-athlete identity development in current academic literature. Prior to 1969, the combined databases of the researcher’s university system reveal fewer than ten results in any given year when searching for the key words of student-athletes, identity, athletics, and development. Between 1969 and 1981, the same search reveals a modest number of findings, but still not exceeding twenty-five articles for any single year. However, researchers have published at least one-hundred articles related to student-athlete
identity development every year since 1997 with a peak of 470 sources identified in 2010. Topics addressed include, but are not limited to: variance in levels of academic preparedness; high-risk behaviors; consequences of injury; faculty stereotyping; and the like.

Valentine and Taub (2011) used Chickering’s developmental model to describe the needs of collegiate student-athletes. Although there is no actual quantitative or qualitative measure conducted in the article, the authors’ hypothesized how Chickering’s seven vectors related to student-athlete development. They further demonstrated how this approach could advance counseling interventions for this population by encouraging research “that illuminates within-group differences among student athletes (sic) based on such factors as gender, race/ethnicity, class year, and sport” (p. 177). The current study hopes to answer the researchers’ call by survey both in- and out-group student-athletes.

In their study of identity salience effect on task performance, Yopyk and Prentice (2005) found student-athletes assume different identities for the specific task they are facing. Participants also performed differently based on the identity with which they had most recently identified. Student-athletes who reflected on an academic achievement before taking a math test scored higher than student-athletes who reflected on an athletic achievement prior to the exam.

Also identifying the tendency of student-athletes to place their sport at the core of their identity, Weigand, Cohen, and Mertenstein (2013) consider the prevalence of depression within the population both during and after their playing career. The authors surveyed 280 current and former Division I collegiate student-athletes by administering the Wakefield Depression Scale and a series of demographic identifiers via Survey Monkey. The
authors found significant levels of depression in over 16 percent of current student-athletes and eight percent of former student-athletes. Results could indicate pressure on current student-athletes to disregard the signs of depression and simply fight through any symptoms in keeping with the popular coaching adage to *play through the pain*. Similarly, there could exist a stigma that admitting to depression could be a sign of weakness on the part of the individual and that admitting such might let down the team (Lopez & Levy, 2010). Finally, the authors suggest the drop in depression indicators after student-athletes complete their career illustrates the severity of stressors exist much more prevalently within the climate experienced by active players. Recognizing this heightened susceptibility to depression during a student-athletes athletic eligibility and the corresponding ambivalence on the part of student-athletes to discuss the impact of these stressors, it appears all the more paramount to establish the level of support for student-athletes who identify as LGBT so as to keep at least this aspect of their identity development from becoming one that could lead to depression.
Figure 2.1. Identity concerns for collegiate LGBT Student-Athletes. (Astin, 1977; Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Erikson, 1968; Maslow, 1943; Yukhymenko-Lescroart, 2014)

Context: Importance of Environment

Schlossberg (1989), focusing on the idea of building community, attempts to identify efforts that bridge individual differences and lead all students to feel as though they belong and have importance on campus:

We are aware of classifications and issues that divide us. There are many – ethnicity, age, gender, social class, sexual preferences, religion, and politics,
to name a few. This awareness of different experiences, different expectations, and different voices raises a perplexing set of questions: With all these differences separating us, what connects us? Do we have a shared humanity? Can a campus community be created that allows all students to find a place of involvement and importance? (p. 5)

Involvement in intercollegiate athletics provides the subpopulation of student-athletes the common connection of which Schlossberg inquires, thereby creating a sense of community. The hours spent together in practice, conditioning, travel, and competition leads to a bond between participants that other groups on campus might not naturally reach; teammates know that each member of the team, including himself or herself, matter to the success of the whole (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001). However, Schlossberg (1989) suggested students can also struggle with marginality, a feeling of not fully being accepted despite their importance to the group.

**Campus environment.** While the number of reported hate crimes based on sexual orientation has increased nationwide in recent years (Mustanski, 2013) the U.S. Department of Education reports such crimes at four-year institutions has decreased from 185 in 2009 to 167 in 2014 (crime reporting statistics based on gender identity were not collected until 2014) (“Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool,” 2015). The trend of increased safety on campuses versus the larger society could be attributable to many institutions having begun to invest in resources for LGBT students, including campus programming, dedicated advisers, LGBT-friendly residence options, and safe space training for students and employees (Lipka, 2011) as administrators have realized organizational
health can significantly impact student achievement (Hoy & Hannum, 1997). Other institutions have hired consultants to conduct climate audits.

In a report conducted in 2011 by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, an organization that researches and advocates for healthy learning environments for all K-12 students in the United States, researchers found LGBT students report feeling unsafe in their school and experience adverse effects on their academic performance and psychological health (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). While participants in this study were middle-school and high school students, the report is significant to the current study in that it represents the experiences of students who are currently in college. The report is also indicative of the current state of LGBT research in education, in that it is conducted by an advocacy organization as opposed to campus researchers investigating their own institution, the latter of which, is encouraged by this author.

Woodford, Howell, Silverschanz, and Yu (2012), surveyed 114 self-identified GLB students in relation to their health and well-being when hearing the phrase “that’s so gay” in conversation. The researchers found “participant’s social and physical well-being was negatively associated with hearing this phrase, specifically feeling isolated and experiencing physical health symptoms (i.e., headaches, poor appetite, or eating problems)” (p. 429). As student-athletes may be conditioned to find such language as part of the locker room culture to which they must conform, this finding provides justification for athletics departments to regularly assess their climate and address any such harmful language in the interest of student-athlete well-being.
Institutions that establish educationally purposeful engagement with students both inside and outside the classroom identify that today’s population of college students is not the homogenous affluent, White, heterosexual, male population of a century ago; as such, they recognize the need to evaluate in theory and practicality, the way climate is perceived by each subpopulation and arrange for meaningful campus programming and course content and delivery which will engage and support each individual student (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Kuh, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As a key to unlocking a student-athlete’s potential, works such as Harper and Quaye’s 2009 book, *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations*, might be just as important a read for coaches and sports administrators as the Athletics Office staples of Coach Mike Krzyzewski’s *Leading with Heart*, Coach John Wooden’s *Wooden on Leadership*, or Coach Vince Lombardi’s *What it Takes to Be #1*.

**Athletic environment.** As sports play a significant role in establishing what a man or woman might believe to be his or her role in society (Messner & Sabo, 1990), team climate has a significant influence on a student-athlete’s construct of gender (Messner, 1989). With a focus on student-athletes and masculinity, Anderson (2008) conducted a qualitative study of the masculinity of high school football players. Employing a social constructivist perspective, the author used multiple methods to interview and observe heterosexual athletes who played football, a more masculine sport, in high school but had become cheerleaders, a more feminine sport, in college. The researcher refers to the practice of considering masculine sports more prestigious than feminine ones as heteromasculine stratification. Findings indicated a wide-ranging spectrum of participant responses to the gay or feminine
cheerleading stereotype, with some disregarding the notion and others aggressively
“[H]anging on to their lost identity… [as] part of a larger strategy [called] defensive

Sternod (2011) found the defense of heterosexuality and accompanying hostility
toward homosexuality to be engrained in culture of sports as part of participants’
development. In his literature review of current research, legal cases, books written by former
athletes, and news coverage of LGBT issues in sports, the author found a dominant
heterosexual culture enveloped locker rooms, playing fields, and the overall sport culture.
Male athletes were conditioned to act masculine, promote their sexual conquests, and
antagonize the LGBT culture so as to prove they know how to be a man, while female
athletes were pressured to over-accentuate their femininity and alienate teammates who
might appear to be lesbian in the hopes of removing any doubt as to their sexuality
(Anderson & Bullingham, 2013; Griffin, 2002; Steinfeldt, Carter, Benton, & Steinfeldt,
2011; Sternod, 2011).

In their study comparing athletic participation habits of self-identified homosexual or
bisexual adults to heterosexual adults, Elling and Janssens (2009) found a large majority of
homosexual or bisexual individuals preferred to participate in gay/lesbian oriented or gay
friendly sports clubs, regardless of the sport. This finding suggests a more hostile
environment could be perceived by an LGBT individual in public university athletics
department when compared to the atmosphere of gay-friendly sports clubs. The authors also
found fewer sport-related role models for same-sex attracted individuals in sports as
compared to other leisure activities. The researchers go on to cite the disproportionate
amount of qualitative research regarding homosexual participation in mainstream sporting activities as compared to quantitative research. Additionally, the authors recognized national sport participation databases do not often use sexual identity as a relevant demographic characteristic.

In studying LGBT climate in high school activities, Osborne and Wagner (2007) used data from the Philadelphia Educational Longitudinal Study which consisted of phone interviews with a random sample of over 1,400 students. The researchers found participants in core sports were much more likely to express homophobic beliefs while participation in nonathletic extracurricular activities decreased the likelihood. As with Elling and Janssens’ (2009) findings, perhaps athletic departments could study the factors that make non-athlete culture more appealing to LGBT students.

As previous studies should always be considered for re-examination, Jimerson (2001) offers a new analysis of an oft-cited 1991 article by Curry focused on interpretation of observed conversations occurring in locker rooms of two major athletic programs of contact sports at Midwestern universities. The researcher argues that applying conversation analysis, in which “any utterance can have multiple meanings” (Jimerson, 2001, p. 317) rather than Curry’s original profeminist perspective, which, “[gives] special attention to sexist and homophobic remarks that reveal assumptions about masculinity, male dominance, and fraternal bonding” (Curry as cited in Jimerson, 2001, p. 318) refutes the original author’s claim that no one challenged the sexism and homophobia in either of two locker rooms. Re-examination using this method has found some responses to crass comments to be adversarial, disagreeable or downplayed. Considering the increased social acceptance of
LGBT individuals over the past decade since Jimerson’s re-evaluation, the current study will re-analyze Division I locker room culture to see if such acceptance has grown further.

Also recognizing the possibility that the climate within a women’s sporting team locker room might evolve at a different rate as that of the broader culture, Anderson and Bullingham (2013) investigated the experience of lesbian student-athletes. The authors revisited interviews Anderson had conducted, but had not summarized, with twelve self-identified lesbian collegiate student-athletes in 2002. Ten student-athletes reported support from their teammates, while two faced overt hostility, including damage to property and assault; such overt hostility was not reported in over 100 interviews conducted by Anderson with male student-athletes reported between 2002 and 2011. The authors report four significant findings: 1) a coach’s attitude is likely to impact teammate responses to an openly lesbian student, 2) a student with greater athletic value to the team might have an easier time coming out, 3) as the membership of a collegiate sports team changes each year with seniors graduating and freshman joining, the lesbian student-athlete must experience her coming out multiple times during her career, and 4) homohysteria, the fear a heterosexual teammate might have of being perceived as lesbian or gay, is still prevalent in women’s sports.

The sense of community within intercollegiate athletics, despite its widely-diverse student composition, can serve as a model for the campus, as a whole (Levine & Cureton, 1998; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001). Having conducted interviews with student-athletes at five Division I institutions regarding the sense of community within college athletics, Wolf-Wendel et al., 2001) found:
These bonds link students across most differences, including race, socioeconomic status, and geographic background. Student-athletes, coaches, and athletics administrators suggest several ways that participation fosters community for members of teams. Those who participate in intercollegiate athletics recognize the following traits as facilitating intergroup cooperation:

- Sharing a common goal
- Engaging in intense, frequent interaction
- Sharing adversity in the form of hard work, suffering, and sacrifice
- Having a common “enemy”
- Recognizing that each individual has something important to contribute
- Holding team members accountable
- Having coaches who guide them
- Exposure to difference from an early age (pp. 376-377)

The authors follow their work with a companion paper, which was presented at the ASHE annual meeting in November 2002, which found student-athletes to readily accept many forms of diversity within their team, while remaining hostile to LGB student-athletes (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2000). Given trending national advances for LGBT individuals in the fourteen years since, the time is ripe to re-examine this aspect of athletic community climate.

Mullin (2013) refined the Heterosexist Attitudes in the Sport-Lesbian questionnaire based on the multilateral model of attitudes drawn from affective, behavioral and cognitive sources of information. Wishing to expand the quantitative data available in the area of
homophobia and heterosexism in women’s athletics, the researcher established four subscales which were found to be an acceptable fit for the theory including Cognitive/Affective, Language Behaviors, Inclusion Behaviors, and Avoidance of the Lesbian Label. Mullin’s (2013) work confirms the impact of a heterosexist attitude in women’s athletics. Although the response rate was low in this study, it encourages further research in sexual orientation for athletic departments.

It is interesting to note the variety in the designs utilized when investigating LGBT climate and experiences of LGBT students, particularly those who are athletes. Given this variance, it is difficult to draw reliable comparisons and contrasts between articles in the hopes of defining an overall culture. In acknowledging this aspect of research in the small, but growing, body of literature as it currently exists, I hope this study, and the ease of its replication by other researchers, will more concisely provide uniformity across campuses for institutions wishing to examine their own climate for LGBT student-athletes.

**Workplace environment.** In her policy review article focused on best practices in the field of social work as related to gender identity concerns, Markman (2011) provided a series of workplace advances that are possible in the short term, which could provide a more welcoming environment for the transgender and gender-nonconforming community. The author suggested broadening gender continuum items for incoming patients to self-select on intake forms, hosting gender sensitivity training for employees, and enhancing physical facilities to be more gender-neutral. While the author’s case for change is strong, and her passion for advocacy is clear, the article did not engage social work practitioners directly
through interview or survey, nor did she explain her basis for having a legitimate level of expertise in the field.

Liddle, Luzzo, Hauenstein and Schuck (2004) also investigated LGBT climate within the workplace. In establishing of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Climate Inventory (LGBTCI), an instrument for measuring workplace LGBT climate, the researchers found, “Workers treated with respect…are more likely to work in a manner that promotes and enhances their organization, their coworkers, and themselves. [In contrast,] discrimination may…reduce creative energy, decrease collaboration, and increase feelings of isolation, anxiety, and psychological distress” (Liddle et al., 2004, p. 35). This current study employs Liddle et al.’s (2004) instrument, as it can be applied to student-athletes, who serve the institution as quazi-employees. Liddle et al. remind researchers that focusing only on the harassing or discriminatory behaviors would not truly gauge the continuum of a climate; therefore, the LGBTCI has been engineered to also address affirmative behaviors in the workplace.

**Power dynamics as context.** One could have an optimistic outlook toward future LGBT research in athletics if one were to consider the successful application of critical race theory (CRT) and its influence on advancing the study of factors impacting racially underrepresented students in higher education. Chafe (2007) examined the analogies between the experiences of women and African-Americans in a white male dominated society and suggested:

[CRT] provides greater flexibility in exploring how the experience of one group can inform the study of another [and] it has the potential of developing
insights into the larger processes by which the status quo is perpetuated from generation to generation…The best way to pursue [such an understanding] is through looking closely at the process of social control as it has operated on one group, and then comparing it with the process and experience of the second group. (p. 659)

The researcher examined the social control exercised on African Americans by White Southerners by reviewing Richard Wright’s autobiographical novel *Black Boy*. It is possible that other groups today, namely LGBT students, could face the concentric circles of control as detailed by Wright, which prevent individuals from opposing the status quo. These forces include physical intimidation, adverse economic consequences, and the psychological conditioning that leads people to expect less of, or deny themselves the chance to live and achieve how they please. The current study examines possible impacts of such controls of a heteromajoritive culture on LGBT students in Division I athletics.

The power of the majority is also the focus of McIntosh (1988), who views the unwillingness or inability of members of the privileged culture to acknowledge their “[U]n-earned advantage and conferred dominance” (p. 181) as another hurdle for persons in the non-majority culture. Although there are differences between racism, sexism, and heterosexism, the mechanisms leading to such control are to a great extent interlocking. While it may be easy for an individual in a dominant class to identify and disapprove of active forms of oppression, it can be much more difficult for the person to identify the embedded systems that maintain the dominance, which they might not realize contributes to their lot in life. As with male privilege and White privilege, as long as members of the
dominant group do not recognize, discuss, and dismantle the structures which continue to promote the dominant heterosexual image (Cass, 1984), those with a different orientation will continue to be disenfranchised.

