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# The Impact of a Mentorship Program on the Academic and Personal Development of College Athletes

## Abstract

This qualitative study explored the impact of having a mentor through the academic and social life of student athletes who were recruited to become mentees in a program called the University of Colorado Athletic Mentorship Program (UCAMP). The sample consisted of 10 randomly selected mentors from the community and 10 mentees who had been matched to these mentors. The mentors and mentees, respectively, expressed their experiences of the mentoring relationship as well as their satisfaction with UCAMP, offering suggestions for its improvement. An interview protocol framed the interview and details of what took place during that time for both the mentor and mentee who worked together. Separate questionnaires were used for the mentors and mentees, respectively, with both sets of questions closely tied to the research questions. Key findings were as follows: (a) engaging and matching played a key role in the success of the mentoring experience; (b) relationship building added to the success of the mentormentee relationship; (c) time and persistence in establishing the mentor-mentee relationship seemed to add to the bonding process and positive outcome; and (d) mentees who not only had a mentor but were able to make a meaningful connection perceived that this strengthened their career accomplishment. Foreign students seemed to appreciate and gain even more from having had a mentor and a relationship with someone outside of the university system. Based on the findings, suggestions were provided for a mentoring program model. It was suggested that the experiences and stories shared by the student athletes and their mentors be used to prepare the way for future studies and training regarding replication of this model. Other directions for future research were also recommended.

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THE IMPACT OF A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM  
ON THE ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ATHLETES

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A Dissertation

Presented to  
the Morgridge College of Education  
University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Larry Curry

June 2010

Advisors: Dr. Karin Dittrick Nathan

Dr. Kathy Green

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Title: THE IMPACT OF A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM ON THE ACADEMIC AND  
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Advisors: Dr. Karin Dittrick Nathan & Dr. Kathy Green

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athletes and their mentors be used to prepare the way for future studies and training regarding replication of this model. Other directions for future research were also recommended.

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction to The Study**

Over the years, the University of Colorado (CU) has gained national attention for its outstanding rating as a Big-Twelve university. However, the school has also received its share of negative publicity from some of the poor choices and decisions that a select few have made. Some of these few have included student athletes, although some have merely been accused of wrong doing and then found innocent. Nevertheless, the public has, at times, had a very negative impression of student athletes. Unfortunately, the whole athletic department has suffered from the actions of those few.

One day in 1999, a group of individuals was asked to meet at the Denver Marriott Hotel in southeast Denver. These individuals were from all areas of the community and work force. Some were attorneys; others were representatives of the business community. Coach Gary Barnett, head football coach at the University of Colorado at that time, and two of his assistant coaches met with the group to share the coach's dream of having a program that would support male athletes from the football team.

There ensued an open discussion as each person shared previous experiences with the University of Colorado, particularly as related to its historic lack of sensitivity towards minority athletes. The coach was very open to the feedback from these community members who had assembled to hear his plan and goals.

In some ways, it was as if each were waiting to see where this discussion would go and if the goals of the coach would survive the powers that be at the University of

Colorado. It was at this point that mentoring became the subject of discussion. For some of the participants, mentoring was not a new term; rather, it was a welcoming offer to the young athletes who had been without any role modeling or guidance during their academic stay at the University of Colorado.

## **Background**

Every student is confronted with challenges during their first year away from home. Student athletes find themselves confronted with the same issues any other student has to contend with, dealing with homesickness, fear of the unknown, the pressures of meeting new friends, forming a new support system, and the cultural impact of being in a higher educational world and lifestyle. The student athletes are, in addition, adjusting to the demands of fulfilling the requisites for their scholarship, which has allowed them to attend the university. This study looked at the importance of having available and using a formal mentorship program that aids in the orientation process and supports student athletes with the career and social stability needed to meet the demands and expectations put on them. Having such a formal program as the University of Colorado Athletic Mentoring Program (UCAMP) can help reduce some of the obstacles that student athletes face.

Since 1983, the climate on school and college campuses has been studied by such groups as the National Commission of Excellence in Education, which issued the report, *A Nation at Risk*. Educators and counselors have used the term *at risk* to identify specific social-psychological problems (McWhirter, 1993). Each year the magazine, *Rolling Stone*, and other such publications, release the top party colleges in the United States. The

University of Colorado in Boulder has had its name among the top rankings. With this label comes negative press, and fingers have been pointed at the university's athletic department as contributing to the party school reputation. In 2004, a number of press leaks named several members of the CU football team as being part of a number of incidents in which sexual assaults and drinking misbehaviors were reported.

In these press reports, the University of Colorado Athletic Mentoring Program (UCAMP) was cited as one of the more positive services being offered to student athletes by the athletic department and the university. However, studies that document and describe the outcomes of such mentorship programs at the college level and that assess the impact of those programs on the college and life experiences of young adults are lacking.

### **Defining mentoring.**

Depending on what group is addressed, one will come away with a number of definitions and meanings as to what mentoring is or is not. Youth mentoring programs seem to be best described as programs that promote relationships (Smink, 1990). Broadly defined, however, mentoring is a sustained "one-on-one relationship between a caring adult and a youth who needs support to achieve academic, career, social, or personal goals" (McPartland & Nettles, 1991, p. 568). This is unlike natural mentoring relationships, which may develop independently between students and teachers, older friends, relatives, or coaches. Planned mentoring relationships are those in which a young person, the mentee, is matched with a mentor through a structured program with specific objectives and goals (Floyd, 1993). Many stories have been written about how the youth

being mentored received help from his or her mentor when it is most needed, making all the difference in the world to the mentee.

Researchers studying other types of mentoring relationships, such as those between adults in the work place and between professors and students in higher education, have observed that half of the mentees surveyed reported at least one negative mentoring relationship (Eby, 1997). Indeed, negative experiences, such as conflict, disappointment, and regret, are a fundamental component of all interpersonal relationships (Duck, 1994) and, thus, can be expected in youth mentoring relationships as well, to some degree. Several programs, such as Mentors, I Have a Dream, and National Mentoring Partnership, have reported that matching mentees to mentors from strikingly different backgrounds seems to occur in the more formal mentoring programs. With younger youth programs, matching has consisted of pairing adults from upper-middle-class backgrounds to youth of color from inner city schools. However, in the present study, neither one's color nor socioeconomic background constituted criteria involved in the matching process.

As mentioned above, Floyd (1993) suggested that planned mentoring programs are those in which the mentee and the mentor are matched through a structured program with specific objectives and goals. Furthermore, according to this author, planned mentoring programs can be broken down into three general types of mentoring:

1. *Educational or academic mentoring* focus on improving students' overall academic achievement. Whereas these programs generally have specific school-related goals, such as raising students' grades, improving attendance, or curbing dropout rates, mentors do not concentrate only on tutoring or doing homework with their mentees. Instead, some academic mentoring programs ask that mentors simply spend time encouraging,

talking to, and becoming friends with their mentees, in hopes of boosting academic performance by improving students' attitudes about school, raising personal goals, and giving them incentives to attend school and classes regularly.

2. *Career mentoring* helps the mentee develop the skills needed to enter or continue on a career path. Career mentoring programs often pair mentees with adult mentors who work in the mentee's general field of interest. This can provide the mentee with a role model who may familiarize him or her with the working world and offer guidance and support as the mentee prepares to make the transition from college to career.
3. *Personal development mentoring* supports mentees during times of personal or social stress and provides guidance for decision making. Although these programs may foster improved academic performance, they focus on improving mentees' self-esteem, behaviors, and decision-making ability. This can reduce high risk behaviors, such as gang involvement, premature sexual activity, criminal activity, and drug and alcohol abuse, and can introduce social, cultural, and recreational activities they may not have previously experienced.

### **Theoretical perspectives.**

Jocobi (1991) suggested several theoretical perspectives in regard to mentoring.

The first one focuses on mentoring as a vehicle for promoting involvement in learning through role modeling or direct involvement. The second suggests an academic and social integration that looks at the mentoring relationship as a mechanism for influencing the mentees' behaviors and attitudes, feelings, and self concepts. The third theory involves House's (1981) four categories of social support: emotional, informational, appraisal, and instrumental. It is within these categories that the mentor-mentee relationship seems to have an impact on the health and amount of stress that the mentee experiences during the time involved in the mentor-mentee relationship. It is both the quantity and quality of the social relationship with family, friends, co-workers, and teammates that affect the amount of stress in a person's life and, thus, their overall well-

being. Social support promotes mutual obligation and belonging. Attachments among individuals that improve adaptive competence, promote emotional mastery, offer guidance with problems, provide feedback to validate identity, and foster improved performance are considered to involve social support (House, 1981). The final theoretical basis for mentoring, suggested by Jacobi, includes developmental support in which mentoring is the mechanism used to enhance cognitive development.

### **Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the University of Colorado Athletic Mentorship Program (UCAMP) by interviewing athletes as mentees and mentors with respect to the nature of the relationship, satisfaction with UCAMP, and suggestions for improving the program. Accordingly, the study was directed by the following research questions that address UCAMP's effectiveness:

1. What was the nature of the relationship between the mentor and mentee?
2. Which characteristics of the student athlete and the mentor made an impact in the satisfaction with the program?
3. What was the mentor/mentee's reason for becoming a mentor/mentee?
4. What improvements can be made in the program?

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Different types of mentor-mentee relationships and studies that have been conducted are reviewed herein. This review was delimited to data from the years 1959 to 2008. It was also delimited to data obtained from the business community, athletic staff, and from non-formal settings.



## **UCAMP**

UCAMP, founded in the summer of 1999, was a program that facilitated interactive opportunities between student athletes and their mentors—business professionals, community leaders, and interested adults who had the time and interest to share in a meaningful experience with these athletes. The primary goal was to prepare the student athlete for life beyond college sports and cultivate pride and loyalty towards the University of Colorado. UCAMP took a positive approach to providing community members an opportunity to have a one-on-one relationship with student athletes. This relationship was meant to last for a 2-year period.

This process helped the mentor understand the importance of giving back to the community, while gaining a deeper understanding of just how valuable their presence is to youth, elderly, and any member of the community needing a helping hand. In short, this is another way of learning about mentoring while experiencing it from the other end.

The mentor-student relationship began with an initial matching when the student athlete arrived at the designated athletic program. At this point, both parties agreed to meet at convenient times without interrupting the student's academic or athletic schedule. Staff, mentors, and students reviewed and evaluated the relationship on an annual basis thereafter. Whereas UCAMP was a CU-based program, the larger system governing students' activities was, and still is, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). This governing body also recognizes the need for monitoring and involving student athletes in a program that provides learning and development in the areas of support and community involvement. This larger NCAA program is called Life Skills.

## **Life Skills Program**

In 2003, the NCAA implemented a formal program called Life Skills. Participation in this program is a requirement of the NCAA and the University of Colorado. This program offers a one-credit course to all incoming freshman athletes. The class meets weekly and addresses issues for all college students, but is especially aimed at athletes. Some of the topics discussed are substance use and abuse, sexual harassment issues, date rape, career counseling, resume writing, and goal setting. These topics are presented in a lecture format, allowing time for student dialogue with the presenters. Students are expected to write at least two papers, along with their resume. At the end of the course, students are invited to attend an evening with professionals who represent some of the most successful companies and organizations in Colorado and across the country. In this way, it provides an opportunity for students to speak with professionals who work in the students' areas of interest, and who could be future employers.

The Life Skills class worked in conjunction with UCAMP to develop a well-rounded and mature college athlete who is ready for today's challenges. The Life Skills program became a major component of UCAMP and enhanced the grooming of the students for future career goals and objectives. The coordinator of Life Skills, who was also the director of the mentorship program UCAMP, was available to the student athletes for daily and weekly support, and assisted by responding to personal, academic, and career questions. UCAMP's staff consisted of the director, one half-time administrative assistant, and a part-time consultant who was also a co-founder of the

UCAMP. In addition, from time to time, there was some administrative support offered by college work-study students and volunteers.

### **Methodology**

The present study was designed to interview a sample of mentees and their corresponding mentors who had been participants in UCAMP, describe the outcomes of the mentorship program at the college level, and assess the impact of mentoring programs on the college and life experiences of young student athletes. The mentee participants were composed of freshman through senior athletes from CU who participated in women's track and field, men's tennis, women's tennis, and football (men only). These mentees were both male and female, full-time students, selected from CU's athletic department from 2000-2005.

### **Setting**

The site for this study was a large, Big-Twelve Champion university of co-educational athletes. The University of Colorado is located in Boulder, Colorado. In 2005, approximately 372 student athletes, both male and female, made up the athletic department. The history of CU reflects 124 years of growth, becoming one of the nation's leading public research institutions. CU now ranks in the top 10 public universities in federally sponsored research and in the top 20 public universities and colleges in overall research expenditures. Established in 1876, the year Colorado became a state, the university is currently home to some 30,000 students, which has helped CU play a key role in the economic development of the state and the Rocky Mountain region.

## **Overview of the Study**

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study and the purpose of the mentoring relationship; in addition, it briefly defines the purpose and methodology of the present study. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature, which provides a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of a mentor-student relationship. This chapter also gives the reader a better understanding of the rules and expectations of the NCAA and its guidelines for Big Twelve student athletes during their academic stay at the University of Colorado. Chapter 3 details the methodology used in the study, including the use of an interview protocol. Chapter 4 provides the results. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings; suggestions for a mentoring model, based on the findings; and recommended directions for future research.

## **Definitions**

- Athlete - a full-time student taking a minimum of 10 semester hours and participating in an official campus-sponsored sport while enrolled at the University of Colorado Boulder campus.
- Data Analysis - a descriptive analysis of the interviews of two groups: the mentor's experiences with student athletes and the mentee's experiences with their adult mentors.
- Mentor - a person who offers time, support, friendship, knowledge, and understanding to another person; also, a guide to life's challenges who can advise and answer questions around career, life, and other personal matters.
- NCAA - the National College Athletic Association that governs the practices and rules for all of the Big Twelve university athlete departments' roles and responsibilities related to the student athletes.

## **Chapter 2. Review of the Literature**

Mentoring has been around for as long as man has been in existence. Who was the first mentor? The word originates in *The Odyssey*, by Homer, who described the character, Mentor, as a “wise and trusted friend.” When Odysseus leaves Ithaca to fight the Trojan War, he asks his good friend, Mentor, to guard the household. Mentor watches over the kingdom and becomes guardian and teacher to Odysseus’ son, Telemachus (Alter, 2000).

Mentoring has long been used throughout society. From the beginning of time to the present, mentoring relationships have provided opportunities for career advancement as well as exposure to new experiences. Mentoring is more than a fad. It is a well-researched, helping relationship. It is associated with positive personal and career outcomes. Research has consistently demonstrated the following benefits for a mentored person: enhanced promotion rates, higher salaries, accelerated career mobility, improved professional identity, greater professional competence, increased career satisfaction, greater acceptance within the organization, and decreased job stress and role conflict (Johnson & Ridley, 2004).

The definition of a mentor can be nebulous; sometimes the word refers to a CEO who is helping a younger executive, or to a professional who is guiding a graduate student (Alter, 2000). Borman and Colson (1984) described a mentor as someone who undertakes the role of assisting and advising a younger, more inexperienced person and

who has his/her best interests at heart. Mentoring is a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing various social and material resources.

Mentoring is a positive dynamic that enables people to develop potential (Stanley & Clinton, 1992).

### **Characteristics and Roles of Mentors**

#### **What A Mentor IS**

- A connection
- A guide
- A listener
- An adviser
- A responsive adult
- A wise and trusted friend
- Someone who has been there
- Sources of career information

#### **What A Mentor Is NOT**

- A guarantee for a job
- A personal financial donor
- A savior
- A foster parent
- A therapist
- An expert on career guidance
- An easy way to the top

(Dixon, 2000, p. 20)

The relationship between the athlete and the mentor is the most important aspect of the mentorship program. Mentoring relationships can be very positive, dynamic, reciprocal, and personal when a more experienced person acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced person (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). The relationship between the mentor and the student is very important with respect to developing trust and effective communication (see Table 1). In regard to advice for the

mentor, Heider (1999) suggested, “Have respect for every person and every issue directed at you. Do not dismiss any encounter as insignificant” (p. 45).

Table 1

*Elements of a Mentor*

Behavioral Functions	Essential Purpose
Relationship emphasis	Establish trust
Information emphasis	Offer tailored advice
Facilitative focus	Introduce alternatives
Confrontational focus	Challenge
Mentor model	Motivate
Mentored student vision	Encourage initiative

Peddy’s (2001) work in mentoring relationships suggested that building the relationship is critical to the mentoring process. Her three-step strategy helps to “prime the pump” (p. 47). First, you look for common ground. Find something you share with the other person, no matter how small. Second, you begin building trust by revealing something about yourself. Third, you ask open-ended, non-loaded questions to increase the other person’s comfort level. Although the mentoring relationship is not meant to be a therapeutic relationship, much can be learned from those who have proven successful in such processes. Rogers (1953), a famous psychologist, believed that for growth to occur in counseling, a counselor needs to be kind, warm, and willing to offer unconditional, positive regard to clients.

The same regard is expected in the mentoring relationship. When the mentor is friendly, open, approachable, and consistently encouraging, students are more at ease

with risk taking, more assured that they can succeed, and more comfortable asking for advice and assistance. Some key components of this relationship would be,

1. Expect even the most talented and confident students to benefit from encouragement and support.
2. Understand that although foundational to mentoring, encouragement and support are not easy to practice.
3. Seek opportunities to offer support, praise, and encouragement.
4. Be genuine, consistent, warm, and accepting.

Evans (1992), author of the book *Mentor* and founder of UCAMP, made it clear that mentors can and do make a difference. Evans worked with some 550 members of law firms, from 20 different states, who had worked as mentors. The attorneys found that they formed a bond and were an educational inspiration to those students they mentored. According to Evans, some of the earlier developers of mentoring and protégé programming identified a few common behaviors that seem to follow strong and successful programs. These behaviors are communication, leadership, social support, advising, a good connection to the community, and a strong sense of morals and ethical standards of the people who do the mentoring.

Whereas personal satisfaction comes in many forms, the responsibility for working directly with students, establishing a personal bond, and providing educational aspirations are far more valued in the process of mentoring. In 1940, Thomas J. Watson Sr., founder of International Business Machines (IBM), visited the Junior Hall of Science at the New York World's Fair. Henry Platt, the 23-year-old director, convinced Watson to establish an after-school science laboratory at the IBM building on 51st Ave. in New



York City. Thirty to 35 high school students participated in the labs before it was forced to close in 1941 because of World War II. Although the program only lasted 18 months, the outcome seemed to prove its success. Almost all of the participants in the science lab went on to acquire medical degrees or Ph.D.s.

### **Coaching and Mentoring**

Coaching includes consistency, specific types of behaviors, and ongoing cheerleading (Sullivan, 1992). Coaching is also another way for the mentor to help students maintain and refine those desirable skills and behaviors they have already acquired. The following are some suggestions for coaching the student:

1. When the student knows intellectually what to do, provide encouragement for repeated practice.
2. Chart the student's progress in an area needing improvement.
3. Discuss an area of ability, and work with the student to increase skill and confidence.
4. Provide examples and models of desired levels of competency.
5. Use steps of a peer-coaching program to ensure careful implementation (Sullivan, 1992).

The use of mentors in the lives of young college students seems to have the same impact as on young adults in the world of work. Studies conducted on normal development agreed that the presence of such role models seems to have an enormous impact on young men and women. For example, adult development researchers, Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee (1978) reported, in a 10-year study, on the importance of the mentoring relationship. Reaffirming the significance of mentoring to one's personal development, the study stated, "Mentoring is defined not in terms of

formal roles, but in terms of the character of the relationship” (p. 98). The role of the mentor is to operate both as a teacher and a coach. As a teacher, the mentor takes on the role of direct training and information sharing. Ultimately, the mentor is encouraging the student’s technical competence by providing knowledge and refining specific, professional skills (Johnson & Ridley, 2004).