**Recent LGBT Legal Considerations.** Between January 2013 and June 2014, the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission received 1,585 allegations of sex discrimination related to gender identity or sexual orientation with total monetary benefits of nearly $2.8M going to claimants (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2015).

In her meta-analysis of LGBT concerns related to intercollegiate athletics, Baird (2002) reviews a great number of legal cases surrounding Title IX, the 1972 Federal law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex within all educational programs receiving Federal aid. The author passionately builds the case morally and legally against sexual harassment, religious indoctrination, discrimination, and deliberate indifference. Similarly, Ball (2010) covered five landmark legal cases moving LGBT individuals toward equal citizenship in America. These cases decided between 1989 and 2003 recognized the rights of LGBT individuals to marry, be recognized as a family, engage in same-sex sexuality, pursue antidiscrimination protections, and to be protected against harassment based on sexual orientation. More recent legal cases have advanced the LGBT cause even further. One example is the repeal of Don’t Ask Don’t Tell, which prohibited military service members from engaging in same-sex behaviors and unintentionally led to many individuals being discharged or discouraged from serving. Another example is the repeal of section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibited the Federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages (Gates & Rodgers, 2013).
Perhaps no case better exemplifies the hostile treatment of a college student-athlete who identifies as LGBT as that of Pennsylvania State University women’s basketball player Jennifer Harris (Hohler, 2006; Newhall & Buzuvis, 2008; Sternod, 2011). In 2005, Harris sued the institution claiming she had been discriminated against because of her sexual orientation and that the head coach did not allow lesbians on her team. Although the case was settled out of court in 2007, Head Coach Rene Portland resigned from her position after 27 years. More illustrative of the department’s negative LGBT climate and furtherance of much public skepticism toward major college athletics was then Director of Athletics, Tim Curley’s claim that Harris was not forced to resign (Armas, 2007).

Other recent LGBT-related cases further amplify the importance of institutional awareness of permissible and impermissible behaviors and policies. Harassment of graduate students by supervisors (Abrams, 2013; Leguina v. Columbia, 2013), firing of employees over their sexual orientation (Brenny v. Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2012; Chanen, 2014), denial of institutional services based on sexual orientation (Rudow, 2013; Ward v. Eastern Michigan et al., 2011), and student group membership and exclusion (Banks, 2012; Christian Legal Society Chapter of the University of California v. Martinez, 2010) are examples of contentious issues which cause a great deal of emotional, political, legal, and reputational costs to individuals and institutions. Moreover, the dramatic increase of gender related complaints, particularly those based in athletics (Waldron, 2015), serve as motivation for administrators to evaluate their own campus climate, policies and procedures.
**Process: Regularly-occurring Experiences**

*Stereotype threat.* One possible climate-related hurdle within the proximal processes preventing LGBT student-athletes from fully benefitting from their college experience might be their perception of the overt or covert societal stereotypes within the department. Non-LGBT student-athletes may not be aware of these perceptions. In his study of underperforming female and Black students on math tests and verbal tests, respectively, Steele (2003) uses the term *stereotype threat* to describe such “exposure to negative images and stereotypes about one’s group [which] can lead to chronic self-doubts, low self-esteem, low performance expectancies, and the like, and these states, in turn, can undermine school performance” (p. 315). Steele (1997) further explains the damage done by stereotype threat can go beyond simply underperformance on an exam, by impacting the individual’s core identity, a concept he calls disidentification. The author describes this concept as:

> A reconceptualization of the self and of one’s values so as to remove the domain as a self-identity, as a basis of self-evaluation [which] offers the retreat of not caring about the domain in relation to the self [and] can undermine sustained motivation in the domain, an adaptation that can be costly when the domain is as important as schooling. (p. 616)

While not necessarily impacting student-athletes’ performance in the arena of sport, for purposes of this study, the impact of stereotype threat on their self-worth or on their social interactions (Feltz, Schneider, Hwang, & Skogsberg, 2013), could go unnoticed by teammates and coaches.
Translating these findings from Steele’s study to a Division I locker room, makes the case all the more urgent for athletics departments to assess their climate, especially since stereotype threat can theoretically impact student-athletes at any level of ability (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). The national media attention surrounding the coming out and eventual selection of Michael Sam demonstrates that student-athletes who are portrayed as emotionally and mentally tough can still fall prey to stereotype threat (Glazek, 2014). Given the overall lack of research on LGBT issues in higher education (Sanlo, 2002), it is not surprising that coaches and leaders could intentionally or inadvertently marginalize LGBT student-athletes through stereotyping or offensive behavior and language.

**Implicit bias.** Sometimes microaggressions, stereotyping and discrimination occur outside of a well-intentioned person’s awareness (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Sue et al., 2007) when, within the brain, the limbic system, which controls automatic responses, responds to a stimulus before a person’s prefrontal cortex, or the emotional manager, can control the impulse (Wilson, 2004). This process of a person’s mind pairing concepts with attributes is necessary to help people learn from past experiences and prepare for future experiences (Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2010). For example, if you are bitten by a dog as a child, you might subconsciously associate dogs with pain and learn to fear them from that moment forward. This concept is the same in the associations students draw in interactions with other students. Such occurrences, however, may be contrary to an individual’s values and beliefs; according to Staats (2013):

> While people can monitor their verbal behaviors pretty well, they do not monitor and control their nonverbal behaviors as effectively or as often; the
prejudiced attitudes they are trying to conceal can “leak,” thereby revealing their true stances. (p. 15)

This study aims to evaluate if today’s LGBT student-athletes face hostility within their athletics program, whether it be in the form of overt aggression or as implicit bias, which can be just as psychologically damaging (Nadal et al., 2011).

**Role of mentors and champions.** In his overview of the experiences of LGBT students in community colleges, Ivory (2005) identified the lack of role models as a major barrier to creating and maintaining their connection to campus. Without a visible LGBT staff or faculty member, these students might be denied the opportunity to be mentored and might believe “they are not valued [and might] leave the institution, or, worse yet, not accept who they are” (Cullen & Smart, as cited in Ivory, 2005, p. 65). Mentors, whether identifying as LGBT or not, play an important role in helping to create and sustain LGBT student organizations and support services. After all, it was the support of the university chaplain, who, in 1967, “prevented Columbia [University] officials from revoking the [first LGBT student organization, the Student Homophile League’s] charter” (Beemyn, 2003, p. 207).

Although not a scientific study, Barber and Krane (2007) provided a brief, advocate opinion editorial, supported with peer-reviewed sources, encouraging mentors of LGBT student-athletes to address overt and covert homophobia by beginning a healthy dialogue about issues that might be impacting the population. The authors suggested coaches and teachers learn to examine their own biases and monitor their own behavior by attending LGBT training sessions and reading LGBT literature. Though not using Steele’s (2003) vocabulary, the authors address stereotype threat by encouraging teachers and coaches to
display and incorporate LGBT books, artists and athletes into their vocabulary and their surroundings to create a more inviting climate.

Examining support for employees of college athletics departments who identify as LGBT, Melton and Cunningham (2014) find multiple levels of analysis needed to critically identify factors that influence inclusiveness. Large-scope issues such as the culture of the sport, mid-level population concerns such as the number of champions within the specific department, and individual concerns such as open-mindedness, can collectively and individually impact the culture of the department, thereby illustrating Bronfenbrenner’s multiple-layers of contextual influence on the individual. The authors report employees who effectively support LGBT inclusiveness “modeled supportive behaviors and positive attitudes toward LGBT individuals, vocally opposed discriminatory treatment, and provided sexual minorities with a safe space within sport” (p. 189). Chapter three proposes an examination of similar factors and their influence of championing support for student-athletes who identify as LGBT.

Contact theory. Focused on higher education, Bowen and Bourgeois (2001) surveyed over 100 college students living in residence halls about their attitudes toward lesbian, gay and bisexual students. Many students rated themselves less anti-gay than their friends rated them. Further, students who reported having LGB students living on their floor indicated significantly more positive attitudes than those who reported no such students. These findings support Allport’s (1954) contact theory, which posits that stereotypes and negative beliefs about a group can be overcome by interacting with members of that group (Bowen & Bourgeois, 2001). The work is supported by Roper and Halloran (2007) who
found student-athletes to possess more positive attitudes toward gay and men and lesbians, if they reported having contact with gay men and lesbians. Bowen and Bourgeois (2001) suggest administrators arrange for intentional interaction between LGB and non-LGB students to create a more hospitable climate. While research did not address attitudes toward or contact with student-athletes who identify as transgender, it is reasonable to posit that increased contact with this population could produce a similar evolution toward acceptance, as with other populations.

For purposes of this study, Research Question Three asks: Do student-athletes who report not having an out LGBT coach or team member perceive warmer LGBT climate than those who do report having an out LGBT coach or teammate? In this case, when applying contact theory it is possible that a student-athlete who has grown to know an LGBT coach or teammate might become more aware of overt and covert hostilities faced by them, and upon witnessing such, be more apt to report a chillier climate within the department.

In a pair of studies examining the connection between friendship contact and implicit bias, Aberson, Shoemaker, and Tomolillo (2004) found White students who report having a close friend who is African American or Latina/o exhibited less implicit bias than individuals without such friends. The researchers asked White students to take the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), which measures a person’s reaction time in associating faces with positively or negatively charges words as an indicator of the subject’s unconscious bias. Participants also completed four measures of explicit bias and a demographic questionnaire, which indicated their number of African-American friends for the first study and Latina/o friends for the second study. While all individuals indicated some
level of implicit bias, participants with friends of color reported much lower levels, as well as lower levels of explicit bias. The current study aims to investigate the impact of friendships of the dominant culture with the non-dominant culture of student-athletes who identify as LGBT.

Blanchard (1992) also considering the impact of close associations with students of color, or lack thereof, indicates very few White college students have lived in integrated neighborhoods, been taught by black teachers, or worked for black employer. As such, the views these students hold of African Americans, while largely favorable, are not informed by lived experiences. Many of these individuals, while well-intentioned, are naive to the behaviors that lead to inadvertently racist acts (McIntosh, 1988; Steele, 2003). Viewing someone’s intentions rather than viewing the systemic power structures that lead to a discriminatory act is one reason why younger people in the United States might believe racism, sexism, and heterosexism is a thing of the past (Rothenberg, 2007). In relation to this study, it is possible that heterosexual student-athletes, coaches, and staff might unintentionally promulgate hostilities toward LGBT student-athletes by not recognizing the structures currently in place that perpetuate heterosexism, if they have not been informed by the lived experiences of LGBT students-athletes.

**Bullying and hazing.** While many of the societal and organizational forces that maintain power differences between groups in the United States are subtle and covert such as implicit bias and stereotype threat, there are also, blatant and overt mechanisms used to display and maintain power, such as bullying. Weddle (2004) describes bullying as “a persistent pattern of intimidation and harassment directed at a particular student in order to
humiliate, frighten, or isolate the child” (p. 645) which can include, but is not limited to, teasing, pushing, insults, and exclusion. Without intervention from peers or authority figures, LGBT students continue to face verbal, gestural, and physical harassment as a result of the unquestioned heteronormative dominance granted to non-LGBT persons (Watson & Miller, 2012).

Perhaps a term more common to studies related to college athletics is hazing. Like bullying, hazing is an exercise of power, but is defined as “any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate” (Hoover, as cited in Crow & Rosner, 2012, pp. 87-88). Hazing activities can include nonthreatening behaviors such as freshmen having to carry a senior student’s gym bag, to embarrassing behaviors such as singing songs in front of teammates, to emotionally- and physically-damaging actions such as binge drinking, destruction of property, and assault. Campo, Poulos, and Sipple (2005) report that although 72 percent of NCAA student-athletes participated in hazing, 60 percent said they would not report it; stating further:

Whether these students decided to remain silent because they truly believed that they did not engage in hazing, because they were expressing team loyalty, or because they did not understand the concept of hazing is uncertain. Confusion about the definition of hazing appears prevalent. Although definitions of hazing exist, students often complain that hazing policies are not explicit enough or disagree that specific activities are hazing. (p. 138)
Hazing in athletics has received increased attention in recent years following the resignation of offensive lineman Jonathan Martin from the Miami Dolphins football team as a result of “harassment, racism, bullying, homophobia and overall cultural intolerance in one National Football League locker room” (Babb, 2014). The story gained nation-wide attention following the release of tweets and voicemails in which Martin received threats and abuse from teammates. An internal investigation found that the hazing activity was well-known by team members, coaches and administrators, furthering the notion that the silence of survivors, participants, and bystanders leads to a culture that perpetuates the occurrence of hazing and bullying (Campo et al., 2005; Crow & Rosner, 2012; Weddle, 2004).

**Sport as Social Change Agent**

The institution of sport has long served as a vehicle for social change in America. Heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali’s refusal to be drafted into service for the United States’ Armed Forces during the Viet Nam conflict led him to be found guilty of violating the United States Selective Service laws. He was subsequently sentenced to five years in prison, which was later appealed, fined $10,000, banned from professional boxing for three years and stripped of his championship (Gorsevski & Butterworth, 2011). Jackie Robinson is remembered for breaking the color barrier in sport by becoming the first black professional baseball player in the modern era of Major League baseball (Damio, 2009). Women’s tennis champion Billie Jean King’s defeat of tennis champion and self-proclaimed chauvinist Bobby Riggs in the 1972 Battle of the Sexes is viewed as a turning point in American sport and in the broader movement of modern American feminism (Roberts, 2005). In the 1968 Olympics, with world-wide media coverage, American medalists
Tommie Smith and John Carlos famously stood shoeless, heads bowed with a single black-gloved fist in the air during the playing of the National Anthem as part of the medal ceremony in a show of solidarity with the Olympic Project for Human Rights and support for black athletes (Bass, 2006). In 2015, as a result of perceived inaction of university administrators to address incidents and other conditions that led to a hostile environment for students of color at the University of Missouri, members of the football team went on strike, refusing to participate in athletic activities and threatening to boycott an upcoming nationally-televised game, unless the system president and campus chancellor were removed from their respective office. Within 48 hours of the team’s announcement on social media, both men had resigned (Son & Madhani, 2015). These cases illustrate the power of athletics to move the national dialogue related to social justice issues.

Today, sports figures are making social statements regarding the acceptance of LGBT athletes. LGBT and non-LGBT individuals can sign a pledge at AthleteAlly.org, br{achethesilence.org, or visit GO!Athletes to advance LGBTQ inclusion in sports (Elfman, 2013). The YouCanPlay.org campaign encourages sporting teams as well as high school and collegiate athletics departments to produce videos encouraging LGBT individuals to participate in athletics. Professional athletes have come out publically representing the sports of tennis, basketball, soccer, softball, diving, boxing, track, and recently in the National Basketball Association. In November 2014, Division I men’s basketball had its first openly gay student-athlete play in a regular-season contest when Maryland junior Derrick Gordon scored 17 points and grabbed nine rebounds against Siena (Fagan, 2014).
Summary

Regardless of theory, athletics administrators need to evaluate their own LGBT climate in order to gage the presence of any possible chilling effects (Hall & Sandler, 1982) within the department and recognize the possibility of an adverse impact on the athletic and academic achievement of the student-athlete. Barron and Bradford, along with Hemphill and Symons (as cited in Carless, 2011) suggested, “[E]ntrenched power dynamics and social processes operating within school and sport settings have shaped – and continue to shape – the identity development, health, well-being, safety, privilege and prospects of same-sex attracted young people” (p. 608). Bandura (1997) similarly connects the dots between climate and performance through the study of self-efficacy, which he defines as the “beliefs in one’s capacity to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). The department’s climate, therefore, serves as the foundation upon which student-athletes base their self-efficacy required for identity development. Accordingly, coaches and student affairs professionals should identify factors that might influence “the self-assurance with which people approach and manage difficult tasks [which] determines whether they make good or poor use of their capabilities [because such] insidious self-doubts can easily overrule the best of skills” (Bandura, 1997, p. 35). These efforts to dispel any sense of perceived marginality can reinforce an LGBT student-athlete’s sense of mattering, thereby strengthening the sense of community and providing a healthier climate for individual identity development (Schlossberg, 1989). The study suggested in Chapter Three provides for such an evaluation of athletics departmental LGBT climate in the hopes of defining barriers or affirming the support available to student-athletes. Armed with these results,
athletic departments can illustrate Wolf-Wendel et al.’s (2001) claim that “community is not only a process of stressing what is common to the group, but also of accepting differences within the group” (p. 371) by allowing student-athletes who identify as LGBT to devote their whole selves to the team as they develop their identity and compete on behalf of the institution.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to determine how student-athletes perceive the climate for LGBT student-athletes within their department of intercollegiate athletics. The target population for this study consists of all 173,500 Division I student-athletes playing 37 sports divided among three subdivisions at all 346 NCAA Division I institutions (NCAA, 2016, Division I Facts and Figures). This study aims to obtain responses from a significant sample of these students in an effort to generalize to the larger population. Data will be collected over the course of three months in the middle of the academic year as participants complete an online 53-item instrument, distributed via Redcap software. Additional data will be collected to explore policies and documents relevant to Division I athletics at identified institutions.

Institutions of higher education that choose to sponsor Division I sports make a commitment to abide by NCAA legislation, including Bylaw 2.2, which states “Intercollegiate athletics programs shall be conducted in a manner designed to protect and enhance the physical and educational well-being of student-athletes” (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014, p. 3). The NCAA also addresses inclusion concerns legislatively, through Bylaw 20.9.1.9, which states:

The Division I membership believes in and is committed to the core values of diversity, inclusion and equity, because realization of those values improves the learning environment for all student-athletes … The membership shall create diverse and inclusive environments, promote an atmosphere of respect for and sensitivity to
the dignity of every person, and include diverse perspectives in the pursuit of academic and athletic excellence. (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014, p. 347)

Presenting the findings of this study within the framework of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory and his refined Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model provides an indication of the impact of environmental factors, personal attributes, and lived experiences of student-athletes on their perceptions of climate, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of efforts by NCAA member institutions to create an inclusive, supportive environment for student-athletes who identify as LGBT.

The remainder of Chapter Three is presented in the order suggested by Roberts (2010), Brause (2000), and the Dissertation Learning Consultants (2015).

Setting and Participants

Site Selection

As of June 2015, senior compliance officers at fifteen Division I institutions spanning all three subdivisions, nine conferences, and thirteen states had agreed to provide access to the survey to the entirety of their student-athlete population, totaling a possible 4,500 participants (see Figure 3.1, p. 65). By offering the survey to a wide variety of Division I student-athletes, the investigator attempts to avoid regional bias and limit any lone-institutional anomalies (Rankin & Reason, 2005). By including responses from members of both dominant and non-dominant groups, the study avoids any one-sided bias. Finally, just as the 1994 Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act forced transparency upon higher education to disclose disparities in the treatment of women and to report tangible signs of equality (Baird,
2002), this study hopes to provide similar benefits for LGBT equality by asking participants to voluntarily self-identify the previously taboo categories of sexual orientation and gender identity, which could, in turn, lead institutions to collect meaningful empirical data as a means to assess the effectiveness of their programs.

![Figure 3.1. Geographic location of institutions initially agreeing to participate in survey.](image)

**Population**

The target population for this study consist of all 173,500 Division I student-athletes playing 37 sports divided among three subdivisions at all 346 NCAA Division I institutions (NCAA, 2016, Division I Facts and Figures). This study aims to obtain responses from a significant sample of these students in an effort to generalize to the larger population. The study collects individual data based on student attributes as opposed to collecting cultural data, which requires the input of experts (Bernard, 2013). Due to this style of data collection, criterion sampling, which “involves the selection of cases that satisfy an important criterion”
(Gall et al., 2007, p. 184), in this case, Division I student-athletes who are at least eighteen years-of-age, is used.

Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 indicate participation for student-athletes at NCAA Division I institutions, the population from which this study hopes to draw a representative sample.

Table 3.1

*Division I sports sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletics Association in 2013-14 [number of institutions offering sport]*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Men’s Sports</th>
<th>Women’s Sports</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Football [250]</td>
<td>Field Hockey [77]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soccer [301]</td>
<td>Soccer [326]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water Polo [22]</td>
<td>Volleyball [328]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Sports</td>
<td>Basketball [345]</td>
<td>Basketball [343]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowling [34]</td>
<td>Bowling [34]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fencing [19]</td>
<td>Fencing [23]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gymnastics [15]</td>
<td>Gymnastics [61]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ice Hockey [59]</td>
<td>Ice Hockey [35]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Swimming/Diving [134]</td>
<td>Swimming/Diving [196]</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Track &amp; Field (Indoor) [258]</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field (Indoor) [318]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wrestling [76]</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Sports</td>
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<td>Golf [258]</td>
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<td>Lacrosse [68]</td>
<td>Lacrosse [106]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rowing [28]</td>
<td>Rowing [88]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tennis [257]</td>
<td>Tennis [318]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Track &amp; Field (Outdoor) [278]</td>
<td>Track &amp; Field (Outdoor) [328]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Sports</td>
<td>Equestrian [18]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rugby [3]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2

2013-14 Division I sports male participation by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>White Caucasian</th>
<th>Two or more races</th>
<th>Non-Resident/Int’l</th>
<th>Other/Unknown/No Reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8,471</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,488</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>183</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,472</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
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<td>397</td>
<td>11,429</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>856</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>Gymnastics</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Ice Hockey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,142</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>102</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,601</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifle</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rowing</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3,342</td>
<td>159</td>
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<td>Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3,017</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>228</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>141</td>
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<td>5,816</td>
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<td>351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Track &amp; Field Outdoor</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>3,006</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6,354</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>383</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
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</table>

(“Race and Gender Demographics Search,” 2015)
Table 3.3

2013-14 Division I sports female participation by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black or African-American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>White Caucasian</th>
<th>Two or more races</th>
<th>Non-Resident/Int’l</th>
<th>Other/Unknown/No Reply</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>2,506</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,646</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4,474</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>194</td>
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<td>Equestrian</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>1,412</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>1,376</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>Gymnastics</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>Ice Hockey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,628</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>148</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>274</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4,471</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rugby</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Volleyball</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>129</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>531</td>
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<td>6,556</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>233</td>
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<td>427</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>4,371</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming &amp; Diving</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4,307</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track &amp; Field Indoor</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>3,456</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7,281</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track &amp; Field Outdoor</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3,476</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7,454</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3,563</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

("Race and Gender Demographics Search," 2015)

Instrumentation

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Student-Athlete Climate Inventory

This quantitative questionnaire-based study will employ the use of a 53-item self-report online instrument adapted by the researcher based upon the modified version of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Climate Inventory (LGBTCI) (Liddle et al., 2004) and the Student-Athlete Assessment of the Climate of Intercollegiate Athletics (SACS) (Rankin
et al., 2011). Self-report surveys, though prone to social desirability, are found to be useful for “provid[ing] a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2009, p. 12). This sentiment is echoed by Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) although they do identify the inability of a questionnaire to “probe deeply into a respondent’s beliefs, attitudes, and inner experience” (p. 228). The cost-savings, time-savings, and broad overview-type data provided by this instrument satisfies the needs of this study.

Becky Liddle, primary author of the LGBTCI (2004), granted permission to modify the instrument for this study on October 21, 2013. Sue Rankin, primary author of the SACS (2011), granted permission to include various items from the instrument on February 11, 2015. A number of additional demographic items allow for comparison between subgroups as well as mitigating and mediating factors, including, but not limited to subdivision, athletic conference, sport participation, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, year in school and religious affiliation. The final version of the new instrument was reviewed by a tenured professor of Counseling Psychology, an expert in the field of quantitative research, at the home institution who verified the appropriateness of each item. For purposes of this study, the instrument is referred to as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Student-Athlete Climate Instrument (LGBTSACI) (see Appendix A).

**LGBTCI.** The LGBTCI is a 20-item self-report survey created to capture employee perception of formal and informal aspects of their workplace climate. In creating the instrument, Liddle et al. (2004), directly engaged their population of interest and requested they create items based on their lived workplace experiences. Although not common to
instrument creation, this phenomenological methodology allowed the authors to distill the common experiences of surveyed LGBT employees into items that would permit respondents to identify “the presence of positive workplace conditions and the absence of negative conditions” (Liddle et al., 2004).

To address the full spectrum of workplace experiences, the authors intentionally rotated positively and negatively worded items throughout the instrument. Alternating items as such, can also avoid response bias and non-response bias. Sedgwick (2011) explains the possible influence of these two phenomena:

Non-response bias and response bias are often confused. Response bias is not the opposite of non-response bias in definition…Non-response bias would have occurred if there was a systematic difference in characteristics between responders and non-responders. Response bias would have occurred if there was a systematic difference in the way that respondents answered questions about their career progression, so that their answers did not accurately represent their experiences. (p. 1)

Liddle et al. (2004) report the instrument meets or exceeds all psychometric properties including internal consistency (alpha = .96), test-retest reliability (.87), and construct validity from “moderate correlations with measures of related constructs” (p. 44). This instrument has been used to evaluate the workplace experience of individuals who identify as LGBT (Brewster, Velez, DeBlaere, & Moradi, 2013; Gamst, Liang, & Der-Karabetian, 2011; Kwon & Hugelshofer, 2010). This instrument is easily translatable to the experience of Division I intercollegiate student-athletes, given that “applying [the control and relative nature of work
tests common in employment law] to an athlete’s relationship with his or her coach demonstrates that a student-athlete is an employee of the university he or she attends” (Rasche, 1997, p. 226), making this instrument appropriate for the study. In furtherance of this position, student-athletes receiving an athletic scholarship in the sport of football at Northwestern University were granted permission to unionize and bargain collectively in March 2014, as the National Labor relations Board recognized them as employees of the institution (Kane, 2015). An example of one such modification to an LGBTCI item made by the author for this study is the changing of employees to student-athletes and from employer to team’s coaching staff in Item 19: The team’s coaching staff provides a supportive environment for LGBT student-athletes.

**SACS.** Items taken from Rankin et al.’s (2011) SACS address specific incidents of LGBT harassment, experienced or observed, which could inform the respondent’s perception of context and reflect the impact of the proximal processes. The SACS, funded by the NCAA, is a 68-item web-based survey which was used to collect data from over 8,000 student-athletes at 164 institutions in 2010. Rankin et al. (2011) state, “Generally based on Astin’s (1999) theory of student involvement, [the SACS] includes individual and institutional characteristics, a conceptualization of campus climate, and student outcomes” (p. 3). While Rankin et al.’s (2011) SACS investigates all aspects of climate within all NCAA institutions, items selected for use in this study address incidents only concerning LGBT climate only at Division I NCAA institutions. The SACS also connected perceptions of climate to student-athlete self-reported measures of academic and intellectual development, athletics success and athletic identity; however, the current study does not
focus on these self-reported outcomes. As this study employs only twelve of 68 items from the SACS, validity for the original instrument may be rendered moot and will require reassessment upon data collection.

Variables

**Outcome variable: Perception of climate.** The outcome variable for all four research questions is perceived LGBT climate within athletics. The first twenty-two items of the survey, inspired by the LGBTCI (Liddle et al., 2004), measure the outcome variable of perceived climate by asking respondents to comment on the experiences of student-athletes who identify as LGBT using a four-point Likert-type scale. These lived experiences are referred to by Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) as *proximal processes*, which serve as a human’s primary developmental mechanism and are based on two primary propositions:

(First,) [H]uman development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as proximal processes…(Second) The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment—both immediate and more remote—in which the processes are taking place; the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration; and the social continuities and changes occurring over time through the life course and the
historical period during which the person has lived. (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996)

Other survey items related to student perception of lived experiences are questions 23, 24, 27-29, 33, and 34, which are inspired by the SACS (Rankin et al., 2011). While a number of these items are presented as multi-option, they are all coded as binary variables, as each response is either no, to be coded as 0, or yes, to be coded as 1. Items inquiring directly about the outcome variable, with the exception of question 29, address student perception of recurring interactions, while question 29 involves perception of how different levels of the environment interact.

Table 3.4

*Outcome variable survey Item by source, scale and relation to Person-Place-Time-Context Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item(s)</th>
<th>Source Instrument</th>
<th>Variable Type</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Relation to PPCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Liddle et al., 2004</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Likert-type</td>
<td>Perceived Proximal Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Rankin et al., 2011</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
<td>Perceived Proximal Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24,27,28,33,34</td>
<td>Rankin et al., 2011</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Multi-option</td>
<td>Perceived Proximal Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Rankin et al., 2011</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
<td>Context (Mesosystem)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Predictor variables.** Considering the correlational design of the study, independent variables will be referred to as predictor variables. This survey includes the following four predictor variables: self-identification as LGBT; sports team participation; having an out LGBT coach or teammate; and the perceived LGBT climate of the larger campus. The table below identifies anticipated relationships of survey items pertaining to each individual
predictor variable research question, along with the variable type, scale, and how each relates to the theoretical framework.

Table 3.5

*Predictor variable survey item by research question, type, scale and relation to Person-Place-Time-Context Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item(s)</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Variable Type</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Relation to PPCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35,37</td>
<td>RQ4 (Larger campus LGBT climate)</td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Likert-type</td>
<td>Proximal Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>RQ4 (Larger campus LGBT climate)</td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Likert-type</td>
<td>Context (Exosystem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>RQ4 (Larger campus LGBT climate)</td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Likert-type</td>
<td>Context (Microsystem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>RQ1: (Self-identified LGBT student-athlete)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46,47</td>
<td>RQ3: (LGBT coach or teammate)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>RQ2: (Specific sport-climate vs other sports)</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>Context (Microsystem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>RQ4 (Larger campus LGBT climate)</td>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Likert-type</td>
<td>Context (Exosystem)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Covariates.** Within the study, this author identifies variables that could affect the outcome of the study, including age, race, sex, year in school, religious affiliation, athletic conference, athletic subdivision, receipt of athletics scholarship, and transfer status.

According to Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004), “a moderator is a variable that alters the direction or strength of the relation between a predictor and an outcome...[whereas a] mediator is the mechanism through which a predictor influences an outcome variable” (p. 116). Table 3.6 identifies which items on the survey will address these variables and how they relate to the theoretical framework.

Table 3.6

*Covariate survey item by source, scale and relation to Person-Place-Time-Context Theory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item(s) Instrument</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Variable Type to PPCT</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rankin et al., 2011</td>
<td>Moderator/Mediator</td>
<td>Multi-option</td>
<td>Context (Mesosystem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,26,31,32</td>
<td>Rankin et al., 2011</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Multi-option</td>
<td>Context (Microsystem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-43,48-51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Moderator/Mediator</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Moderator/Mediator</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions

The study addresses four key research questions by surveying a sample of current Division I student-athletes.

1) Do student-athletes who identify as non-LGBT report a warmer LGBT athletics climate than those who identify as LGBT?

2) Do student-athletes on teams with lower risk of injury report a warmer LGBT athletics climate than others?

3) Do student-athletes who report not having an out LGBT coach or team member perceive warmer LGBT climate than those who do report having an out LGBT coach or teammate?

4) Do student-athletes who indicate a warmer LGBT climate on the greater campus report a warmer LGBT athletics climate?

Based on the literature review conducted in Chapter Two, the researcher predicted likely outcomes for each of four research questions in this study.

1) Similar to students of color reporting a more hostile racial environment at predominantly White institutions when compared to the perception of White students (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Yasso, Smith, Ceja, & Solorzano, 2009), students from the minority LGBT population will perceive a more hostile climate than those of the majority non-LGBT population.