An effective mentor is generally one who is able to teach, be a role model, and coach by taking advantage of any opportunity to promote the skills and life experiences needed for the student to develop into his or her full potential. As the student becomes increasingly more confident and competent, he or she may operate with more independence. Therefore, teaching should be most active early in the mentoring process.

Some key components of mentoring would be to (a) give direct and explicit instruction on the various roles and functions required in the mentor’s vocation; (b) demonstrate and describe complex professional skills; (c) seize opportunities for training and instruction through story-telling and using metaphors; (d) help students understand and respect organizational politics and implicit group norms while avoiding gossip; and (e) gradually decrease the amount of direct teaching as students develop and succeed (Johnson & Ridley 2004).

### **Coaching models of mentoring.**

The term *coaching* has long been used to describe the supportive experience of teachers, attorneys, and other business men and women who are entering their career fields for the first time; they seem to have a greater chance for success when mentored into their future roles and duties. In athletics, a coach must be able to teach the athlete

how to win and lose and how to handle responsibility. He must provide motivation, and impart skills to meet a variety of challenges (Stanley & Clinton, 1992).

The role of the mentor, as discussed earlier, is to assist with career goals and educational endeavors. Mentors have been associated with protégé career success. Kirchmeyer (2005) conducted a study using two different perspectives to determine how mentoring can advance careers. The performance perspective implied that the effects of mentoring on career advancement operate through performance, whereas the political perspective assumes direct effects.

### **Responsibilities of the Mentor**

Mentoring experiences provide the opportunity to build a bonding relationship between a student athlete and an adult within the business community. Some of the mentor responsibilities suggested by Boyer-Stephens (1992) include,

1. Be available at regular times to assist the student athlete;
2. Provide support to the student athlete in decision making;
3. Assist the student athlete in awareness, exploration, and identification of career goals;
4. Encourage the student athlete in a variety of academic, personal, and social issues;
5. Introduce the student athlete to your business/career, including personal and social expectations of a job;
6. Help the student to see the relevance and importance of education.

Every individual has different strengths and skills. A person's role and success in the world of work qualifies him or her as a potential mentor. The mentor's personal and

social competence and his interest in helping youth build similar competencies are essential contributions in a mentoring program. The focus for this is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

*Competence Scale*

Personal Competence	Social Competence	Skill Competence
Self-confidence	Introduction to work- Place culture	Perform tasks
Initiative	Organizational structure	Meet expectations
Motivation	Interpersonal relationship	Participate in teams
Commitment to goals	Obligations to consumers/ client	Accept responsibility
Career planning	How to obtain information	Solve problems
Integrity	How work contributes to organization	Plan projects
Communication	How work contributes to personal growth	Decision making

*Note.* Adapted from *UCAMP Mentorship Training* by J. P. Dixon, 2000, p. 10.

Finally, the responsibility falls on the shoulders of both the mentor and the student. The successful student athletes demonstrate several common characteristics, including a combination of some or all of the following traits:

1. Ability to clearly articulate career needs;
2. Willingness to assume responsibility for one's own professional growth and development;
3. Capacity to set goals and make decisions to achieve them;
4. Willingness to spend time reflecting on the achievement of goals;
5. Ability to be receptive to constructive feedback (Murray & Owen, 1991).

Mentors were a major factor in how the relationship turned out. They had to use the skills taught in the UCAMP training and add their own creative means of engaging

with their mentee. Both the mentor and the mentee seemed to have a better appreciation for the high demands on the student athlete once they had engaged with each other. The expectations took on a new direction and brought about a better understanding. The adult could now see and appreciate the pressures the student was facing, rather than perceiving the student's attitude as an "I don't care" one or that the student did not want to participate. The relationship, therefore, starts off with the initial bonding period which is enhanced by how much time and energy goes into the forming of the relationship.

### **Mentoring Through the Workplace**

Mentoring relationships have been proven successful in the workplace. Take Max Miller, a career success story for mentoring programs in the work force (Evans, 1992). He started his career and education with a series of events and successes. After high school, Miller enlisted in the military for 26 years. After retiring in 1992, Miller completed his education and earned an M.S. in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Technology from Memphis State University. Miller later entered the civilian work force and became manager of training and development for AutoZone, Inc., a company in the automobile parts and repair business, with 7,000 employees in 16 states.

Some years later, AutoZone debated how to give something back to the communities. It considered supporting one of the many programs that help children go on to college. But as Miller explained, "The majority of the people that worked for AutoZone did not go to college, and we weren't looking for them to go to college. We simply wanted people to come and work in our stores" (as cited in Evans, 1992, p. 54). Auto Zone would later partner with the educational system at East Vocational Technical

Center and become part of Memphis's well-developed Adopt-A-School Program. This program was the first to develop a community-based mentoring program that addressed the needs of students who need support and encouragement to further their education and careers upon completing high school.

Miller's experiences with AutoZone represent only one example of a successful mentoring program in the workforce. Stanton (1998) described a corporate example in which a company was downsizing. To maintain the integrity of the work, Stanton utilized a mentorship program to help newer, less experienced workers make smarter decisions.

Grant Hill, a Detroit Pistons' super star forward in the NBA, stated he has relied on his high school teacher, Mr. Reginald Kitchen, for guidance and support. Maria Hinijosa, an award-winning reporter and writer, who was formerly at National Public Radio and at CNN, names her mother as her mentor. John Updike, author of the Pulitzer prize-winning novels, *Rabbit Is Rich* and *Rabbit at Rest*, gives his time to young people who are seeking guidance. Updike believed a mentor enables a creative person to keep that creative spark burning and is a shelter in an unfriendly world (Alter, 2000).

### **Mentoring in Educational Settings**

Youth coming out of high school find themselves with the challenges of academic transformation and athletic competitiveness. Tinto (1975) developed a model based on the premise that students' pre-college traits (high-school performance and test scores), along with their interaction with the academic and social environment, correlate positively with the goal of college completion. Tinto stated that positive academic and social encounters enhance motivation and commitment to persist through graduation, and

decisions to withdraw or remain in college stem from the students' social and academic integration. Bers and Smith (1991) examined the extent to which social and academic integration and student educational objectives and intentions to re-enroll are predictive of persistence. Mentoring seems to be a way to connect with social and academic arenas for college students on today's college campuses.

In addition, the same findings have been revealed on the campus of 2-year community colleges. Nora and Rendon (1990) tested the hypothesis that high levels of congruency between students and their environment lead to high levels of students' predisposition to transfer, as defined by transfer behavior and perceptions. The results of the study showed that students with high levels of social and academic integration do tend to have high predispositions to transfer.

Community colleges have an "open door" admission policy, with virtually no academic standards for admission. Community colleges, by name, encourage the aspirations of the multitudes. Among this group are high-school student athletes who, seeing college as essential, have sought to enter college regardless of their high school records. As a result, academically under-prepared student athletes, who lack the academic qualifications to gain admittance to 4-year colleges or universities, enroll at community colleges. A 2-year college becomes an open door to a 4-year institution (Figone, 1988).

There seems to be an increasing trend in the number of Division I institutions providing academic support programs for student athletes. Colleges and institutions across the country have taken steps to provide better educational opportunities for student athletes, by improving support services and educational opportunities for student athletes

through structured academic support systems (Newman, 1990). Mentoring programs such as UCAMP are just one of many support services being explored by some colleges and universities today.

Academic success ranks at the top of the goals for young students entering into a traditional 4-year college experience. Therefore, measuring social and personal aspects of the college transition and accommodating all aspects (i.e., academic and athletic, as well) would be necessary to assess the success of a mentoring program in higher education. The quality and skills of a college athlete's education are and should be at the top of the list.

Today's college campuses seem to generate some unique challenges for the student athlete. Academic and intercollegiate sports programs have teamed up with competitive missions. Poised between these opposing sides are athletes. Often identified as having athletic potential at an early age, they spend their youth trying, with decreasing success, to participate on both academic and athletic teams (Ruscella, 1993). There are numerous stories of athletes who have achieved remarkable accomplishments when society has given up on them, and as a result of their participation in athletics, have become productive and contributing members of society (Dealy, 1990; Lapchick & Slaughter, 1989; Lederman, 1992).

In recent years, colleges and universities have introduced mentoring programs, both in the formal and informal sense, helping student athletes in their transition into college life and their academic career path. The mentor is a tool, used in conjunction with



everything else that the student is going through, that can help ease the struggles and the challenges they will undergo.

Whereas researchers agree that support is very important and necessary for the student athlete, there are little data based on fact and research regarding specific academic support models or programs that assist student athletes academically (Bove, 1990; Lederman, 1992). Even without these data, it is apparent that society has moved towards the usage of mentoring, especially when it comes to young adult learners. Furthermore, the mentoring of young adults has been accepted in our society as an important tool for the successful development of an individual (Levinson et al., 1978; Rothstein, 2000).

The mentor's role is to aid and support the student athletes through appropriate role modeling, teaching, advising, and sponsoring the development of young adults (Levinson et al., 1978). And, as described above, mentoring has occurred in a variety of educational settings, including elementary and secondary schools. In this study, mentoring is viewed as it occurs in a university atmosphere.

Research conducted by Cohen (1993) has provided one of the most comprehensive reports of mentor functions within undergraduate higher education. Cohen listed six broad categories of mentor emphasis that must take place with the undergraduate learner. These major functions are as follows:

1. Relationship emphasis—the mentor conveys genuine understanding about the student's feelings;
2. Information emphasis—the mentor provides detailed information and achievement of the student's personal, academic, and career goals;

3. Facilitation focus—the mentor guides students through a reflective review of their areas of interest, abilities, ideas, and beliefs, in an effort to facilitate the decision-making process;
4. Confrontation focus—the mentor respectfully challenges student decisions as they relate to their development as adult learners;
5. Mentor model—the mentor discloses fitting life experiences in an effort to serve as a role model and to personalize the mentoring relationship;
6. Student vision—the mentor stimulates students' critical thinking in relation to developing their personal and professional future goals.