2) Teams with more historically masculine homosocial traditions (e.g., locker room joking), higher rates of contact, and greater risk of injury will report a less LGBT-friendly climate (see Table 3.7).
3) Students who develop a personal relationship with a person on their team who identifies as LGBT will be more cognizant of factors which might impact the climate for an LGBT coach or teammate and will therefore indicate a more inhospitable environment than do those students without such a connection to an individual who identifies as LGBT (Allport, 1954).

4) Student-athletes reporting more active and engaged LGBT-supportive efforts on the larger campus will correlate with a student-athlete population that perceives a friendlier LGBT climate within the athletics department (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Table 3.7

*Classification of Sports offered at NCAA Institutions based on Contact and Risk of Injury*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased Risk of Injury</th>
<th>Moderate Risk of Injury</th>
<th>Lower Risk of Injury</th>
<th>Contact and Limited Contact (lowest risk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Basketball</td>
<td>Women’s Basketball</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Bowling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Diving</td>
<td>Crew</td>
<td>Rifle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Hockey</td>
<td>Indoor Track</td>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing, downhill</td>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>Skiing, cross country</td>
<td>Outdoor Track</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water Polo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Rice, 2008; National Athletic Trainers Association, 2003)
Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested using Chi-square tests and binary logistic regression in SPSS.

1) There is no significant relationship between LGBT identity and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

2) There is no relationship between risk of injury in a particular sport and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

3) There is no relationship between having an out LGBT coach or teammate and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

4) There is no relationship between perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

Procedure

Delivery

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board in January 2016, a solicitation email was sent to the Primary Compliance Officer at the fifteen institutions who had voiced interest in the study during the previous summer. Embedded within the email was a link to the online Division I Athletics Climate Survey issued through Redcap software, to be forwarded to all student-athletes in a method of the institution’s choosing. Completion of the survey takes approximately 15 minutes, based on a beta test conducted by five current student-athletes representing a variety of ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and athletic teams at the author’s home institution. Before accessing the survey questions,
participants read a solicitation script on the front page of the Redcap software instrument detailing the purpose, confidentiality, risks, benefits, and voluntary nature of the study. Participants were informed that choosing to proceed to the second page of the survey by clicking the next button serves as their consent to participate in the study. To collect participant responses anonymously, the author disabled IP address tracking and email address tracking in the collector settings before sending out the survey. After completing the fifty-third question of the survey, participants were offered the opportunity to enter a random drawing for one of sixteen Amazon gift cards, valued between $100 and $25 each. A reminder email was sent to these administrators who previously expressed interest in early February requesting they complete the survey by February 19, 2016, at which time the survey was closed.

**Timeline**

This author defended his proposal and completed the IRB with the committee chair early in the spring 2016 semester. With approval, the instrument was made available to participants, thus allowing the entirety of the fall semester to acclimate to their institution and digest the climate of the athletics department. Being cognizant of the multiple demands placed on student-athletes and the variance of such demands throughout the academic year between in-season and out-of-season teams, this author made the survey available through late-February 2016. Data collection occurs instantaneously via REDCedcap and imports directly into SPSS software, making analysis seamless. As such, data cleaning and analysis was completed by mid-March, with the discussion section completed by mid-April. The author submitted his final dissertation draft to the committee in late April and defend his
dissertation on May 3, 2016. In an attempt to add to the national dialog, this author will apply to present his findings at the 2017 NCAA Inclusion Forum.

**Analysis**

Using SPSS, descriptive analysis for all outcome and predictor variables, including means, standard deviations, and score ranges was provided (Creswell, 2009). The study utilized Chi-square tests and binary logistic regression to determine if and how multiple subpopulations of college student-athletes perceived differently the LGBT climate within their athletics department. Although not the original statistical analyses the researcher had planned on employing (see Chapter Four), these tests were selected because the results are easily understood by multiple audiences and are effective in predicting outcomes by identifying risk factors for different groups (Farrington & Loeber, 2000; Plichta & Kelvin, 2013). Results of these tests are discussed in Chapter Four with intervention suggestions discussed in Chapter Five.

**Content Analysis**

As “an important feature of human environments is the messages that people encode in various forms” (Gall et al., 2011), this researcher also conducted a content analysis of documents from those institutions that agree to offer the instrument to their student-athletes in order to contribute more concretely to the interpretation of the findings from statistical analysis of survey responses. Documents including, but not limited to mission statements, You Can Play videos and rankings from outside advocacy organizations are be reviewed, coded, compared, and summarized to provide context to the climate revealed by the study. The results of thematically coding variables into exclusive categories and conducting a
frequency count of each will be reported as descriptive statistics. The researcher will then interpret the results based on the Bronfenbrenner framework as a means to inform discussion in Chapter Five (Gall et al., 2011).

**Significance**

In order to satisfy the four facets of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, and teaching) (Boyer, 1990), the findings of this study are detailed in Chapter Four with a discussion of practical implications in Chapter Five. University faculty can analyze and replicate this study and incorporate the findings into course discussion. Campus employees can use the findings to inform programming or staffing. Student-athletes may discuss with department leadership any differences between the findings and their personal experiences. Activists can identify areas in which their efforts have begun to show progress and areas that still need attention. Increased focus on LGBT issues in Division I athletics could also empower prospective LGBT student-athletes throughout the recruiting process by leading some athletics departments to publically embrace LGBT issues. Results will assist member institutions by providing a measurable foundation on which to design programs to combat any hostile environment, thereby making LGBT student-athletes feel as though they matter, which can lead to personal growth, improved learning, and a healthier student experience (Astin, 1984; Gall et al., 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Schlossberg, 1989).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Recent advances in the United States regarding inclusion and equality for individuals who identify as LGBT offer cause for the investigation of the climate for LGBT student-athletes within Division I athletics departments. In order to determine if the political and social progress in the wider society has pervaded the often-secretive confines of major college sports, this author has adapted two established climate instruments, the LGBTCI (Liddle et al., 2004) and the SACS (Rankin et al., 2004), into a 53-item survey, administered via REDCap online software to over 350 current student-athletes at six Division I institutions. The results of this study provide baseline data on which coaches, administrators, staff, faculty, and student leaders can build campus programming, policies, and procedures to benefit the experience for all students. Chapter four describes the sample of participants, the statistical tests conducted through SPSS software, and the findings of these tests discussed in response to the research questions posited in chapter one.

Chi-square tests revealed any significant association in proportion of responses between groups of student-athletes while binary logistic regression established which predictor variables affected the probability of a student-athlete’s perception when controlling for other specific variables such as sex, year in school, and the like (Plichta & Kelvin, 2013). Having an out coach or teammate was found to be a significant predictor variable, as is perception of the wider campus LGBT climate. Ethnicity, biological sex, transfer status, and having experienced or witnessed an incident of LGBT-related harassment or discrimination were found to be significant covariates in perception of LGBT climate, as well.
Description of the Sample

Initially, chief compliance officers at fifteen institutions expressed interest in having their athletes participate in this study during the summer of 2015. When the study was launched in December 2015, a total of six athletics departments invited their student-athletes to participate, producing responses of n=446 out of a sample of 1,660 possible participants (27 percent). After accounting for incomplete responses, the final respondent total included in the analysis for this study totaled n=345 (21 percent response rate). Participating institutions represented a mixture of public and private control, secular and religiously-affiliated foundations, large and medium sizes, residential and non-residential campuses, urban, suburban, and rural settings, in five states, spanning three time-zones. Athletic programs at these institutions included both Football Championship Subdivision and Non-football Subdivisions in three athletic conferences.

Table 4.1

Comparison of institutional profile and survey participation, per institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Size (enrollment)</th>
<th>Total # Student-athletes</th>
<th>Total # participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Urban, residential</td>
<td>Large (16K)</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Rural, nonresidential</td>
<td>Large (33K)</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Private, Jesuit</td>
<td>Suburban, residential</td>
<td>Medium (5K)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Rural, residential</td>
<td>Large (15K)</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Suburban, residential</td>
<td>Large (22K)</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Private, Jesuit</td>
<td>Urban, residential</td>
<td>Medium (7K)</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2016; institutional websites not listed for purposes of confidentiality)
The respondents in this study reported biological sex that included 119 male, 223 female, and no intersex participants. Respondents’ gender identity included 120 masculine, 227 feminine, two transgender, and one androgynous participant. Respondents’ sexual orientation included nine lesbian, three gay, 310 heterosexual or straight, 13 bisexual, two pansexual, one queer, five questioning, and three asexual participants. Respondents’ ethnic identity included 35 Black or African-American, five Asian, one American Indian or Alaskan Native, 17 Hispanic, one Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 237 White Caucasian, eight Non-resident Alien or International, six other or unknown, and 43 participants of two or more races. Respondents’ year in college included 87 first-year, 84 second-year, 88 third-year, 79 fourth-year, and 12 fifth-year participants. Respondents’ transfer status indicated 307 who had attended only their current institution and 44 who had previously transferred into the current institution. Respondents’ importance placed on religion included 173 very important, 123 somewhat important, and 56 not at all important responses. Respondents’ risk of injury in their primary sport included seven high-risk, 123 moderate-risk, and 159 low-risk sport participants. In terms of respondents’ participation in their department’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, 61 indicated they are a representative while 289 were not. Respondents’ playing time revealed 209 starters, 54 who do not start but see significant playing time, 45 who rarely play, 13 who do not play or are redshirting (postponing a year of eligibility), 17 who are medically unable to play, and 14 who have exhausted their eligibility. In terms of having a coach or teammate who openly identifies as LGBT, 135 respondents indicated having an openly out teammate and 73 indicated having an openly out coach while 38 respondents indicated having a teammate who was out only to a few people and 18 had a
coach who was out only to a few people. One-hundred seventy-eight respondents indicated not having any teammates who identify as LGBT and 258 respondents indicated not having a coach who identifies as LGBT. For those respondents who identify as LGBT (n=33), 17 report being openly out, 11 are out to a few people, and five are not out. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 include graphs of demographic- and athletically-related responses, respectively.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The 53-item instrument (see Appendix A) used to gather student-athlete self-reported perception of LGBT climate within their department was amended from two sources: the LGBTCI (Liddle et al., 2004) and the SACS (Rankin et al., 2005). The LGBTCI was chosen as a reliable instrument for measuring workplace climate and is applicable to the current student as student-athletes play a role in an institution very similar to that of an employee (Cavico et al., 2015). The SACS was chosen as its primary author is one of the preeminent researchers in the field of higher education campus climate, particularly in regard to individuals who identify as LGBT. The secure survey link was emailed using REDCap online survey software to athletics administrators at institutions who had expressed interest in the study and delivered to the student-athlete population in a method of the administrator’s choosing. Once opened, potential participants read the agreement of confidentiality and informed consent statement (see Appendix C) and were informed that their continuation onto the next page of the study would indicate their consent to participate.
Figure 4.1. Number of participants by demographic variables.
Figure 4.2. Number of participants by athletic variables.

Given the discretion granted to researchers by Liddle et al. (2004) to define one’s own workplace, Item 18 of the revised instrument was removed prior to analysis. The
researcher realized this item asked participants their perception of the larger campus climate, which is contrary to the intent of this study to establish a single score focused on the more intimate climate of the athletic department. As per the scoring and guidelines of the original LGBTCI (Liddle et al., 2004), Items 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15 and 20 were reverse scored. Reverse scoring indicates that, contrary to the positively-keyed items inspired by the LGBTCI in which responses from the likert-type scale of strongly-agree indicates a warm LGBT climate, these eight negatively-keyed items would indicate a chillier climate with a response of strongly agree. Using both positively- and negatively-keyed items is assumed to counter the possibility that test respondents would allow acquiescence, or the tendency to agree to survey items simply because people tend to agree in general (Ziegler, 2015), to influence their responses to the instrument.

Quantitative instruments should have high internal consistency, which indicates how well select items collectively create a single score measuring a reliable scale (Leech, Morgan, Morgan, Barrett, & Barrett, 2012; Plichta & Kelvin, 2013). This measure is indicated by the instrument’s Chronbach’s alpha, which is considered acceptable at the .7 level or higher (Gall et al., 2007). In the case of the first 21 items in the current study, given the high internal consistency from the original LGBTCI (α = .96) from which they were amended, any survey submitted missing five or fewer responses to these items, average scores for that respondent were substituted (n=19). This procedure was suggested in Liddle et al.’s (2004) scoring guidelines:

[T]he LGBTCI’s high internal consistency legitimizes interpolation of scattered missing data. Surveys with a few missing items can be scored by
computing the item average from the rest of the instrument for each participant and substituting that mean for the missing items...We believe any risks from scattered interpolation of missing data are less serious than the risk of excluding certain subsets of respondents. (p. 45)

**Survey Results**

Based on the scoring guidelines for the survey, higher scores indicated a student-athlete who perceived a more supportive environment, while lower scores indicated the perception of a less supportive LGBT climate. In the language of the instrument, a score near 21 would indicate that friendly *does not describe* the climate of the department; a score of 42 would indicate the climate is *somewhat or a little* friendly; a score of 63 would indicate the climate is *pretty* friendly; and a score of 84 would indicate the climate as *very* friendly (Liddle et al., 2004). Total scores from the 345 survey respondents in this study ranged from 21 to 84 with a mean of 66.49 (SD=10.745). This overall mean of 66.49 would indicate respondents, on average, believed the climate for LGBT student-athletes at their institution to be *pretty* friendly. The standard deviation is used to show how closely above and below the mean the scores of other respondents typically fall (Mann, 2013). For this measure, the standard deviation (SD=10.745), indicates most respondents scored in the *pretty* friendly range of scores (54 through 73) with a few reaching into the *very* friendly range of scores. The following section includes a series of descriptive tables indicating number of survey responses (n), median scores from the survey (\(\chi\)), means (M), and standard deviations (SD) on the measure of perceived LGBT climate within Division I Athletics Departments by all
demographic variables in the instrument. The researcher recognizes some n-values lack the power to draw definitive conclusions for specific variable responses.

**Results of Descriptive Statistical Analyses**

The survey responses were first analyzed using descriptive statistics to explore differences based upon the respondents’ self-reported *biological sex*. Choices provided on the survey included male, female, or intersex. The number of survey respondents who self-reported biological sex as female (n=233) was higher than male (n=119), and no respondents identified as intersex. Table 4.2 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by biological sex.

### Table 4.2

*Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Sex (biological)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex (biological)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>( \chi )</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69.24</td>
<td>9.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61.22</td>
<td>11.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersex</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.2, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by female athletes than by male athletes. There was also a higher standard deviation for males than for females, indicating that results for female students were
clustered more closely around the mean, while male students’ results were spread more widely from the mean. Neither male nor female means indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.3 examines survey results according to gender. While the variable sex refers to a person’s biological attributes that physically differentiate males from females, gender refers to one’s self-identity of socially-constructed roles associated with biological sex (Del Boca, 2016, p. 1). Choices provided on the survey included man/masculine, woman/feminine, transgender, gender queer/androgynous, questioning, or gender not listed here with respondents given the opportunity to fill in their own response. The number of survey respondents who self-reported woman/feminine (n=227) was higher than man/masculine (n=120), transgender (n=2), and gender queer/androgynous (n=1) with no respondents identified as questioning or gender not listed here. Table 4.3 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by gender identity/expression.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (identity/expression)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman/Feminine</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69.35</td>
<td>9.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>9.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender queer/androgynous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man/Masculine</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61.51</td>
<td>11.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Gender (identity/expression)
As shown in Table 4.3, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by feminine, transgender, and gender queer/androgynous athletes than by masculine athletes. There was also a higher standard deviation for masculine athletes than for other respondents, indicating that results for participants who indicated a feminine or transgender identity or expression were clustered more closely around the mean, while masculine students’ results were spread more widely from the mean. No category of respondent indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.4 examines survey results according to sexual orientation, a variable that indicates the sex of people to whom the respondent is romantically attracted (Harek & Garnets, 2007). Choices provided on the survey included lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, questioning, asexual, heterosexual, or orientation not listed here with respondents given the opportunity to fill in their own response. The number of survey respondents who self-reported heterosexual (n=310) was higher than all other responses combined. Other responses in descending order include bisexual (n=13), lesbian (n=9), questioning (n=5), other (n=4), gay (n=3), asexual (n=3), pansexual (2), and queer (n=1). Table 4.4 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by sexual orientation.

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68.44</td>
<td>9.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66.77</td>
<td>10.284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Sexual Orientation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66.46</td>
<td>9.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown/No reply</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>65.25</td>
<td>10.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>15.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>28.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10.583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.4, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and other respondents than by gay, pansexual, questioning, and asexual athletes. There was a higher standard deviation for gay and questioning students than for other respondents, indicating that results for those two groups were spread more widely from the mean. No grouping with an n>1 indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.5 examines survey results according to ethnicity. Choices provided on the survey included American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White Caucasian, two or more races, non-residential/international, and ethnicity not listed here with respondents given the opportunity to fill in their own response. The number of survey respondents who self-reported White Caucasian (n=237) was higher than all other responses combined. Other responses in descending order include two or more races (n=43), Black or African American (n=35), Hispanic (n=17), non-resident/international (n=8), ethnicity not listed (n=6), Asian (n=5), American Indian or Alaska Native (n=1), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific
Islander (n=1). Table 4.5 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by ethnicity.

Table 4.5

Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Caucasian</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown/No reply</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>7.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident/International</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12.565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.5, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by Asian, White Caucasian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and athletes identifying as two or more races when compared to American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic, non-resident/international and other respondents. Although the sample size was very small, there was a higher standard deviation for gay and questioning students than for other respondents, indicating that results for those two groups were spread more widely from the mean. No grouping with an n>1 indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.
Table 4.6 examines survey results according to year in college and transfer status. The similar number of survey respondents across years in school is in keeping with what the researcher has experienced in his 20-plus years in college athletics: first year (n=87); second year (n=84); third year (n=88); fourth year (n=79); fifth year (n=12). Student-athletes in their fifth year are not common in Division I as most have completed all four of their NCAA-mandated seasons of eligibility within their first four years of college. In terms of transfer status, participants were asked to indicate if they had attended only their current institution (n=307) or if they had transferred in from another institution (n=44). Table 4.6 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by year in college and transfer status.

As shown in Table 4.6, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by first, second, and fourth year students than by third and fifth year students. There was also a lower standard deviation for third and fifth year students, indicating that results for these two groups were clustered more closely around the mean, while first, second, and fourth year students’ results were spread more widely from the mean. No group means indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate. Regarding transfer status, the median and mode ratings for LGBT climate were perceived as
Table 4.6

Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Year in College and Transfer Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year in College</td>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.56</td>
<td>10.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.52</td>
<td>11.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66.51</td>
<td>12.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64.98</td>
<td>9.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63.67</td>
<td>9.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Status</td>
<td>Attended only this institution</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67.02</td>
<td>10.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transferred in</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62.93</td>
<td>12.297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

more friendly by students who had only attended their current institution than by students who had transferred in. There was also a lower standard deviation for non-transfer students, indicating that their results were more closely clustered around the mean. Neither group, however, indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.7 examines survey results according to level of LGBT disclosure. For student-athletes who identify as LGBT, choices provided on the survey included openly out (n=17), out to only a few people (n=11) and not openly out (n=5). Regarding student-athletes’ teammates, choices provided included an openly out teammate (n=135), a teammate who is out only to a few people (n=38), and having no teammates who identify as LGBT (n=178). Regarding student-athletes’ coaches, choices provided included an openly out coach (n=73), a coach who is out only to a few people (n=18), and having no coaches who identify
as LGBT (n=258). Table 4.7 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by level of disclosure.

Table 4.7

*Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Self-disclosure, peer disclosure, and coach disclosure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Level of disclosure</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ (Median)</th>
<th>M (Mean)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Out to only a few</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69.73</td>
<td>7.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openly out</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>67.59</td>
<td>9.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identify, but not openly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49.80</td>
<td>16.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teammates</td>
<td>Openly out</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70.16</td>
<td>8.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out only to a few</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65.13</td>
<td>9.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No LGBT teammates</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64.04</td>
<td>11.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Openly out</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>70.04</td>
<td>9.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No LGBT coaches</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65.74</td>
<td>10.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out only to a few</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>64.11</td>
<td>10.715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.7, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by student-athletes who identify as LGBT if they were out only to a few people, as compared to those who were openly out or not out. There was also a lower standard deviation for those participants who were out only to a few people, indicating that their results were clustered more closely around the mean. Regarding the level of disclosure of a coach or teammate, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by those respondents indicating an openly out coach or teammate, than those
with a coach or teammate who is out to only a few people or those reporting no out coaches or teammates. There was also a lower standard deviation for those with an out coach or teammate, indicating that their results were clustered more closely around the mean. All groups indicated a pretty friendly climate other than student-athletes who identify as LGBT but are not out, who indicated a chillier climate.

Table 4.8 examines survey results according to playing time and membership in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), a group of student leaders who advocate for student-athlete concerns. Choices provided on the survey related to playing time included eligibility exhausted, starter, significant playing time, do not play often, do not play at all (also known as redshirting), and medical hardship year. The number of survey respondents who self-reported they were a starter (n=209) was higher than significant playing time (n=54), do not play often (n=45), medical hardship year (n=17), exhausted eligibility (n=14), and do not play at all (n=13). In terms of SAAC membership, participants were asked to indicate if they were a member of the organization (n=61) or if they were not (n=289). Table 4.8 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by playing time and SAAC membership.

As shown in Table 4.8, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by students who reported their playing time as eligibility exhausted, starter, significant playing time, do not play often and those who are sitting out of competition for medical reasons as compared to students who are not playing at all. Students not playing at all also produced the lowest standard deviation, indicating that results for that response were clustered more closely around the mean, while all other group results were spread more
widely from the mean. Regarding SAAC membership, while the median ratings were the same, the mode ratings for LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by students who were involved in SAAC than by students who were not. There was also a lower standard deviation for students who were involved in SAAC than non-participating students, indicating that their results were more closely clustered around the mean. Given these variables, no category of students indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.9 examines survey results according to the importance of religion in the respondent’s life. Choices provided on the survey included not at all important, somewhat important, and very important. The number of survey respondents who self-reported religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playing time</td>
<td>Significant playing time</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68.48</td>
<td>10.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhausted eligibility</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68.29</td>
<td>9.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical hardship year</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67.82</td>
<td>10.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not play often</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67.44</td>
<td>9.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Starter</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65.82</td>
<td>11.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not play at all/redshirting</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAC Membership</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66.74</td>
<td>10.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65.70</td>
<td>9.766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, 2016)
as very important (n=173) was higher than those who indicated somewhat important (n=123), and not at all important (n=56). Table 4.9 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by importance of religion.

Table 4.9

*Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Importance of Religion in One’s Life*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion (importance)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>χ</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.20</td>
<td>10.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66.39</td>
<td>11.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65.45</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.9, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by athletes who considered religion very or somewhat important than by athletes who considered religion not at all important. There was also a lower standard deviation for students who considered religion not at all important than others, indicating that results for these students were clustered more closely around the mean. Given these variables, no category of student indicated a description of *very well* for the friendliness of the climate.

Table 4.10 examines survey results according to primary sport. Choices provided on the survey included all Division I sport offerings (see Table 3.1). Table 4.10 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by sport participation.
As shown in Table 4.10, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as most friendly by female athletes in the sport of swimming, softball, field hockey, rowing, and basketball and by male athletes in the sport of swimming, basketball, wrestling, and track and field. There was also a higher standard deviation for participants in men’s track and field, men’s basketball, and women’s swimming than other sports, indicating that results for these student-athletes were spread more widely from the mean, while remaining students’ results were clustered more closely around the mean. Softball and field hockey participants indicated a description of very well for the friendliness of the climate.
Table 4.10

*Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Sport Participation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Sport</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>( \chi )</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71.80</td>
<td>7.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>66.33</td>
<td>4.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>15.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62.89</td>
<td>5.915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61.67</td>
<td>11.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59.77</td>
<td>10.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58.64</td>
<td>12.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55.11</td>
<td>8.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s</td>
<td>Rowing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>74.50</td>
<td>6.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>73.75</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>72.91</td>
<td>8.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>70.32</td>
<td>7.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>70.90</td>
<td>7.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>70.10</td>
<td>12.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>69.21</td>
<td>11.272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Track &amp; Field</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68.51</td>
<td>7.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>68.15</td>
<td>9.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>67.67</td>
<td>8.343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like Table 4.10, Table 4.11 also examines survey results according to sport participation, but categorizes teams by risk-of-injury (see Table 3.7). Rather than providing choices for participants to select their own level of risk on the survey, student responses to the sport selection item were categorized into lower risk (n=159), moderate risk (n=186), and increased risk (n=7). Table 4.11 shows the overall instrument rating of LGBT climate disaggregated by sport risk category.

Table 4.11

*Medians, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Measure of LGBT Climate within Division I Athletics Departments as a Function of Sport Injury Risk Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk of Injury</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$\chi$</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate risk</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66.63</td>
<td>10.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower risk</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66.50</td>
<td>10.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased risk</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64.29</td>
<td>7.228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.11, the median and mean ratings of LGBT climate were perceived as more friendly by athletes in lower and moderate risk sports than by athletics in increased risk sports. There was also a higher standard deviation for athletes in lower and moderate risk sports than by athletics in increased risk sports, indicating that results for high risk sport participants were clustered more closely around the mean, while other students’ results were spread more widely from the mean. Given these variables, no category of student indicated a description of *very well* for the friendliness of the climate.
Results for Tests of Statistical Significance

The original plan for analysis of survey results was to use multiple linear regression to identify statistically significant predictor variables, and to use analysis of covariance to examine the influence of the covariates. Any variance for continuous variables was to be reviewed by hierarchical multiple regression and stepwise multiple linear regression as a means to predict a participant’s outcome variable score based on a particular predictor variable (Jaeger, 1983). For models in which the dependent variable is dichotomous or categorical, as opposed to being continuous, logistic regression was to be employed. However, a more effective model was selected that involved recoding all continuous variables to dichotomous variables and running a chi square test and binary logistic regression. According to Plichta and Kelvin (2013), such tests ask, “What is the increase or decrease in odds of getting an outcome, controlling for a number of variables simultaneously, given someone has a risk or protective factor for that outcome?” (p. 326). This section describes the methods used for recoding variables, review the research questions and hypotheses for this study, and report results of the tests of statistical significance.

Recoding variables. The first step in the analysis process was to recode the continuous variables from the survey to dichotomous variables. Continuous variables are those which vary along a scale from low to high while dichotomous variables have only two categories (Leech et al., 2012). In their article supporting the practice of dichotomization of variables in research, Farrington and Loeber (2000) state:

[D]ichotomization…greatly simplifies the presentation of results and produces meaningful findings that are easily understandable to a wide audience…
makes it possible to compare the predictive strengths of exploratory variables…and encourages a ‘risk factor’ approach, which helps in targeting intervention efforts” (pp. 119-120)

Using language common to climate research literature in higher education (Renn & Reason, 2013; Turner, Myers, & Myers, 2000), the continuous scale variable for perceived LGBT climate within the athletics department, determined by results from the first 21 items on the survey, was recoded into the dichotomous variable of chilly (scores of 21-53) and warm (scores or 54-84).

Predictor variables were also coded into dichotomous variables. LGBT identity was established as a single dichotomous variable (LGBT Power) by recoding responses from demographic items 39 (biological sex), 40 (gender identity/expression), and 41 (sexual orientation). With no respondents indicating intersex for item 39, those indicating agreement between their biological sex and the majority culture’s expected gender identity (male with masculine, female with feminine) were coded as “0” (hetero and majority gender expression) with those not in agreement coded as “1” (LGBT AO and TGQAQ). Respondents indicating a response of Heterosexual or Other: Straight for item 41, were also coded as “0” with all other respondents coded as “1”. If a respondent met the criteria to be coded as a “1” for either of these two measures, they were coded as “1”. Dichotomization in this case was based on the literature of power dynamics of a majority non-LGBT culture and a minority LGBT population. This same bifurcated recoding system grounded in power dynamics is used throughout the remaining predictor variables and covariates (e.g., majority culture White student-athletes recoded as “0,” and minority remaining populations recoded as “1”).
Survey respondents identified participating in 20 of the possible 45 sports offered in Division I athletics. These 20 sports were recoded into the dichotomous variable of *sport risk* (see Table 3.7) with participants in *lower-risk* sports coded as “0,” and those in *high- and moderate-risk* sports coded as “1”. *Out teammate or coach* was established as a single dichotomous variable (*Coach or teammate Y or N*) by recoding responses from demographic items 46 and 47. Respondents indicating having *no out coach* or *no out teammate* were coded as “0” with all other respondents indicating either an out coach or teammate, or both, as “1”. Reliability tests for items investigating support and inclusiveness for LGBT students on the larger campus led to the removal of Item 38 (*classroom lesson inclusivity*), and was recalculated to include only Items 35-37. The resulting Cronbach’s alpha (**α** = .9) indicated strong internal consistency for this measure. As a result, the final predictive variable, *campus LGBT support*, was recoded with respondents answering *disagree* or *strongly disagree* to any of the items as “0” and those answering *agree* or *strongly agree* to all three items as “1”.

These variables included *sex* (**male** coded as 0, **female** coded as 1), *importance of religion* (**not important** coded as 0, **somewhat or very important** coded as 1), *year in college* (interval variable *first year* through *fifth year*), *ethnicity* (**White** coded as 0, **all other categories of Federally-recognized ethnic identities** coded as 1), *experienced discrimination* (**not having observed or experienced discrimination** coded as 0, **having observed or experienced discrimination** coded as 1), *membership in campus Student-Athlete Advisory Committee* (**not a member** coded as 0, **member** coded as 1), and *transfer status* (**spent entire career at current institution** coded as 0, **transferred-in** coded as 1).
Research questions and hypotheses results. This study addresses four key research questions by surveying a sample of current Division I student-athletes. Below, each research question is restated along with null hypothesis, which expects that variables will not be related (Plichta & Kelvin, 2013), the directional hypothesis, which expresses the researchers expected relationship between variables, and the statistical significance test results for each.

Research question one asked: Do student-athletes who identify as non-LGBT report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than those who identify as LGBT? The null hypothesis would indicate no significant relationship between LGBT identity and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics. Based on current literature, the directional hypothesis proposed by the researcher would indicate student-athletes who do not identify as LGBT will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students who do identify as LGBT. Results of Chi-square test (p=.462) found no significant relationship between LGBT identity and perception of the perceived LGBT climate within the department, thereby leading the researcher to accept the null hypothesis. However, when connecting this finding to all Division I institutions, it should be strongly acknowledged that there is a severely low response rate from football and men’s basketball student-athletes, along with a total absence of responses from students at Football Bowl Series institutions. This researcher believes the findings related to research question one might have been different with a higher number of responses from these students. Moreover, an increase in the number of respondents identifying as LGBT (n=42) might also have impacted the findings.
Research question two asked: Do student-athletes on teams with lower risk of injury report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? The null hypothesis would indicate no relationship between risk of injury in a particular sport and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics. Based on current literature, the directional hypothesis proposed by the researcher would indicate student-athletes participating in lower-risk sports will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students in higher-risk sports. Results of Chi-square test (p=.193) found no significant relationship between risk category of sport and perception of LGBT climate within the department, thereby leading the researcher to accept the null hypothesis. As with research question one, had a greater number of football and men’s basketball student-athletes responded to the survey, it is possible that the results of research question two might have been different, given the heteronormative and homonegative traditions associated with these sports (Anderson, 2008; Messner, 1989).