The functions, described above, allow the mentor to assist in the growth and challenges the young student is going through, without taking away lessons that need to be learned. The mentor provides an extended support system not only while the student is away from his or her home environment, but at any time it might be needed. For many athletes who are away from home, there is a need for positive confrontation and direction. This is where the role of the mentor is most helpful to the students. Confrontation can be a paradox. Confronting a student may cause pain, but it also shows caring and concern for the welfare and future of the student. Avoiding confrontation may spare the student that pain, but will not help deflect costly mistakes in their career and social lifestyle.

Mentors who really care confront behaviors (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). In regard to confrontation, some additional key elements of mentoring include,

1. Confront self-defeating, unprofessional, or career-inhibiting behavior;
2. Temper confrontation with realistic affirmation, especially early on;
3. Quickly address unethical, unprofessional, and illegal student behavior;
4. Kindly confront personal distress and unhealthy work and study habits without assuming a mental health counselor's role;

5. Recognize that appropriate confrontation builds trust (Johnson & Ridley, 2004).

### **Benefits of the Mentoring Relationship**

Both mentors and students benefit from the relationship. For the mentors, it is the satisfaction and fulfillment they receive from nurturing the personal development of a student (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). In addition, there is the opportunity of helping a student plan for future goals around job and career fulfillment.

For students, the benefits of mentoring are legion. Many young adults find themselves under pressure and experiencing new anxieties in their life as they leave the security of high school. Some of these young people are not sure that they will be able to find a means of supporting themselves when they leave their parent's home to enter the work force (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007).

The time in college is a movement from dependence to independence. Mark Twain wrote, "When I was fourteen my father knew nothing, but when I was twenty one, I was amazed at how much the old man had learned in those seven years" (as cited in Alter, 2000, p. 4). Young adults who are raised in a family in which the parents have provided opportunities to learn self-reliance, responsibility, and self-respect tend to make a smoother transition from dependency to adulthood interdependency.

Youth who are raised in families where the parents are overly permissive or take little interest in their children's behavior tend to have greater difficulty making the transition to adulthood. These young people lack the structure, or a system of standards and values, to gauge whether their behavior is suitable and their decisions are appropriate. Young people who have over-protective parents also have difficulty making

this transition; they usually do not learn how to assume responsibilities or make important decisions (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2007).

Although many agree that mentoring has its benefits, there are few objective findings when it comes to outcome and statistical research findings. Work by Stanley and Clinton (1992) focused on the role of both mentor and student. Whereas these authors wrote about the mentoring one needs to succeed in life from a spiritual perspective, their finding can be applied in the secular world as well. The relationship between mentor and student recognizes the validity of that relationship by the help and encouragement that is given and received.

Mentors provide perspective at crucial times in a mentee's development, are often aware of the need for renewal experiences, and can help interpret them. They can detect and warn against negative patterns, such as the abuse of power and authority in one's life. Peers and mentors can stimulate and provide accountability for a mentee's personal life. They can encourage the right disciplines and new perspectives, model values and a positive learning attitude, and spot signs of reaching a plateau where they can counteract and stimulate learning. Although this is not a complete list of the rewards of mentoring, it is a fair summary of some of the more common benefits of a mentoring relationship.

For all of the previously stated reasons, mentor-mentee relationships are encouraged in the business world as well as other aspects of society. They fit with the needs of the student athletes at the University of Colorado's athletic department, as well. When forming and setting the groundwork for UCAMP, the program took these needs under consideration in implementing and forming the training and expectations of the

participants. The fact that this program was housed at a Big Twelve university might have made the academic and career goals more reachable than at a smaller institution where it could have been challenged with obstacles that would have prevented success. Furthermore, a mentoring program for incoming student athletes, such as UCAMP, can be a great recruiting tool. It shows students and parents that the school has a genuine interest in the whole person and not just their athletic abilities.

Participation in UCAMP provided many new components to the student athlete's academic and career journey during their 4 to 5 years at the University of Colorado. This study seeks to examine the benefits and lessons learned by both the mentors and mentees in UCAMP.

### **Mentoring the Student Athlete**

Research has recently identified themes of mentoring as nurturing, knowledgeable, listening, friendship, trustworthy, open-minded, role model, shared similar interest, positive attitude, and sense of humor. The characteristics deemed most important were nurturance, knowledge, motivation, networking, trust, and role modeling. Several key traits stand out for consideration for the college student athlete. The first is role modeling, and then career, job, and professional relationships. These are needed skills and talents that the mentor shares with the student (Beyene, Anglin, Sanchez, & Ballou, 2002).

The traditional focus of developing student athletes is with the training of the student, rather than care and concern for the student's life success. Although all incoming freshman students have many demands on their new lives, the student athletes have the

additional task of intercollegiate athletics, as discussed earlier. Some of their demands include additional expectations in the coursework required to maintain their academic standing for eligibility in sports. Moreover, they are faced with the coach's expectations of heavy travel, practice, game schedules, the change from "star" status in high school to being just one of many skilled players, higher visibility and attention from fellow students and community members, and spending breaks and holidays at school because of athletic events (Gibson as referred to in Cooker & Caffey, 1984; Farwell & Perrone as referred to in Stone & Strange, 1989). This makes it difficult to find time to make friends outside of the sports community, as well as have the opportunity to attend regular university functions that other students enjoy. These added stressors highlight the need for special attention, allowing the student athlete to make the necessary adjustments as he or she progresses through college, and to receive the personal, emotional, and social support necessary for success.

Success is described in many different ways during one's college experiences. But the student athlete, making the transition from high school to college, may be experiencing the first steps towards independence. Added to that is the process of loss, change, or disruption of a prior set of structures in the individual's life (Compas, Wagner, Slavin, & Vannatta, 1986). The once most popular student athlete, who was a star player in high school, is now just one of many competing for a spot on the team. The student athlete is also confronted with a very challenging schedule and competing demands on his or her time. This might present a change in priorities and timing when the athlete is

asked to spend breaks and holidays at school training or at athletic events (Gibson, 1982, cited in Cooker & Caffey, 1984; Farwell & Perone, 1983; Stone & Strange, 1989).

### **Transitions from adolescence.**

Mentoring has many applications for youth in their transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Many youth are in college at this stage, so it is an ideal time to promote the development of mentoring. Many young people who are making this transition find themselves experiencing social changes and moving from dependence to independence. This often creates conflict: wanting independence from parents, yet being dependent on them for basic needs. Children who are raised in families where the parents have provided opportunities for self-reliance, responsibility, and self-respect tend to make a smoother transition from total dependency to adulthood interdependence. Social independence involves becoming self-directed rather than other-directed. Social independence does not mean becoming selfish. Socially independent people realize their best interests are served by becoming involved in political, civic, educational, religious, social, and community affairs.

A collision of values, which can be a good thing, may occur when parents influence an offspring's values by modeling the values they hold as important. A parent can influence a teenager's values by acting as a mentor and can modify strict values to reduce tensions.

Racial and ethnic identity is more complex for minority adolescents, because it involves not only knowing that one is a member of a certain ethnic group, but also recognizing that some aspects of thoughts, actions, and feelings are influenced by one's

ethnic identity. Issues of ethnic identity may not become salient until early adolescence.

“As minority children grow up, they tend to incorporate many of the ideals and values of the Anglo culture. Suddenly, in adolescence however, they may find themselves excluded from it” (Newman, 1990, p. 62).

The more fully immersed minority adolescents are in the values and traditions of their ethnic culture, the more likely it is that they will experience a dual identity, such as viewing themselves as an American and a Japanese American. Mentoring minorities has been studied in the work by Kanter (1977) and Levinson et al. (1978). In both studies, the authors proposed that access to a mentor was advantageous to a student’s career outcome (Ehrich & Hansford, 1999).

### **The college athlete.**

The first year of college is often difficult for any student, but because the athletes observe an early arrival time to campus and feel the mixture of academic expectations and physical performance, they are very aware of the dual role and expectations placed upon them. This is typically the first time student athletes are faced with such tremendous, transitional stress (Hale, Greenberg, & Ramsey, 1990; Jordan & Denson, 1990). The UCAMP students have the task of adapting to a new environment, making new friends, and facing increased academic challenges. Additionally, they enter a community environment that does not look anything like their home community, and they are expected to compete in their sport at a higher level than previously. These stressors often affect the student athlete’s ability to adjust to collegiate academic and athletic environments if they are not managed well.



In recent years, mentoring has taken on a new role on the college campus. This role is to assist student athletes who might be having problems adjusting to academic demands. Therefore, services have included a mentoring program as one means of support for the student athlete (Willoughby, Willoughby, & Moses, 1991). Most mentoring programs have been shown to provide resources for individuals who are faced with difficulties, while attempting to guide the individuals through their troubled times (Flaxman, Erwin, & Ascher, 1992; Grossman & Garry, 1997).

### **Cultural Diversity and the Mentoring Relationship**

Even with all of the gains made during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement and the dismantling of years of segregation, sexism and racism in the United States still persists. For example, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Blum (1991) cited studies on the status of women on college campuses, such as Middlebury College, Pennsylvania State, Case Western Reserve, and the University of Wisconsin. The Chronicle reported that there existed persistent and widespread gender discrimination and sexual harassment and that these are the same conclusions reached in similar reports prepared 20 years before, in the 1960s (Blum, 1991). Current data in Colorado also indicate a lack of minority students in higher education (Colorado Commission of Higher Education, CCHE, 2006). These studies showed not only the unchanged attitudes in American society, but that universities and college campuses have much the same responses in regard to enrollment statistics.