Research question three asked: Do student-athletes who report not having an out LGBT coach or teammate perceive more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? The null hypothesis would indicate no relationship between having an out LGBT coach or teammate and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics. Based on current literature, the directional hypothesis proposed by the researcher would indicate student-athletes without an out LGBT coach or teammate will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students who do have an out LGBT coach or teammate. Results of Chi-square test (p<.001) found a significant relationship between having an out coach or teammate and perceived LGBT climate within the
department, thereby leading the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. Of the respondents who report not having an out coach or teammate, 93% report the department climate as warm, while only 77% of those who report having an out coach or teammate report the department climate as warm.

Research question four asked: Do student-athletes who indicate a more engaging LGBT climate on the greater campus report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? The null hypothesis would indicate no relationship between perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus and perception of LGBT climate within Division I athletics. Based on current literature, the directional hypothesis proposed by the researcher would indicate student-athletes who do perceive a warmer LGBT climate on the greater campus will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students who do not perceive a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus. Results of Chi-square test ($p<.001$) found a significant relationship between perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus perceived LGBT climate within the department, thereby leading the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. Of the respondents who report LGBT support on the larger campus as warm, 90% report the department climate as warm, while only 70% of those who report LGBT support on the larger campus as chilly report the department climate as warm.

**Chi-square tests.** Chi-square tests are used to compare proportions of respondents who have certain characteristics among different groups by assessing if there are statistically significant associations between rows and columns (Plichta & Kelvin, 2013). The researcher
conducted a series of four chi-square tests using the dichotomous LBGTCI score as the row and each of the four predictor variables as the column, producing the following results:

**Binary logistic regression.** Binary logistic regression was conducted to examine the impact of adding seven covariates to the four predictor variables on the model. When accounting for Cox & Snell $R^2$ and the Nagerkerke $R^2$, the model predicts 13.1% to 24.7% of the dependent variable, these figures provide an estimate of the variance that can be predicted from the combination of all variables in the model (Leech et al., 2012). The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test reveals an acceptable goodness of fit ($p = .630$), indicating

Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable (dichotomous values)</th>
<th>Pearson Asymptotic significance value</th>
<th>Phi value</th>
<th>Warm LGBT climate count</th>
<th>Chilly LGBT climate count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBT identity</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not identify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does identify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out Coach or Teammate</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No out coach or teammate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes out coach or teammate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport by risk category</td>
<td>.306</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High or moderate risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider campus LGBT Climate</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilly campus LGBT climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>269</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm campus LGBT climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the data fits the model (Plichta & Kelvin, 2013). In furtherance of the model’s predictive reliability, the Hosmer and Lemeshow Contingency Table, which breaks participants into smaller groups than the overall N, predicted 32.47 participants would indicate the a warm LGBT climate within their Division I athletics department while
the actual observed number of respondents indicating a warm climate was remarkably close at 32. Moreover, the binary regression classification table reveals our model was able to accurately predict 89.7% of actual outcomes.

When controlling for the seven covariates and four predictor variables (listed in Table 4.13), the following were found to not be statistically significant in our model: LGBT identity, sport participation by risk category, year in college, importance of religion, and membership in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Each of the remaining variables were found to be statistically significant in the model (p < .050), and are described below in terms of the odds ratio expressed by exponentiation of the beta coefficient, which indicates “the probability of occurrence over the probability of nonoccurrence” (Plichta & Kelvin, 2013, p. 461). Each variable in the equation meets the 95% confidence interval, indicating the model has 95% confidence that the interval will contain the population parameter (Mann, 2013).

- Student-athletes who do not have an out coach or teammate are 2.8 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within athletics than those who do have an out coach or teammate when controlling for the remaining variables.
- Student-athletes who perceive a warm LGBT climate on the overall campus are 3 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within the athletics department than those who report a chilly LGBT climate on the larger campus when controlling for the remaining variables.
• Female student-athletes are 2.5 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within athletics than male student-athletes when controlling for the remaining variables.

• White student-athletes are .6 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within athletics than non-White students when controlling for the remaining variables.

• Student-athletes who have not experienced or observed LGBT discrimination or harassment are .8 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within athletics than those who have not experienced or observed LGBT discrimination or harassment when controlling for the remaining variables.

• Student-athletes who have spent their entire career at the institution are .7 times more likely to perceive a warm climate for LGBT students within Division I athletics than those who have transferred in when controlling for the remaining variables.
Table 4.13

*Results of Binary Logistic Regression Analysis for all Predictor Variables and Covariates (N=352)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable or Covariate</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>95% C.I. Lower</th>
<th>95% C.I. Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~ LGBT Identity</td>
<td>-.134</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td>.875</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>2.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~Sport by Risk</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>1.906</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>4.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~Out Coach or Teammate</td>
<td>1.039</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>2.826</td>
<td>1.204</td>
<td>6.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~Campus support</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>3.010</td>
<td>1.363</td>
<td>6.648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Sex</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>2.453</td>
<td>1.090</td>
<td>5.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.871</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.418</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Witness/experience discrimination</td>
<td>-1.449</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Transfer status</td>
<td>-1.289</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Year in college</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.920</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>1.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Importance of religion</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>2.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#SAAC membership</td>
<td>-.299</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>1.838</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: LGBT_POWER_DUO, RISK_DICH, OUTCOACHORTeam, CAMPUS_SUPPORT, SEX_REC, ETHNICITY_REC, EXP_HAR, TRANSF_REC, year_in_college, REL_REC, saac.

b. Dependent Variable: Total LGBTCI

~predictor variable  #covariate

**Summary of Results**

The results of the tests of statistical significance support two of the four directional hypotheses. First, the researcher’s proposed connection between a Division I student-athlete’s perception of warm LGBT climate within their department when they also perceive a warm LGBT climate on the larger campus was found to be significantly valid. Second, as was the assumption that a student-athlete would perceive a warmer LGBT climate within the department when the student-athlete reports not having an out LGBT coach or teammate.
Results for the remaining two directional hypotheses: 1) that student-athlete who do not identify as LGBT would find a warmer LGBT climate within the athletics department and 2) that student-athletes in sports with a lower risk of injury would find a warmer LGBT climate within the athletics department were found not to be statistically significant.

Given the addition of seven covariates, the model in its entirety was shown through binary linear regression to be very accurate, nearly 90%, in projecting an individual student-athlete’s perception of LGBT climate within their athletics department. This particular model predicts that female student-athletes, White student-athletes, student-athletes who have not previously transferred universities, and student-athletes who have not witnessed or experienced discrimination or harassment are significantly more likely to report a warmer LGBT climate within their Division I athletics department.

**Content Analysis Results**

A content analysis of factors indicative of campus and department setting was conducted through a search of each institution’s website along with the YouCanPlayProject.org and CampusPride.org websites in an effort to relate the study’s findings to the microsystem, exosystem, and mesosystem (see Figure 1.1) experienced by each participant. It is important to consider these three systems as it is Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) Person, Process, Context, and Time theory which undergirds this study. Microsystems are those in which a person has direct interaction with other members of the same microsystem and could include teammates, locker rooms, or in this case, a campus LGBT support office. Exosystems are contexts that influence microsystems, but in which the person might not have direct interaction. In this case, exosystems include athletics policies and
institutional policies. Mesosystems are made up of the interactions between a microsystem and an exosystem. In this case, mesosystems include an athletic department’s creation and promotion of a You Can Play video (see page 9) and the institution’s participation in Campus Pride rankings.

Institutional and athletic department mission statements as listed on each institution’s website were reviewed for words or phrases indicative of diversity efforts such as “diversity,” “inclusive,” “LGBT,” and the like. Institution websites were also reviewed for a dedicated LGBT support office on campus. The website for CampusPride.org, a nonprofit organization created to make college environments safer for LGBT students (“What Is Campus Pride?,” 2016), was searched for each participating institution’s name and ranking. Institutions voluntarily register with Campus Pride in an effort to publically self-evaluate their LBGTQ climate by the following inclusion factors: policy, support and commitment, academic life, student life, housing and residential life, safety, counseling and health, and recruitment and retention efforts. Scores on the website are offered out of a possible five stars with a score closer to five indicating a more inclusive environment. Finally, a search for departmental You Can Play videos was conducted by searching the YouCanPlay.org website, youtube.com, and google.com. You can play videos serve as an athletic department’s voluntary public declaration that it supports all student-athletes, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity (You Can Play, 2014).
Table 4.14

Comparison of content analysis climate indicators to index results, per institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>“Diversity” in Institutional Mission</th>
<th>“Diversity” in Athletics Mission</th>
<th>You Can Play Video on campus</th>
<th>LGBT Office on campus</th>
<th>Campus Pride Ranking</th>
<th>Average LGBTSACI score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>64.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>65.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>66.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.5/5</td>
<td>73.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewing the data, it is interesting that the second-lowest scoring institution (II) was the only university to have a “no” response in all five categories of indicators while the highest scoring institution (IV) was tied for the most “yes” responses and had the highest Campus Pride ranking. The institution that reported the lowest climate score (I), also had a “yes” response in at least three categorizes, however, none of these included the two mission statements, thereby indicating a failure to commit to diversity at the deepest level of institutional values. Institution III is an interesting study in that both the institutional and department missions address diversity, yet there is no related tangible measure of related action given the absence of a You Can Play video, no LGBT Office, and no voluntary Campus Pride Score, which would seem to be a natural extension of an institution’s philosophy.

Conclusion
This study involved over 350 current NCAA Division I student-athletes at six institutions completing a 53-item instrument evaluating their perception of the climate for LGBT student-athletes within their athletic department. The study was conducted to examine if advances made in support of LGBT communities in the United States in recent years (Halloran 2015; Heffernan, 2011) have also been made within major college athletics. The researcher posited research questions investigating four predictor variables’ impact on the outcome variable *perceived LGBT climate within the athletics department* and offered directional hypothesis for each based on current literature. The survey, amended from two established instruments (see pages 75-77), was distributed via the REDCap online survey web application to athletic administrators at fifteen institutions that had expressed interest in participating in the study. The six institutions that eventually took part (see Table 4.1) include private-religious and public-secular, high- and medium-enrollment, residential and non-residential, urban, suburban, and rural, and are spread across three time-zones. Athletically, institutions included both Football Championship and Non-football subdivisions (see Table 1.3) with respondents indicating participation in 20 out of the possible 43 sports (see Table 3.1) sponsored by the NCAA. Participants represented the spectrum of demographic items including, but not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, year-in-school and the like.

Response data was analyzed using SPSS software. Results of Chi-square tests revealed statistically-significant relationship for the predictor variables of *having an out LGBT coach or teammate* and for *perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus* while no statistically significant relationship was found for the predictor variables of
personally identifying as LGBT and for sport participation by risk of injury. Results of binary logistic regression revealed the model to have great predictive value (89.7% accuracy) after adding seven additional covariates. The covariates of sex, ethnicity, transfer status, and having experienced or witnessed harassment were found to be statistically significant in the model, while the covariates of year in college, importance of religion in one’s life, and membership in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee were found to not be statistically significant. Chapter five will discuss in greater detail the results of the study in terms of the four research questions, implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for next steps.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The current population of traditional-age student-athletes in major collegiate athletic programs have come of age in a time when society in the United States is trending in favor of support for people who identify as LGBT (Flores, 2014; “HRC National Survey of Likely Voters,” 2016). These students have seen LGBT issues celebrated in popular media and hit television shows, and have seen many laws passed in favor of these communities and other discriminatory laws struck down, and likely had LGBT-supportive student organizations such as the gay-straight alliance in high school (GSA Network, 2016; Heck, Flentje, & Cochran, 2011). While there may certainly be instances where intolerance or hostility exist, this study presents data which suggest that Division I intercollegiate athletics departments, more likely than not, offer a supportive climate for student-athletes who identify as LGBT.

Tinto (1987) recognizes the importance of both formal and informal social experiences and formal and informal academic experiences on the retention of students in college. There are currently mechanisms unique to Division I NCAA athletic departments that mitigate any adverse impact of student-athletes’ academic experiences, which make the likelihood of a student-athlete dropping out of school for purely academic reasons very unlikely. This leaves the impact of a student-athlete’s social experience as the main driver behind self-reported student-athlete satisfaction and retention (see Figure 1.3). Considering the ongoing paradigm shift within higher education to recognize the importance of incorporating student development concerns (Keeling, 2004) and climates of inclusion (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin, 2005) into the learning process, this study identifies
significant linkages between characteristics of student-athlete subgroups, their lived experiences, and their perception of LGBT climate within their athletic department, which reinforces the link between psychological climate for sexual minority students’ social integration (Woodford & Kulick, 2015).

Liddle et al.’s (2004) instrument, modified by this author for the student-athlete population, intentionally examines this impact. Any department wishing to show a concern for the student-athlete experience, should be willing to offer this instrument to their student-athlete population in establishing where their climate falls along the continuum from overt discrimination, covert discrimination, tolerance, to affirmation (Chojnacki & Gelkberg, 1994; Liddle, et al., 2004). Again viewing student-athletes through the organizational psychology lens, these pseudo-employees perform better and feel more involved when treated with respect (Ellis, 1996); as such, athletics administrators and coaches could use this instrument to identify those areas of their program that might require attention. Removing heterosexist discrimination and growing LGBT supportive climates, while technically separate but overlapping constructs (Velez & Moradi, 2012), could allow students to focus their energy toward team goals, increase collaboration and cohesion, and decrease feelings of isolation, anxiety, and psychological distress (Liddle et al., 2004, p. 35).

**Findings and Implications**

Based on the literature and my twenty-plus years of experience working in Division I athletics, I wanted to investigate factors that might impact a student-athlete’s perception of the LGBT climate within their athletic department. I will review below, in practical terms, my findings and how the results of the study could turn into actionable items on campus in an
effort to fulfill Boyer’s (1990) principle priorities of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

**Research Question One**

Research question one asked: Do student-athletes who identify as non-LGBT report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than those who identify as LGBT? Chi-square tests revealed no significant relationship between LGBT identity and perception of LGBT climate. As such, the proposed directional hypothesis suggesting that student-athletes who do not identify as LGBT will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students who do identify as LGBT, was found to not be the case.

I was surprised to find there to be no statistically significant relationship between a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity and their perception of climate. I had predicted, based on power dynamic similarities of the LGBT community and the African American community as expressed by critical race theory (Chafe, 2007), that being unaware of the overt and covert discrimination and harassment all-too-familiar to LGBT students, the majority population would perceive a warmer climate than minority population. This finding could be encouraging, however, as it does not necessarily indicate the majority culture to be ignorant of or dismissive of the concerns of LGBT student-athletes; rather, it could indicate that student-athletes are aware of and sensitive to LGBT climate regardless of their personal sexual orientation or gender identity.

Based on the findings of this study along with the literature, athletic administrators are encouraged to maintain a balance in the power dynamic between the majority non-LGBT
population and minority LGBT population within their department. Such efforts can be made by highlighting accomplishments of LGBT student-athletes or coaches in promotional materials, not tolerating abusive actions, and using inclusive language that does not assume a heteromajoritive culture (“12 Keys to Creating an Inclusive Classroom Community for LGBTQ Students,” 2016).

Research Question Two

Research question two asked: Do student-athletes on teams with lower risk of injury report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? Chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between risk of sport injury and perception of LGBT climate. As such, the proposed directional hypothesis suggesting that student-athletes in lower-risk sports will perceive a warmer climate for LGBT students within Division I athletic departments than will students in higher-risk sports, was found not to be the case.

I was surprised to find no statistically significant relationship between a student-athlete’s primary sport and their perception of climate. Based on the literature surrounding a heteromajoritive culture and traditional masculine traditions (Anderson, 2008; Messner, 1989), I had predicted those sports with higher rates of physicality, as indicated by risk of injury (National Athletic Trainers Association, 2003; Rice, 2008), would report a chillier climate for LGBT students within athletics. This result should be taken with caution, however, as the study’s sample is surprisingly devoid of participants from two of the NCAA’s primary sports: football and men’s basketball (n=6), both of which are considered high-contact. The sample is also lacking participants from institutions at the NCAA’s highest
competitive level: The Football Bowl Subdivision. These concerns are addressed further in the Limitations section of this chapter.