A 1991 survey of United States racial attitudes by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago reported that 53% of White respondents still believe

that African Americans and Hispanics are less intelligent than Whites (Blum, 1992). In a 1990 study, 78% of respondents maintained that African Americans and Hispanics prefer to be welfare dependent (Smith, 1990). Other studies have shown profound divisions between White and minority youth, pointing to a deep-seated mistrust and pessimism between youth of different races and about the systems employed to correct inequities among them (National Federation of Republican Women, NFRW, 1993).

Students of color seem to be at an especially high risk for being victimized. Twenty to 25% of racial minority students are victims of at least one violent crime per year, according to Erlich (1990) at the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence. The concerns of athletes of color are real, and the reports and media's coverage, over the past 15 years or more, have supported the national victimization trend as well as studies conducted throughout the United States on college and university campuses. A Michigan State University survey, conducted by the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, asked a random sample of students if they had ever observed an incident that they thought was racist or showed intolerance for minorities. Of the respondents, 66% of the African American students, followed by Hispanics at 47%, Native Americans at 39%, and Asians at 33%, all said yes; 30% of international students said yes (Erlich, 1990). A survey of minority and international students at Saint Cloud State University, an institution of approximately 16,000 students, which is 70 miles northwest of Minneapolis, Minnesota, found that faculty had made racist remarks in the presence of 50% of those surveyed and that 46% of those surveyed had experienced violence in their on-campus dormitories (Erlich, 1990).

Existing research has suggested that establishing multiple levels of mentoring programs is important in providing a success mechanism for minority student athletes (Pope, 2002). In Pope's (2002) study, conducted with people who had been mentored, the researcher found that the respondents rated each type of mentoring relationship high, with a significant majority of the students providing positive responses regarding each type of mentoring.

It is important to note that differences in programs and services added to both the success and the struggles of the programs being offered. The type of activity as well as environmental factors were helpful to the success of the mentoring experiences and the relationships involved (Floyd & Wasner, 1994; James, 1991; Strome, 2000). These kinds of programs were key to the retention and transition of minority students who were enrolled in an undergraduate program as college athletes. Along with retention efforts, the programs assessed successful transitions in their career and the success of minority students in higher education.

### **Diversity at CU and Mentoring Models**

Traditionally, the University of Colorado has recruited students from many different parts of the country. With an overall population of just over 30,000 students and some 2% of them African American, this presents some challenges to the Black student who lives both on campus and in the Boulder community, which is overwhelmingly White. In the past, Boulder has received national notice for its lack of sensitivity to minority students and to some of the acts of racial profiling. Students have reported being pulled over by police for no apparent reason, and a number of African American students

suffered verbal racial assaults and physical attacks in the community. During the winter of 2005, for example, two White males driving down the street assaulted an African American athlete. As a result of these types of incidents, Coach Barnett called for community leaders to assist him in forming a mentorship program for his young athletes who were being recruited to Boulder, and to address parents' concerns about the safety of their children.

According to coach Barnett's philosophy for UCAMP, the mentorship program design called for four areas of focus for mentors regarding athletes who would be candidates for a mentor: (a) address career goals; (b) provide some outlet and decision-making skills for students who might become involved in abuse drinking or other drug related behaviors; (c) address violent behaviors among student athletes; and (d) develop a culturally sensitive practice and social service delivery to student athletes when needed.

It became increasingly clear that what was needed was to address the career goals of the student athlete and make the connection to some member of the community who would serve as a positive influence to a future career path. Student athletes have a history of performance after college only in their sports careers. Even when young children are asked what they want to be when they grow up, they know the question means, "What profession will you choose?" For example, in a men's treatment program, it was reported that the clients' strong devotion to work is understandable. Most have been raised to consider work the most important part of their lives; their self-esteem is directly linked to their vocation and income (Sekaran, 1986). Student athletes often lack this world view,

because they have been focused on sports rather than careers. Whereas a few may become professional athletes, the vast majority will need to learn skills for other careers.

Although universities and colleges offer a number of programs for their student athletes, such as academic services, computer labs, individual tutoring, advising, and study halls, there are still shortcomings. For example, the University of Colorado at Boulder sits in the middle of a mountain town, which is full of people, but short on people of color.

The UCAMP experience is a positive approach, offering community role models that provide a one-on-one relationship for student athletes. Whereas the mentoring program is available to all student athletes, male and female, minority and non-minority, it may be especially beneficial to those minority students who are enrolling in a college that is predominately White and in a community that may not be representative of their cultural background values or beliefs.

### **University of Colorado Athletics Mission**

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is an integral part of the educational mission of the University of Colorado. This department is responsible for educating the students by providing the opportunity to participate in a nationally successful and respected intercollegiate athletic program, which embraces and promotes diversity, and establishes and maintains unparalleled standards in education, athletic competition, facilities, and relationships with the internal and external communities. “This program is about building trust between people of different generations; about being open, accepting and encouraging” (J. Pacetta, personal communication, October, 2003).

## **Stated CU Athletics Department Vision**

The vision for CU's athletics department is as follows:

The student athletes will experience and understand the educational value of being an athletic champion as a member of a team that consistently competes for the highest possible athletic honors while representing the ideals of sportsmanship. The athletic department is committed to the intellectual, physical, and social development, and the general well-being of each student athlete. We will create an environment where student athletes, university faculty and staff, and all customers are respected and valued. (Dixon, 2000, attachment 1)

The department's stated "Cultural Goals" include the following published statements:

1. "We will aggressively embrace and promote diversity and equity.
2. Each student athlete will leave CU with a mutual commitment to the institution and will be treated appropriately as a permanent member of the CU family.
3. We will provide a forum for student athletes' input on developmental issues.
4. We will support the principles contained in the Arizona Sports Summits Accord.
5. We will communicate effectively with internal and external constituencies.
6. Staff members will have mutual respect and support for each other's roles and responsibilities.
7. We will empower all staff members in their roles and will provide appropriate opportunities for professional growth.
8. We will compensate all staff at or above market rates.
9. We will educate and require commitment by department staff, student athletes, and supporters to abide by the rules and regulations of the NCAA, Big-Twelve Conference, and the University of Colorado." (Dixon, 2000, attachment 2)

### **UCAMP: The CU Mentoring Program**

UCAMP (University of Colorado Athletic Mentorship Program) which ended in June of 2005 in an official capacity, represented a one-on-one supportive and empowering program based upon positive modeling and relevant, enriching dialogue. An effective UCAMP mentoring relationship is flexible enough to fit both the individual needs of the student and the preferences of the adult mentor. In this mentoring program, the mentorship partners were encouraged to shape the process that felt most comfortable for them, based upon personal interaction styles, goals, and values. Successful partnerships were based upon a clear identification and communication of roles, expectations, and concerns, as well as a full understanding of and sensitivity to each other's culture.

The mentoring relationship also built upon the strengths of each person in a complementary fashion, where both grow and learn together through an individualized process of quality interaction. Ultimately, student and mentor worked together toward common goals in a true partnership. The goal clarification sheet was designed as a starting point for enhancing communication and understanding each other's perspectives and cultures. Follow-ups on various items, as they relate to the mentoring relationship, continued throughout the academic year.

At the first meeting of each semester, it was recommended that the mentor and the student clarify the goals, activities, and the time invested in the partnership, as well as become familiar with each partner's personal style of interaction and other areas of

importance. If partners experienced difficulty in making contact, they could seek the assistance of one of the UCAMP coordinators at any time throughout the semester.

### **The UCAMP mentor role.**

The 1990s saw a number of support programs, such as mentoring, used to help handle some of the transitional stressors the athletes were experiencing (CHAMPS/Life Skills Program, 2001). However most of the literature has reported using teaching-faculty members and peer mentoring as a means of assisting the student athlete. UCAMP took a different direction, using adults primarily from the community—some who were former athletes and some who had never before played sports.

The role of the UCAMP mentor was to be a coach, role model, and a link to the student's special interests and career goals. The following is a more specific list of guidelines and requirements for mentors who considered this role and position:

1. Adhere to the guidelines of the NCAA;
2. Must be 25 years of age or older;
3. Have transportation with proof of insurance;
4. Live within the Boulder, Longmont, or the greater Denver metro area;
5. Attend a 4-hour mentor training class;
6. Attend a compulsory interview.

The selection process was important for the success of the match between mentor and student. The process for matching involved careful screening of the mentor and then looking at what he or she had to offer the student. The ability to teach, coach, and be a role model was always at the top of the list.



The student also had a major role in the request, and could choose someone who would enhance or add to his or her academic career while in the University of Colorado athlete program. Each received a one-on-one interview and both the applicant and the mentor filled out a written application. The two were interviewed by the Life Skills director, the co-coordinator for the mentorship program, and occasionally an assistant coach, all of whom determined the matches. The mentor and the student were paired together in the hopes that it would be a positive and long-lasting relationship.

#### **The NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills Program.**

The mission of the NCAA is to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the campus educational program and the athletes as an integral part of the student body. With this in mind, the CHAMPS/Life Skills Program was created to support the student development initiatives of its member institutions and enhance the equality of the student athlete experiences within the university setting. Although the NCAA Champs/Life Skills Program went along with the mentorship program, UCAMP, it is not evaluated within this study. However, it does supplement and support CU athletes as an adjunct to the mentorship program.

A particular caution in the mentoring program is to be sure to comply with NCAA rules governing unethical extra gifts or benefits provided to student athletes. UCAMP) viewed mentors as representatives of CU's athletic interests. Any gifts, benefits, or preferential special treatment violated those interests with unfair recruiting advantages. For example, some of the academic-fraud concerns cover no editing or writing of papers for student athletes; no student use of office computers, typewriters, office supplies, or

research library material; and no mentor conversations with professors, teaching assistants, or tutors on the mentee's behalf. These cautions were made explicit to mentors in their training.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

Mentoring has long been an area of shared interest for the business, educational, and service-oriented fields to help newcomers in their desired field of interest, as well as the adjustment to unfamiliar environments (Haensly & Parsons, 1993). In working with youth and young adults who are re-entering the career and working force, mentoring has long gained much respect and recognition. Although most of the research on the benefits of mentoring have been conducted in the business sector, few empirical research reports on mentoring are mentioned in the academic setting (Wunsch, 1994). In the later 1990s, more attention was given to the high school or 4-year colleges and some to the community colleges. In the community college studies, there was more focus on informal mentoring of high-level leaders and less on formal programs for junior and mid-level faculty and administrators (Barhorst, 1997; Merriam & Thomas, 1986).

For the purpose of this study, mentoring is reviewed as a means of promoting a combination of emotional goals, career goals, and benefits to the 4-year college student. This is best demonstrated through the means of role modeling, coaching, protection, sponsorship, and challenging assignments (Kram, 1980). Another goal of this study was to help clarify the perceived notion that the benefits of the mentoring relationship far outweigh any concerns around other intrusive programs that have less structure and opportunities for the mentoring relationship to grow.

### **Chapter 3. Method and Procedure**

This study examined the effectiveness of the University of Colorado Athletic Mentorship Program (UCAMP) for student athletes who were enrolled full time at the University of Colorado Boulder campus. This chapter begins with the study's purpose and subsequent research questions, followed by the research design and researcher's perspective. It then provides, as background for the study, a brief overview of UCAMP's design as well as the setting of the study. Next, data collection, including recruitment and sampling of participants, and instrumentation are described. In conclusion, the data analysis is discussed.

#### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of UCAMP by interviewing athletes who had mentors, and their matching mentors, with respect to social skills and aspirations. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What was the nature of the relationship between the mentor and mentee?
2. Which characteristics of the student athlete and the mentor made an impact in the satisfaction with the program?
  - What was the mentor/mentee's reason for becoming a mentor/mentee?
3. What improvements can be made in the program?

## **Qualitative Research**

The design of this study is primarily a qualitative examination of the relationship between mentors and mentees who were student athletes enrolled as full-time undergraduate students. Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter (Creswell, 1998). As the qualitative researcher for this study and the one who gathered and analyzed the data and drew conclusions that would be reported as findings, it was important that I study behaviors in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of and interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people would bring to them. Moreover, the use of case studies was employed to best record and report the findings, such as the social learning and relationship building that took place.

Thus, this qualitative study involved investigating the relationship between adult mentors and their college athletes from a Big Twelve university in Colorado. The study represented an inquiry of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explored the social relationship between mentor and mentee. This kind of study required the researcher to build on a complex, holistic picture of interactions, analyze words, and report verbally on details that were conducted in the natural setting of each participant (Creswell, 1998).

The study was designed to reveal a phenomenological experience for those who participated in the reporting of data collected. In these studied relationships, the participants could reveal their lived experiences in working together (Polkinghorne, 1989). This would have been lost if the study had used a numerical stance for reporting

the events that took place and the quality of the relationships experienced during this time frame. This is not an argument for whether qualitative research is better than quantitative research, but rather a rationale for why a qualitative approach provided the best format for gathering data and analyzing it, given the time constraints and availability of the participants being studied, in addition to the experiential purpose of the study.

In conclusion, the qualitative approach to this research study was designed to map the experiences of the participants and summarize them into detailed descriptions and analyses. Their comments were intended to magnify the importance of a mentoring program for college athletes and how such a program can benefit their career goals and personal satisfaction.

### **Researcher Perspective**

My personal and professional opinions about mentoring are important because they affect my perception regarding the forming of relationships. Therefore, it is critical that as the researcher, I identify biases, personal interests, and values, based on not only my prior professional and personal experiences and assumptions, but also my perspective from an insider standpoint.

#### **Prior professional and personal experiences and assumptions.**

Before entering the world of academia, my experience involved working in the day-to-day direct services arena where time and caseloads seemed to dictate one's success or failure as a clinician. This yielded years of observation of burn out and low retention of healthy and qualified service providers. Funding, institutional retention, program outcome, and reimbursement rates seemed to have very little to do with job

satisfaction. Instead, the balance in one's personal and professional life proved to have a great impact on job satisfaction and retention as well as overall personal reward.

Mentoring, although not always called mentoring in the formal sense, seemed to be a major factor in the reports of those most likely to show success and best practices. It was this insight that would motivate me to crave further knowledge and understanding of the internal workings of a mentor-mentee relationship and the goal achievement for both.

My own personal experiences of success have always seemed to be the result of a mentoring relationship in a time of need. I have been fortunate to have had mentors whom I have respected and with whom I have been able to meet, in both formal and informal settings. Through this, I have been able to seek a better understanding and clarity of goals and options in my academic and career endeavors. The student athletes in UCAMP seemed to have experienced many of the same questions my own personal life and career had generated in me. Does having a mentor make a difference in one's personal and career goals and accomplishments? Does having a mentor in the outside world help with career promotions and ultimate career achievements? Will such a program be viewed as beneficial to both the mentor and the mentee? Although research objectivity and strong ethical standards are important, to study the process seemed likely to generate its own path and direction, based on the answers, testimonies, and findings.

#### **Insider perspective.**

I first became involved in the UCAMP experience as a contributor in forming the basic program that would ultimately turn into a model approach for mentoring student athletes. This involvement was solely as an interested party, not a central figure. As time

passed, I was asked to increase my time and involvement, but had no control over the program, providing training and consultation regarding program direction only. At that time, there was no intent or plans to evaluate the program. It was not until 2005 that I decided to study the impact of the UCAMP on the student-athlete participants in order to determine what characteristics of the mentor-mentee relationship made an impact on satisfaction with program involvement, and what lessons could be learned, along with recommendations for improvement.

As one of the initial members invited to the table to discuss forming the mentoring program, I found myself positioned as an objective member of the team. I continued as a consultant to the program, having background training as a mental health professional. My primary responsibilities included monitoring and assisting in the recruitment and interview process, and eventually, becoming one of the trainers presenting the expectations as well as do's and don'ts of being a mentor, along with role playing some of the more risky issues that might occur during the relationship. The processes of recruitment and matching always involved a three-member approach: usually the coordinator; a coach, assistant coach, or representative of the athlete department; and me, as the consultant. This format helped eliminate any risk of prejudice or bias—forming biased opinions or decisions that would impact the progress or outcome of the relationship between the mentor and mentee.

Based on my prior involvement in UCAMP, the present study can be considered “backyard” research in that it “involves studying the researcher’s own organization” (Creswell, 2003, p. 184). Realizing the potential for bias in reporting and analyzing the

data from this standpoint, I made a strong, conscious effort in every phase of the study to bracket or set aside my own assumptions, knowledge, experiences, and feelings in order to be as objective as possible. Thus, I endeavored at all times to take a neutral stance regarding what the participants stated. On the other hand, my prior knowledge and experiences related to the mentor-mentee relationship and to UCAMP served to enhance my awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to many of the challenges and issues related to the mentor-mentee experience.

### **Background of the Study: UCAMP Design**

The UCAMP model originated from the need for adult role modeling and career options for full-time student athletes at the University of Colorado. The general mission of UCAMP was to help serve and promote CU's students and their personal and career endeavors. Two key figures of UCAMP, the coordinator and the consultant, added leadership, guidance, and accountability to the program and the participants. It was believed that a total of about 168 student athletes participated in the program from 2000 to 2005, and about 150 mentors were trained and enrolled in UCAMP as potential mentors. Therefore, about 140 mentees were assigned to adult mentors from the community. The uniqueness of this program was that the use of mentors came primarily from the community, whereas similar studies solely used mentors who were peers or teaching members of the faculty. Although this program no longer exists in the formal sense, ending in 2009, there are still mentors who continue to meet with coaches and support athletes who are new to the program and area.

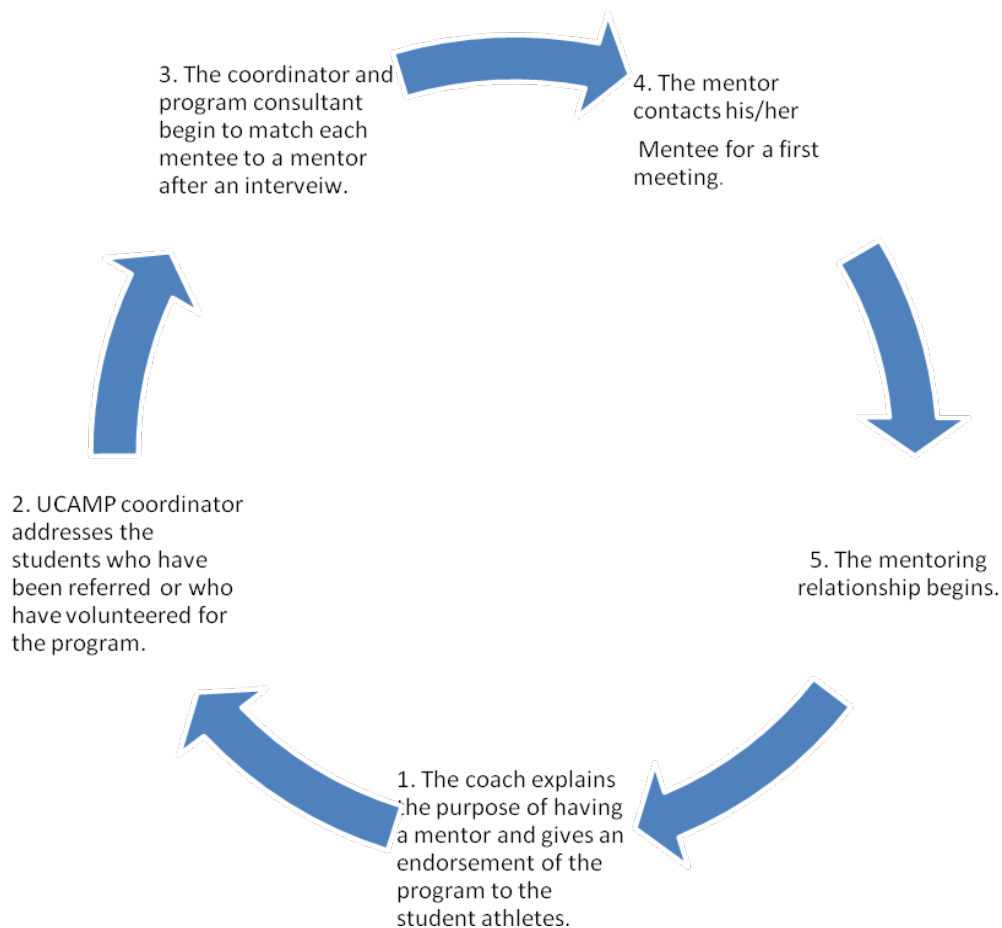


The mentors for this program were volunteers, primarily from the community, consisting of professionals, paraprofessionals, and concerned and caring individuals who wanted to make a difference in the life of a student athlete. The volunteer mentors were adults ages 25 and over. They were male and female and from various racial/ethnic backgrounds. They were matched based upon a request made by the athlete. Sometimes this was a career or related-interest request; but in other cases, it was more of a personal desire to be with someone who had experienced similarities and shared interests. In addition, although the mentee was assigned a mentor, he or she had access to other mentors who had knowledge and/or experience that the mentee might benefit from. Whereas this was a helpful feature of the program in general, it was particularly so when the mentee did not feel well matched with his or her mentor.