Based on the findings of this study and the literature, athletic administrators can maintain continuity amongst teams in perception of a warm climate by intentionally pairing higher-risk teams with lower-risk teams when programming for lifeskills events (e.g., community service projects). Interaction between diverse subgroups of students can lead to a greater understanding, of, empathy for, appreciation of, and connections with one another while building a stronger sense of community (Green, Kidd, & Walter, 2002).

**Research Question Three**

Research question three asked: Do student-athletes who report not having an out LGBT coach or teammate perceive a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? Chi-square tests found a significant relationship between having an out coach or teammate and perceived LGBT climate within the department. In the study’s model, student-athletes who do not have an out coach or teammate are 2.8 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within athletics than those who do have an out coach or teammate.

In keeping with the literature regarding contact theory (Allport, 1954), student-athletes who reported having an out LGBT coach or teammate reported a chillier climate within their department than those who did not have an out coach or teammate. It is likely that participants lacking an out LGBT coach or teammate are naïve to actions that are hostile toward an individual who identifies as LGBT, and therefore might not realize the structures in place are actually perpetuating a dominant heterosexist culture. Based on the findings of this study and the literature, it is in these instances that safe space training might be able to
benefit those individuals who are well-intentioned, but under-informed. Athletics administrators should mandate such training for not only student-athletes, but also coaches, as they carry a disproportionate amount of influence on the student-athlete experience (American Football Coaches Association, 2016; Solomon, 2016).

**Research Question Four**

Research question four asked: Do student-athletes who indicate a more engaging LGBT climate on the greater campus report a more LGBT-friendly athletics climate than others? Chi-square tests found a significant relationship between perceiving a warm LGBT climate on the greater campus perceived LGBT climate within the department. In the study’s model, student-athletes who perceive a warm LGBT climate on the overall campus are 3 times more likely to report a warm LGBT climate within the athletics department than those who report a chilly LGBT climate on the larger campus.

In keeping with Bronfenbrenner’s (1994, 2005) work investigating the influence of multiple layers of environment impacting the lived experience of individuals, this finding encourages athletics departments to coordinate with offices across campus that support student social systems (Tinto, 1987). Rather than encouraging team members to only associate with other student-athletes, perhaps an invitation from a coach for a student-athlete to spend their free time serving on the campus Lavender Graduation Committee or allowing a student to earn study hall hours in the Rainbow Lounge rather than strictly in Athletics Study Hall, might allow the greater campus climate to permeate the department climate.

Students who possess an understanding of diversity at a conscious level and those who had taken courses focused on diversity, also had lower levels of unconscious bias.
(Gurrin, 1999; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001). As such, results of this study support an athletic department’s efforts to encourage student-athletes to enroll in classes that address diversity and host extracurricular events for those whose course schedule does not permit such a class. Considering the intentional effort of the NCAA to engage the concerns of LGBT student-athletes (Griffin & Taylor, 2012), there are likely to be sources of financial support for such efforts from the National Office, such as speaker grants and the student assistance fund.

**Implications Related to Covariates**

Having introduced a set of seven covariates, binary linear regression revealed no statistical significance to the overall model for the following variables: the student-athlete’s *year in school*, the student-athlete’s *membership in the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee* (SAAC), or the *importance of religion* in the student-athlete’s life. Regarding year in school as a variable, I thought it possible that an upperclassman student who had progressed further along Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors of development or who had navigated completely Erikson’s (1968) identity crisis would perceive a different LGBT climate than a student who had not yet had such an experience. I also thought it possible that student-athlete leaders who participate on the department’s SAAC would perceive the LGBT climate differently than those not on the committee as they are charged with speaking on behalf of the entire student-athlete population, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Finally, considering that there are Division I institutions that are affiliated with a particular religion, some of whom have documented anti-LGBT dogma (Zeigler, 2016) I thought that perhaps the influence of such faith-based traditions might impact a student-athlete’s
perception of climate differently than those without such a background. For each of these concerns, however, there was no significant difference in reported perception of climate. On the other hand, the remaining four covariates, ethnicity, biological sex, transfer status, and having experienced or witnessed LGBT-related harassment or discrimination were found to be statistically significant to this model.

**Sex.** In terms of biological sex, women were more likely to report a warm LGBT climate than were male student-athletes, indicating a possible influence of heterosexism being more prevalent on men’s teams. This is supported by data from the study which indicated overwhelmingly friendly climates in the sports of Women’s Softball, Women’s Soccer, Women’s Cross Country, and Women’s Basketball. Accordingly, administrators could intentionally program for men’s teams to undergo safe space training (Lipka, 2011) in an attempt to increase awareness. Similar trainings should also be offered annually at national coaching association conventions.

**Ethnicity.** In campus racial climate studies, students of color often report a more hostile environment at predominantly White institutions than White students in the majority culture (Quaye, Tamnascia, & Talesh, 2009). In this study, students of color were again more aware of hostilities toward the minority LGBT population than were White students. Such perception could indicate a need for visible role models for LGBT students (DeWitt, 2012; Linley et al., 2016; Martinez & Hebl, 2010).

**Transfer status.** Students who enter college having had a solid foundation of emotional support while in high school are more likely to successfully engage new friends, faculty, and mentors, thereby achieving a sense of belonging, which, in turn, can foster
healthy identity development (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2013). Having found transfer students more likely to report a chillier LGBT climate than were students who had attended only the participating institution, this study supports the need for an LGBT-related session as part of the department’s orientation. For LGBT students without such a foundation, administrators might intentionally program for support structures to be introduced to their incoming students in order to mitigate the absence of such a foundation. One approach might be to invite campus colleagues from the Office of Student Affairs, including the Director of LGBTQIA, to present at the annual student-athlete orientation session, as students believe orientation programs are useful to their adjustment to college (Daddona & Cooper, 2002; Perrine & Spain, 2008).

**Experienced or witnessed harassment or discrimination.** The study also revealed students who have experienced or witnessed LGBT-related discrimination or harassment are more likely to perceive a chillier LGBT climate. This finding indicates the profound impact of anti-LGBT behaviors and should motivate departments to train employees and students in anti-bullying and intervention strategies (Wernick, 2013) while also reinforcing legal obligations of the workplace (Hall & Sandler, 1982) including, but not limited to Title IX mandated reporter training.

**Content analysis.** The document analysis revealed other areas for improvement of LGBT climate. Similar to the absence of LGBT-related sessions offered at coaching association conferences (see Table 1.1), the absence of inclusive language in the institutional and athletics mission statements for a number of participating institutions is cause for concern. By not openly embracing students of the minority sexual orientation or gender
identity in the bedrock statement of values, an institution or department begins that student’s journey from a position of abnormality and marginality (Schlossberg, 1989; Vaccaro, Kennedy, & August, 2012). Production of a You Can Play video and completion of the Campus Pride score card are other outward indicators of an institution or a department embracing the concerns for all students, including those who identify as LGBT.

An example of a successful LGBT-friendly public audit is the Law School Admissions Council’s Diversity in Law School (DLS) LGBT Survey Results, which offer law school applicants a window into the climate of schools within the United States and Canada. The survey results are presented with simple yes or no indications as to if the school has a non-discrimination policy, LGBT student organizations, LGBT faculty, LGBT administrators, LGBT courses and domestic partner or same-sex marriage benefits, thereby supplying prospective students with a glimpse into the culture of the institution (“Law School LGBT Survey Results,” 2015). Similarly, as of early 2015, Campus Pride began offering campus administrators an opportunity to respond to a LGBT climate survey related specifically to their athletics department. Like the DLS, this survey has the potential to shape prospective student-athlete behavior with a consumer-friendly, non-scientific glimpse into the athletics department from an administrator’s point-of-view. It is recommended that Division I athletic programs work with their campus LGBTQIA or Student Life Office each year in completing this audit.

One effort to assess the needs of LGBT individuals currently at the center of much debate is the use of voluntary identifiers on personal documents (Callahan, Sitkin, Ton, Eidson-Ton, Weckstein, & Latimore, 2015). On the one hand, asking students to self-identify
can allow for tracking of admission, retention, and success rates, as well as Advancement services and on-campus programming (Garvey & Drenzer, 2013; Windemeyer, Humphrey, & Barker, 2013). On the other hand, some literature, mostly anecdotal, expresses concern of pressuring students to out themselves at a time that they might not have established their identity (Chandler, 2015; Hall & Sandler, 1982). Regardless of which decision is made by the administration, to include voluntary identification or not, departments could certainly stress availability of resources from time-to-time. To have someone outside of the target audience suggest participation might be illustrative of the acceptance and support.

**Limitations**

In 2014, the NCAA Board of Directors approved a reorganization of its governance structure to allow institutions in the top five most powerful and richest conferences a greater degree of autonomy regarding certain bylaws. This group, known as the Power 5 to those in the industry, carry a disproportionate amount of influence in matters related to college sports, as they are also responsible for driving a disproportionate amount of public interest and revenue for the association. With such power, however, can also come resistance to transparency. As previously discussed in Chapter Four, compliance officers at fifteen institutions originally expressed interest in inviting their student-athletes to participate in this study. It should be noted, by virtue of their job requirements, compliance officers are often very supportive of assessment efforts and very open to transparency, as they are paid not to produce positive results in their line of work, but to produce accurate results, regardless of favorability. As such, these individuals, seven of which were from institutions in the Power 5 conferences, were excited to present the study participation to their coaches and to their
Director of Athletics. Unfortunately, none of the seven were able to persuade department and team leaders to offer the link to their student-athletes. As a result, the study participants are not representative of the most influential sixty-five institutions which comprise the Power 5.

Similarly, the two most powerful sports in Division I athletics in terms of influence, exposure, and revenue-generation are men’s basketball and football. As with the Power 5, coaches of these sports can be hesitant when investigating their own programs, even when it is constructive and not the least bit punitive. Besides the possibility of results indicating a particular group of students might be marginalized within their team (Quaye et al., 2009), perhaps it is the lacking immediacy of a return on investment that leads these coaches to resist survey participation. That is to say, it could take years before the results of a climate survey turn into complete action plans. This is in stark contrast to the coaching profession in which teams alter game plans during halftime of a contest and seeing an immediate difference in team performance as a result. It is also possible that a coach might not see the benefit of breaching a possibly contentious topic with student-athletes. Finally, it is possible that coaches find value in a student overcoming adversity and that any perceived hostility in their college journey should be met head-on and overcome, rather than having accommodations made for a more hospitable climate.

Future Research

History suggests that [in addressing inequalities], although increased awareness is often an important first step, significant changes are achieved through enforced alterations of policies and procedures (Del Boca, 2016). Before making such changes for the sake of LGBT climate, departments should first assess their current climate with academic rigor. As
encouraged by Creswell (2009), researchers are invited to extend or retest this study. Should a deficiency or point of contention by identified, it is my hope that offering my instrument to a new sample of student-athletes might strengthen my contribution to the literature and enhance the experience of future students. Summarized below are areas that might be considered for enhanced research related to LGBT climate within Division I athletics.

The two primary models which serve as the foundation for this study, both Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model Tinto’s (1987) Model of Student Departure include the passage of time as a factor; the former theory refers to this as the Chronosystem. My study did not take into account the chronosystem. However, as college students can experience a great metamorphosis during their college years (Erikson, 1968; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), a longitudinal study might inform how the chronosystem impacts perception of LGBT climate within an athletics department. Moreover, Division I student-athletes are only permitted a five-year window of opportunity to participate in college sports beginning with their initial full-time enrollment (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2014), as such, this study could be replicated every six years in order to engage an new cohort of student-athletes.

Because the concepts of gender and sexuality are socially constructed and are constantly changing based on the norms of society and of individuals, Abes and Kasch (2007) suggest that “queer theory critically analyzes the meaning of identity, focusing on intersections of identities and [resists the] oppressive social constructs of sexual orientation and gender” (p. 620). Although not immediately applicable to the current study, this author would like to explore the possible impact of addressing future student-athlete research
through the lens of queer theory by “[questioning] normative constructions of socially constructed binaries such as male/female” (Renn, 2010, p. 132). This author realizes such an approach could be difficult to apply to intercollegiate athletics given the legal requirements to report data based on the binary basis of sex, the history of viewing men’s and women’s sports as separate, and the resistance of many athletics administrators to academically address the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity. However, responding to requests for future LGBT research in collegiate athletics (Baks & Malecek, 2004; Kirby, Demers, & Parent, 2008) might prove fruitful, given the increased attention to LGBT issues in higher education and the increasing national dialogue.

This study provides further evidence that, as with many minority cultures on college campuses, there is a power dynamic impacting the student-athletes experience along the lines of sexual orientation and gender identity. The needs of transgender students, however, are not necessarily the same as those of lesbian, gay, or bisexual students (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011, Carter 2000). While the literature has often combined these unique constructs into a single cohort of LGBT, and as many institutions offer a support services under the single umbrella of LGBTQIA (Dugan et al., 2012), intentionally separating these two measures in future studies may provide more student-specific data addressing the unique concerns of each population.

Considering nine of the fifteen institutions originally expressing interest in the study failed to produce any respondents, particularly the absence of Football Bowl Series schools, a complete snapshot of LGBT climate within all of Division I athletics programs could be enhanced by successfully encouraging student-athletes at these institutions to complete the
instrument. In particular, participants in football and men’s basketball should be targeted for inclusion alongside each other sport. Participation and response rate could be increased by either enhancing participant reward options (such as a prize drawing), or by the NCAA National Office administratively mandating distribution of the instrument (without mandating participation, of course). As an example, one month after I distributed by instrument, Directors of Athletics and Faculty Athletics Representatives at each Division I institution received a directive from the National Office requesting all coaches, staff, administrators and student-athletes be invited and strongly encouraged to voluntarily complete a survey investigating the time demands placed on the student-athlete population in the interest of informing future policies, procedures, and bylaws. If such priority was placed on investigation of LGBT climate through the use of this instrument with such top-down support, it is likely that the response rate would produce an acceptable \( n \) for each possible variable category. Also, the scope of participants could also be widened to include coaches’ and administrators’ perceptions of the climate for LGBT student-athlete, as it is they who primarily create the policies and traditions which lead to the department’s culture.

**Conclusion**

Social acceptance of LGBT individuals has been gaining momentum in a growing number of facets of life in the United States since President George W. Bush endorsed the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2004, which would have Constitutionally-limited marriage in the United States to unions of one woman to one man (S.J.RES.40.PCS, 2004). Over the course of the twelve years since, public dialogue has been further encouraged by the coming out of national celebrities such as fitness expert Bob Harper, television start Wentworth
Miller, Oscar Award winning actress Jodie Foster, and country music stars Ty Herndon and Billy Gilman along with the very public transitions of Chaz Bono and Caitlyn Jenner. LGBT-supportive songs also won the album of the year at the Grammys and the Country Music Awards. In 2013, major professional sports had their first starts come out with Robbie Rogers in men’s soccer and Jason Collins in men’s basketball. In 2015, Dick’s Sporting Goods Stores reported replicas of the jersey for Michael Sam, the first openly out player in the National Football League, outselling the jersey of the number one overall draft pick, Jadeveon Clowney, despite Sam being selected 249th in the 2014 draft (Buzinski, 2015). Such fan support bodes well for the acceptance of the coming out of future athletes and might inspire current college students to take such a step.