Three important events formed the mentoring relationship: (a) the mentee orientation session with the coordinator, where they filled out an application requesting a mentor; (b) the fall, returning social—usually a picnic or cookout—where the mentee would meet his/her mentor for the first time; and (c) the follow-up training, which both the mentors and mentees were asked to attend and where they could get any questions answered. These questions usually centered on how their relationship had started off and how they were currently progressing as a match. (Please see Figures 1 and 2 for the process of enrollment in UCAMP for student athletes and the mentors, respectively.)

Time was viewed as one of the factors that helped determine the success and effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship. In many cases, it was the quality versus the amount of time spent, as well as the relationship versus ethnic identity. Mentoring

relationships were monitored by the UCAMP coordinator through the use of student aides. The monitoring would help show the number of hours the mentor and mentee spent together, which would help determine the magic number that would create the most effective mentor-mentee relationship. Monthly, both mentor and mentee were asked to give feedback, either in writing or email, attesting to how the relationship and their involvement in UCAMP were progressing. This exchange of information helped the coordinator and consultant monitor any current concerns or possible problems that might develop either in the mentor-mentee relationship or in other areas of the mentee's life.



*Figure 1.* The student athletes' process of enrollment in UCAMP.

### **Mentee recruitment.**

At the annual back-to-school picnic for all athletes—both those who were returning and those coming in for the first time as first-year freshmen—an overview of UCAMP was provided, giving the student athletes a chance to hear firsthand how the program worked and what they could expect to gain from having a mentor. The athletes then received an invitation from their coach to participate in UCAMP and to attend the orientation meeting, usually held in the athlete department following the picnic.

During this orientation meeting, the program coordinator explained the program, and student athletes interested in joining UCAMP were asked to fill out a profile/application sheet, which included their personal and career expectations, as well as their request for a mentor and the goals expected from this relationship. Most mentees had pretty good ideas about what they were looking for from a mentor: first of all, someone to be a role model, a guide or certainly someone who would influence them when it comes to making career and academic decisions. Because facilitating the mentee's success was the main reason for the existence of UCAMP, the mentee's request outweighed all other considerations.

More specifically, the mentees' application consisted of a four part questionnaire: Part 1 included demographics, residential location, sports; what the mentee hoped to gain from having a mentor; what might they expect to gain from this experience; preference of their mentor's background regarding religion, family, and gender; and whether or not they came from a large family system. Part 2 addressed career goals, personal interests, and background regarding schools attended and prior education. Part 3 asked about work

experience; and Part 4 asked about friendships, strengths, and weaknesses, ending with a summary of the three-member program assessors of the applications. Individual summaries were then developed for the student athletes, based on their answers and particular request for a mentor. After completing the profile sheets, the mentees were told they would be matched with a mentor.

Enabling mentees to have a say in regard to the characteristics of the mentor with whom they would be matched represented a unique aspect of UCAMP. In contrast, in a study by Campbell and Campbell (1997) with minority students as participants who had agreed to have a mentor, the selection of mentor and mentee was based upon gender, ethnicity, grade point average, and entering enrollment status. Campbell and Campbell's study focused primarily on the success of participants as related to their GPAs. The greater the academic success, the less likelihood the student athlete had of failing or dropping out of college, compared to non-mentored students. UCAMP took a much different approach by allowing the students to define their desires for a mentor who they felt would most likely meet their expectations and interests. Therefore, many minority male athletes had no problem selecting a White female, married mother of younger children, to mentor them. Others may have wanted a mentor who had, in fact, participated in their sport or had some career similarities to their career goals.

#### **Mentors: recruitment, selection, and training.**

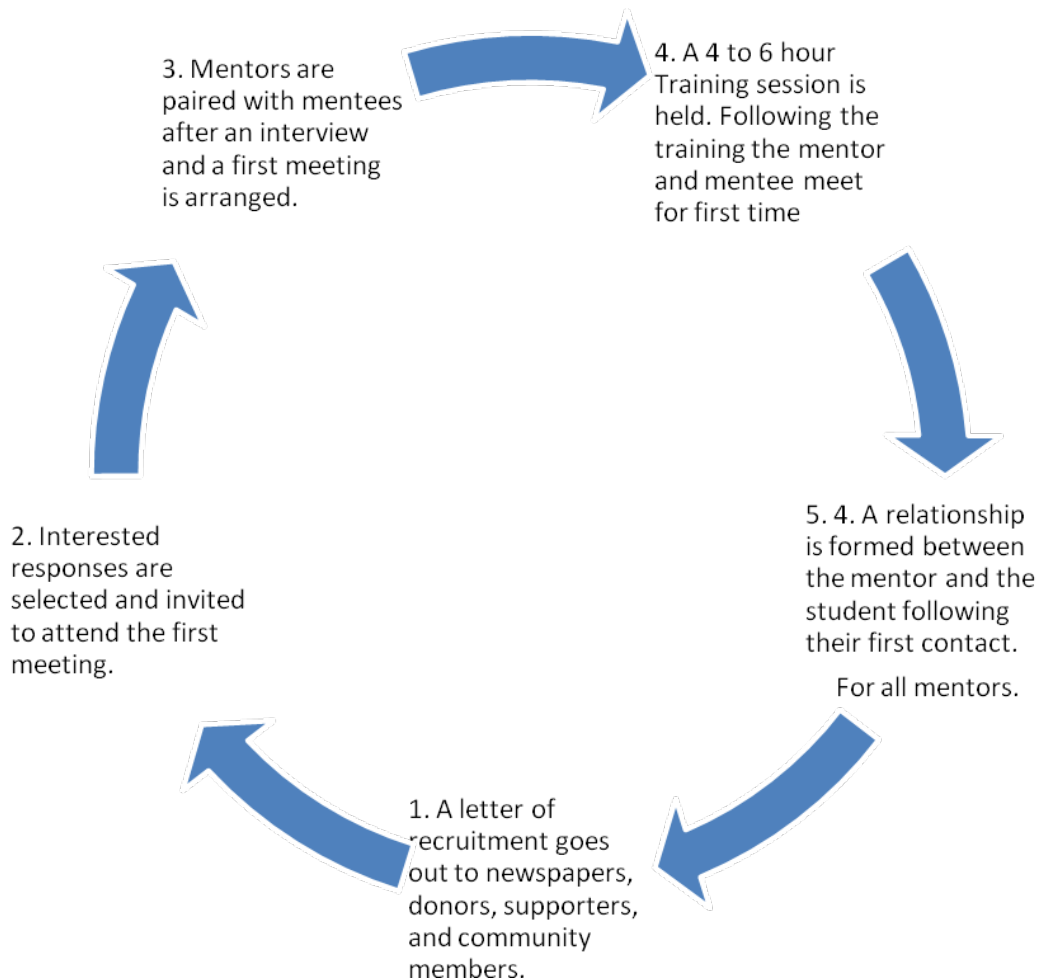
The mentors' recruitment and selection process was as follows:

- After learning about UCAMP through different venues where the program was explained, members of the community interested in becoming mentors were encouraged to sign up for a formal letter and application to be mailed to them.

- Because the student athletes would have a relationship that would be close, often allowing for time alone with their mentors, it was decided early in designing the program that as an important requirement of the application process, the mentors should complete a background check before being matched. The background check was the responsibility of the mentor and was therefore expected to be turned in during the waiting period prior to being matched or shortly following the interview for being matched. This process was a means of ensuring safety, accountability, and was in the best interests of the student athlete.
- Upon returning the written application to the UCAMP office, a phone call would be the follow-up to the perspective mentor applicant.
- The coordinator and the consultant reviewed each applicant's application to determine if he or she should be invited in for a face-to-face interview.
- After the potential mentor had been contacted for an interview, a member of the coaching staff or athletic department was invited as the third member of the interview team.
- At the end of the interview, each member of the selection committee rated the answers and responses of the mentor, while determining which mentee was most appropriate to be matched with the mentor. The mentor was then invited to attend the next UCAMP training.
- In the next step, the coordinator called the perspective mentor to inform him or her of being approved as a mentor to be matched with a mentee. In some cases, during this call, the mentor was given the student athlete's name and phone number to make the initial contact for their first meeting. In regard to making contact, the mentor and mentee might meet at a social function put on by UCAMP, or the mentor might call and the two of them would make their own arrangements to meet and get acquainted with one another.
- After the two had made contact and had had a chance to meet and talk for at least two to three meetings, they both would inform the coordinator that they had agreed to work together.
- The mentors were given a 6-hour training, along with access to the coordinator for questions and guidance while enrolled in UCAMP.

Thus, the mentor met with the mentee only after the mentor had been interviewed, matched to the mentee, and given the contact information for his or her mentee. The

mentors were instructed not to become discouraged if they did not connect the first time with their mentees, given the demands of athletic and academic schedules. Often this would be the determining factor in the success of the relationship: Based upon how willing and persistent the mentor was to connect with his or her mentee, this would set the tone for rest of the relationship and the outcome of the forming of the relationship.