The study detailed in this dissertation provides the rationale for major college athletic departments to investigate their own climate for LGBT student-athletes and also provides the instrument and methodology for conducting such an inquiry. Resources and programming ideas are also described in the hopes that administrators within athletics and those outside of athletics, but who have the ability to effect change, can engage in the conversations that might benefit the student-athlete experience. If major college athletics departments want to take a more holistic approach to offering support services to their population of student-athletes, they could broaden the dedication of resources devoted to the academic plight of the student-athlete by expanding funds to enhance and maintain inclusive climate efforts. In these pursuits, athletics departments should engage members of the faculty and the Office of Assessment to add academic rigor to their efforts while engaging members of the student affairs staff in implementing any resulting action steps indicated in the data. Together, such
strategic planning will increase transparency, dispel skepticism, forge working relationships, intertwine the student-athlete experience with the greater campus, and lead to a more rewarding student experience for all.
Appendix A

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Student-Athlete Climate Inventory (LGBTSACI)

Please rate the following items according to how well they describe the atmosphere for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) student-athletes on your team using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBT student-athletes are treated with respect.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT student-athletes must be secretive.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teammates are as likely to ask nice, interested questions about a same-sex relationship as they are about a heterosexual relationship.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT student-athletes consider this a comfortable place to play.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-LGBT student-athletes are comfortable engaging in gay-friendly humor with LGBT student-athletes (for example kidding them about a date).</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The atmosphere for LGBT student-athletes is oppressive.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT student-athletes feel accepted by teammates.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teammates make comments that seem to indicate a lack of awareness of LGBT issues.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-athletes are expected to not act &quot;too gay&quot;.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT student-athletes fear the loss of playing time because of sexual orientation.</td>
<td>Does not describe at all&lt;br&gt;Describes somewhat or a little&lt;br&gt;Describes pretty well&lt;br&gt;Describes extremely well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My team is supportive of LGBT student-athletes.  

LGBT student-athletes are comfortable talking about their personal lives with teammates.  

There is pressure for LGBT student-athletes to stay closeted (to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression).  

Student-athletes LGBT identity does not seem to be an issue.  

LGBT student-athletes are met with veiled hostility (for example scornful looks or icy tone of voice).  

The team as a whole provides a supportive environment for LGBT student-athletes.  

The athletic department as a whole provides a supportive environment for LGBT student-athletes.  

The university as a whole provides a supportive environment for LGBT student-athletes.  

The team’s coaching staff provides a supportive environment for LGBT student-athletes.  

LGBT student-athletes are less likely to be mentored by upperclassmen.  

LGBT student-athletes feel free to display pictures of a same-sex partner.  

The atmosphere for LGBT student-athletes is improving.
The following question is about your personal experiences.

Have you personally experienced any offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct (harassing behavior) based on your sexual orientation or gender identity that has interfered with your ability to play your sport or learn?

- Yes
- No

In what form was the conduct? (Mark all that apply)
- I was not given playing time
- I felt that the coach was playing favorites
- I was the target of graffiti (locker defaced, etc.)
- I received verbal derogatory remarks either in person or via the phone
- I received derogatory remarks via electronic means (email, Facebook, text message, IM, etc.)
- I feared for my physical safety
- I received threats of physical violence
- I was the target of physical violence
- I was deliberately ignored or excluded due to my identity
- I was pressured to be silent about my identity
- I was threatened with exposure of my identity
- I received a poor grade because of a hostile classroom environment
- I was asked to speak as a representative for all LGBT students
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

Where did the conduct occur? (Mark all that apply)
- At practice
- At the opponent's venue
- In a campus/faculty office
- In a classroom/lab
- In a competition
- In a locker room
- In off-campus housing
- In on-campus housing
- In fraternity/sorority housing
- In another campus setting (restrooms, dining facility, library, public spaces, etc.)
- In an off-campus setting (i.e., the local community)
- While traveling for an away competition
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:
Who was the source of the conduct? (Mark all that apply)

- A member of my team or another student at my institution
- A student-athlete at a different institution
- A student on campus (not an athlete)
- A coach of my institution
- A coach of a different institution
- Athletic department staff
- Faculty member
- Campus security/police
- Non-athletic department/college staff
- College alumnus/alumna
- Media (reporters, posters, newspapers, etc.)
- Opposing team member/fan
- Don’t know classification of source person
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

How did you feel about experiencing this conduct? (Mark all that apply)

- I didn’t feel it was serious enough to do anything about
- I felt angry
- I felt depressed
- I felt embarrassed
- I felt as if I should take some action
- I lost confidence
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

How did you respond to experiencing this conduct? (Mark all that apply)

- I considered leaving the team
- I considered leaving the college/university
- I told a friend/roommate
- I ignored it
- I avoided the harasser
- I confronted the harasser
- I didn’t know who to go to
- I made a complaint to a campus employee/official
- I didn’t report it for fear of negative consequences/retaliation
- It caused me to begin to use/increase my intake of alcohol and/or other drugs
- I sought support from counseling/advocacy services
- I talked to a coach
- I dropped the class
- I avoided going to practice
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:
The following question is about your observation or awareness of someone else’s experiences.

29. Have you observed or been aware of any offensive, hostile, exclusionary, or intimidating conduct (hassling behavior) based on sexual orientation or gender identity that has interfered with another athlete’s ability to play a sport or learn?  
   □ Yes  
   □ No

In what form was the conduct? (Mark all that apply)

☐ Someone not given playing time
☐ Someone feeling that the coach was playing favorites
☐ Someone being the target of graffiti (locker defaced, etc.)
☐ Someone receiving verbal derogatory remarks either in person or via the phone
☐ Someone receiving derogatory remarks via electronic means (email, Facebook, text msg, IM, etc.)
☐ Someone fearing for their physical safety
☐ Someone receiving threats of physical violence
☐ Someone being the target of physical violence
☐ Someone being deliberately ignored or excluded due to their identity
☐ Someone being pressured to be silent about their identity
☐ Someone being threatened with exposure of their identity
☐ Someone getting a poor grade because of a hostile classroom environment
☐ A student who identifies as LGBT being asked to speak for all LGBT students
☐ Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

Where did the conduct occur? (Mark all that apply)

☐ At practice
☐ At the opponent’s venue
☐ In a campus/faculty office
☐ In a classroom/lab
☐ In a competition
☐ In a locker room
☐ In off-campus housing
☐ In on-campus housing
☐ In fraternity/sorority housing
☐ In another campus setting (restrooms, dining facility, library, public spaces, etc.)
☐ In an off-campus setting (i.e., the local community)
☐ While traveling for an away competition
☐ Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:
Who was the source of the conduct? (Mark all that apply)

- A member of my team or another student at my institution
- A student-athlete at a different institution
- A student on campus (not an athlete)
- A coach of my institution
- A coach of a different institution
- Athletic department staff
- Faculty member
- Campus security/police
- Non-athletic department/college staff
- College alumnus/alumna
- Media (reporters, posters, newspapers, etc.)
- Opposing team member/fan
- Don’t know classification of source person
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

How did you feel about witnessing the conduct? (mark all that apply)

- I didn’t feel it was serious enough to do anything about
- I felt angry
- I felt depressed
- I felt embarrassed
- I felt as if I should take some action
- I lost confidence
- Other (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

How did you respond to observing this conduct? (mark all that apply)

- I considered leaving the team
- I considered leaving the college/university
- I told a friend/roommate
- I ignored it
- I avoided the harasser
- I confronted the harasser
- I didn’t know who to go to
- I made a complaint to a campus employee/official
- I didn’t report it for fear of negative consequences/retribution
- It caused me to begin to use/increase my intake of alcohol and/or other drugs
- I sought support from counseling/advocacy services
- I talked to a coach
- I dropped the class
- I avoided going to practice
- I comforted the targeted student-athlete
- I did not comfort the targeted student-athlete
- Other (please describe in the following pop-up question)

Please specify other:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of university action and awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your university takes actions designed to prevent discrimination related to LGBT issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Your university provides visible resources on LGBT issues and concerns.                           |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| ○                                                              | ○                                           | ○                                  | ○ |

| University leadership outside the Athletics Department fosters inclusion of LGBT student-athletes, students, faculty, and staff in the larger campus community. |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| ○                                                              | ○                                           | ○                                  | ○ |

| Classroom lessons at your university are inclusive and representative of LGBT history, individuals, and issues. |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| ○                                                              | ○                                           | ○                                  | ○ |
## Demographics

**Sex (biological)**
- Male
- Female
- Intersex

**Gender (identity/expression)**
- Man/Masculine
- Woman/Feminine
- Transgender
- Gender Queer/Androgynous
- Questioning
- Gender not listed here (please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

**Sexual orientation**
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Questioning
- Asexual
- Heterosexual
- Other/Unknown/No Reply (If “Other”, please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

**Ethnicity (check all that apply)**
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White Caucasian
- Two or more races
- Non-Resident/International
- Other/Unknown/No Reply (If “Other”, please describe in following pop-up question)

Please specify other:

2015-16 is your ______ year in college.
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth
- Sixth

Transfer status:
- I have always attended my current school
- I transferred from another school

Personally out:
- I am an openly out LGBT student-athlete
- I am an LGBT student-athlete and have come out to one or only a few teammates or coaches
- I am an LGBT student-athlete but have not come out to any teammates or coaches
- I do not identify as LGBT

About my teammates:
- I have an out LGBT teammate
- I have an LGBT teammate who has come out to only one or a few teammates
- I do not know of any LGBT teammates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About my coaches</th>
<th>I have an out LGBT coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have an LGBT coach who has come out to only one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or a few teammates or other coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not know of any LGBT coaches on my team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About my playing time</td>
<td>I have exhausted my eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am a starter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not normally start, but see significant playing time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not play very often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I do not play at all/redshirting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a medical hardship year for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am a male practice player on a women's team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Importance of religion in my life</td>
<td>Not at all important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a member of my department's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My primary sport is:

- Men's Cross Country
- Women's Cross Country
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Men's Soccer
- Women's Soccer
- Men's Volleyball
- Women's Volleyball
- Men's Water Polo
- Women's Water Polo
- Men's Basketball
- Women's Basketball
- Men's Bowling
- Women's Bowling
- Men's Fencing
- Women's Fencing
- Men's Gymnastics
- Women's Gymnastics
- Men's Ice Hockey
- Women's Ice Hockey
- Men's Rifle
- Women's Rifle
- Mixed Rifle
- Men's Skiing
- Women's Skiing
- Mixed Skiing
- Men's Swimming
- Women's Swimming
- Men's Diving
- Women's Diving
- Men's Track
- Women's Track
- Wrestling
- Baseball
- Men's Golf
- Women's Golf
- Men's Lacrosse
- Women's Lacrosse
- Men's Rowing
- Women's Rowing
- Softball
- Men's Tennis
- Women's Tennis
- Men's Volleyball
- Women's Volleyball
- Men's Water Polo
- Women's Water Polo
- Women's Equestrian
- Men's Rugby
- Women's Rugby
- Men's Sand Volleyball
- Women's Sand Volleyball

My institution: (will not be identified in any reports, this is for data analysis only)

- Bradley University
- Campbell University
- Cleveland State University
- Colgate University
- George Washington University
- Harvard University
- University of Massachusetts
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri - Kansas City
- Missouri State University
- New Mexico State University
- North Dakota State University
- University of Notre Dame
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of Pittsburgh
- Seattle University
- Southern Methodist University
- University of Texas
- University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley
- Utah Valley University
Appendix B

SSIRB Approval

NOTICE OF EXEMPT AMENDMENT

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Friend
328 Education Building
Kansas City, MO 64110

Protocol Number: 15-565
Protocol Title: You Can Play, but Can You be Yourself: How LGB&T Student-Athletes Perceive the Climate of NCAA Division I Athletic Departments
Type of Review: Exempt

Date of Determination: 12/30/2015

Dear Dr. Friend,

A member of the UMKC Research Compliance Office reviewed the following:
- Additional sites added. Penn State, New Mexico State, University of Texas.

Your amendment is approved and the study retains its exempt status. As with the initial determination, changes to the study must be promptly reported. When the study is complete, you are required to submit a Final Report.

Please contact the Research Compliance Office (email: umkcreb@umkc.edu; phone: 816) for questions or require further information.

Thank you,

Simon McNeill
UMKC IRB
Appendix C

Agreement of Confidentiality

Title of Study: You can play, but can you be yourself. How LGBT and non-LGBT student-athletes perceive the climate of NCAA Division I Athletics and the larger institution.

Investigator: Robert Greim (EdD, Candidate at the University of Missouri - Kansas City)

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study aimed at evaluating the climate related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in Division I intercollegiate athletics. You are eligible to participate if you are (a) 18 years or older and (b) a student-athlete at an NCAA Division I institution.

Background and Purpose: Previous research has indicated that the development of college students is impacted by their involvement on campus. Further, their experiences influence their perception of this involvement. The researcher hopes to use this brief, 15-minute questionnaire to assess the current state of Division I athletics in terms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender climate. This online study is coordinated at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC).

Procedures: Once participants agree to participate by continuing on to page two of this survey, they will be shown a 53-item questionnaire that will ask basic questions about their experience and their sport. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Benefits, Risks and Inconveniences: This research is considered to be minimal risk; the risks of taking part in this study are not expected to be more than the risks in your daily life. There are no other known risks to you if you choose to take part in this study. There are no direct benefits of participating in this study, aside from contributing to research which aims to improve the climate within Division I Intercollegiate Athletics.

Compensation, Fees and Expenses: As an incentive to participate, participants will have the opportunity to enter into a raffle to win one of sixteen (16) Amazon gift cards; three ($100 each), three ($50 each), ten ($25 each). Participants will be directed to a separate Drawing Entry Page at the end of the survey. If you choose to enter the drawing, you will be asked to provide your contact information on a secure page that will NOT be linked to your survey responses. Odds of winning depend on number of participants. The drawing will take place after the data collection has been completed (expected March 2016). There are no monetary costs to participants in this study.

Confidentiality: All data will be collected anonymously and will not contain any identifying information beyond the name of the participant's institution. While we will do our best to keep the information you share with us confidential, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed; there is a possibility of a breach of confidentiality of information from the second survey if someone was to obtain your contact information. Individuals from the UMKC Institutional Review Board (who reviews and approves research studies), Research Protections Program, and Federal regulatory agencies may look at records related to this study to make sure we are doing proper, safe research, and protecting human subjects. The results of this research may be published or presented to others. You and your institution will not be named in any reporting of the results. It is not the University's policy to pay or provide medical treatment for persons who are in studies. If you think you have been harmed as a result of participating in this study, please call the IRB Administrator of UMKC's IRB at 816-235-5927.

Contacts for Questions about the Study: You should contact the Office of UMKC's Institutional Review Board at 816-235-5927 if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research subject. You may contact Dr. Jennifer Friend at either 816-235-2196 or friendj@umkc.edu if you have any questions about this study or if any problems come up.

Voluntary Participation: Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study, you are free to stop participating at any time and for any reason. If participants experience any discomfort, they are encouraged to contact their campus counseling office. If you would like to read the findings of this research, please email the author at greimr@umkc.edu (expected May 2016).

For this survey, sexual orientation means "an individual's physical and/or emotional attraction to the same and/or opposite gender" while gender identity means a person's "psychological identification as a man, woman or some other gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth" (Human Rights Campaign).

Inventory revised May 2014 from two sources with permission from the primary authors:


This informed consent form was reviewed and approved by the UMKC Institutional Review Board (Protocol #15-505) on December 18, 2015.

By continuing on to the next page of this study, you are indicating your consent to participate. It is recommended that you print this statement for your records, or record the address for this site and keep it for reference.

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VITA

Robert Douglas Greim was born October 15, 1975, in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. He attended Excelsior Springs Public Schools and graduated from Excelsior Springs High School in 1994. Greim attended Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, Social Studies, and a Master of Science in Administrative Studies.

Following graduation in December of 2002, Greim accepted an Academic Coordinator position in the Intercollegiate Athletics Department at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming. After two years, Greim and his wife, Jill, returned to his hometown, as he accepted a job as Director of Academic Support in the Intercollegiate Athletics Department at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Greim transitioned to the Athletics Compliance Office in 2008 and began working toward his Educational Doctorate through the University of Missouri – Kansas City in January 2012.

Upon completion of his degree requirements, Greim plans to actively engage professionals in the National Collegiate Athletics Association’s national office and member institutions in an effort to infuse current academic literature into athletics policy while researching issues impacting the experience of student-athletes and the experience of athletics employees.