*Figure 2.* The mentors' process enrollment in UCAMP.

### **Rules and regulations.**

The rules of the program included a minimum of 4 hours of contact between the mentor and his or her mentee each month. In some cases, this was based upon the schedule as well as the training and academic demands of the student, as discussed above. Also, in some cases, the mentee and mentor exceeded the minimum face-to-face expectations.

The mentors were also required to attend a presentation given by a member of the athlete department, which was responsible for NCAA standards and enforcement. These instructions spelled out what a mentor could and could not do with his or her mentee. For example, any activity that involved money—any exchange of money or the purchasing of any items, regardless of the value—was a NCAA violation and could result in the student and university losing their eligibility status in the division. Thus, the mentors had restrictions as to what activities they could and could not participate in with their mentees. Whereas this was a very important component of UCAMP, on the positive side, these restrictions reinforced the value of the mentor-mentee relationship in regard to spending quality time together and using contact as a means of developing their relationship. In effect, a more creative approach was called for in terms of engaging in the forming and building of the mentor-mentee relationship.

### **Setting of the Study**

The site of this study was the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU-Boulder) a large, Big-Twelve university (enrollment 30,000) located in Boulder, Colorado. In addition to its co-educational athletic component, the CU-Boulder campus provides an

educational experience to students that allows them to study a broad range of programs from baccalaureate through post-doctoral levels. The educational experience of CU-Boulder is distinguished by the wide scope of its programs and course offerings, and the notable reputation of its research facilities. Although the diversity of the student body is still lacking in many areas, the university prides itself in the professionalism and dedication of its faculty. CU-Boulder is the largest campus in a three-campus system. The student population comes from every state in the nation and from more than 100 foreign countries. Many different religious, academic, and socioeconomic backgrounds are represented, fostering the development of a multicultural academic community that enriches each student's educational experience.

The athletic department is a member of the Big-Twelve Conference. CU-Boulder's varsity and intercollegiate athletic teams compete against Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor, and Texas Tech. They also take on non-conference teams. Women and men compete in basketball, cross country, golf, tennis, alpine and Nordic skiing, and track and field; women also compete in volleyball and soccer, and men in football. Of the full-time freshman students who entered in the summer of 1999, 38% graduated within 4 years and 61% graduated within 5 years. Of the students who entered in the fall of 2004, 83% returned for their second fall semester. The Boulder campus offers more than 3,400 different courses in approximately 150 fields of study. The mission of the university is to advance and impart knowledge across a comprehensive range of academic disciplines to benefit the people of Colorado, the nation, and the world (*University of Colorado Student*



*Handbook*, 2004). Whereas the CU-Boulder campus was selected as the general site of the study, UCAMP represented the specific site from which the study sample was drawn.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

According to Creswell (1998), data collection should include setting boundaries for the study; collecting information through observation, interviews, documents, and visual materials; and establishing protocol for recording information. In this study, data was also collected in the form of case studies, where in-depth personal interviews supplied the fundamental data being used. Thus, the data gathered were used to address the three research questions through a comprehensive case study of 10 mentors and 10 mentees who had participated in UCAMP from 2000 to 2005. The entire study was approved by the IRB committee, with all participants having received and signed consent forms, acknowledging their understanding with their signature, as is discussed later.

### **Population and sampling.**

UCAMP at CU-Boulder generated an outstanding group of full-time student athletes who had volunteered for the program and were seeking an adult mentor. Altogether, from 2000-2005, approximately 168 student athletes participated in UCAMP, along with some 150 mentors. Thus, guided by the study's purpose of evaluating the outcomes of UCAMP at the college level and assessing its impact on the college and life experiences of young adults, two different, but related groups of participants were selected from UCAMP: 10 randomly selected adult mentors who had been matched to a mentee during the academic years 2000 to 2005, and 10 mentees (student athletes), each of whom had been matched to one of the randomly selected mentors.

More specifically, the mentors were selected by the two UCAMP coordinators. The first coordinator, who was the founding member of the program, was asked to randomly select five mentors who would be able to participate in the UCAMP study. These participants were to be randomly selected from the 2000-2003 mentors in the program. The second UCAMP coordinator was asked to identify five mentors who had been matched to a mentee from years 2004-2005. In order to avoid selecting their favorite or in any way showing favoritism, the coordinators randomly selected every twentieth mentor who had participated in UCAMP from 2000 to 2005. Upon contacting the selected mentors (all of whom agreed to participate in the study), they were asked to select their mentee of choice for the study, because most of them had mentored more than one mentee. This process allowed the researcher to remain objective in the selection of the study sample.

#### **Participant demographics.**

The 10 mentees, consisting of 4 males and 6 females, represented different backgrounds and represented a variety of the university's intercollegiate teams, such as football, basketball, volleyball, tennis, golf, swimming, and track and field. Four of the participants were foreign students who were attending the University of Colorado on scholarship. The demographics regarding the representation of gender and race/ethnicity are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Student-Athlete Participants*

Variable	No. of Participants
Females	6
Males	4
Total	10
White	4
African American	4
Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	2
Total	10

*Note:* Four of the participants were international students.

The mentee participants ranged from full-time athletes in their first year to some who were seniors. More specifically, all student-athlete participants were recruited from the sophomore through senior class the first year. Afterwards, the incoming freshman class was also involved in UCAMP. The ages of the mentee participants ranged from 18 to 21, with the average age of 18 years.

The mentors, aged 25 to 70 years old, were primarily community members, all of whom just wanted to make a contribution in the lives of their mentees. These mentors, both male and female, included everyday homemakers, retired individuals, working mothers and fathers, and single persons; some were unemployed and others were employed, representing various career backgrounds, including some supervisors and owners of their own businesses.

Table 4

*Total Sample Description*

Volunteers by Intercollegiate Team	
Intercollegiate Team	No. of Student Athletes
Football	3
Basketball (men's)	N/A
Basketball (women's)	N/A
Men's Tennis	1
Women's Tennis	5
Track & Field (women)	1
Total number of student athletes (mentees)	10
Community/University Status of Mentors	
4 - Non-teaching university faculty	4
3 - Non-working mentors	3
2 - Mentors from the community	2
1 - Mother and housewife	1
Total number of mentors	10

Table 4 depicts the sample description for both the mentors and mentees: the mentees in terms of the intercollegiate team each represented, and the mentors' status as regards their origination from the community or university.

Four non-teaching faculty members were in the mentor group. In regard to educational background, the mentors ranged from college graduates with master and doctorate degrees to those with some college and those with a minimal high school education. In regard to racial/ethnic background, 6 were White, 3 were African American, and 1 was of Hispanic origin.

### **Instrumentation.**

#### ***The interview.***

Data were collected through the interview as the method of inquiry. The interview format was used in order to capture the personal experiences of the participants, both introspective and interactional. The in-depth interview was chosen because, in general, it allows for a more accurate collection of data and lends itself to a study that best describes the relationships and experiences in this mentoring program. Applicable to this particular study, the personal interview seemed best for describing the routine and problematic moments and meaning in the individuals' lives and experiences.

While measuring the relationship, it was also important to look at the social bond that took place between the two involved in each mentor-mentee relationship. This, according to work done by Creswell (2003), shows the social. Accordingly, interview questions addressed how the participants perceived the mentor-mentee relationship with each other, if the match was successful, and finally, satisfaction with UCAMP as a whole. In addition, all participants were asked for recommendations for future use of this mentoring model.

#### ***Interview questions.***

Mentor and mentee interview questionnaires were used as a guide for the researcher in conducting the interviews. These questionnaires were developed by the researcher with suggestions from the dissertation committee members. The mentors and mentees were asked a separate set of questions, respectively, about their experiences and feelings of being matched to the other: a set of 26 questions for the mentors and a

different set of 26 questions for the mentees. In creating the set of interview questions for the mentors, the researcher was also influenced by the framework suggested by Stanley and Clinton (1992). See Table 5 for the elements of their model.

Table 5

*Mentor Functions and Empowerment*

Function	Empowerment	Explanation
Selection	Confidence building, expectation, sense of uniqueness	Mentors select potential leaders and build in build in students a sense of confidence and uniqueness, which can help the student bring a significant contribution to the organization
Encouragement	Perseverance	The mentors believe in their students and encourage them to believe they will succeed and accomplish set goals.
Impart skills	Show leadership, influence skills	The mentors impart relational skills and demonstrate how to use networking.
Linking to resources	The resources	They link the mentors to needed development resources, including education, training, financial aid, and people.
Perspective	Analytical skill	Sponsors have an overall picture of the organization, its structures, networks, and goals, providing a decision-making framework not accessible to lower-level positions.
Inspiration	Sense of destiny	Sponsors often begin with the end in mind, seeing what the mentees are capable of being and achieving and can inspire them to become that.

*Note.* Adapted from *The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, p. 124, by P. D. Stanley & J. R. Clinton.

## **Procedure**

Both the adult mentors and the student athletes individually received a letter inviting them to participate in the study and subsequently the interview process. The letter gave information that detailed the purpose, goals, and objectives of the study; a list of research questions; and the benefits of the study in terms of outcome and how the study would be used (see Appendix B). Following this invitation/recruitment letter, each participant was given a letter of consent, approved by the University of Denver's Human Subjects Review Committee and the Institutionalized Review Board (IRB), which authorized the researcher to conduct the study and explained the participants' involvement with the University of Denver and their right to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the study. The consent form explained that the study was for dissertation purposes and that there was a non-existent relationship between the interviewer/researcher and any participant in the program (see Appendix C). It is also important to note, given the requirements of the NCAA guidelines, that there was no compensation offered for participation in this study.

Each mentor was assigned a number from 1 to 10, and each mentee was assigned a corresponding number from 1 to 10. The mentors were then paired off with their matching mentees. The participants were told they were volunteers and thus could withdraw from the study at any time they felt uncomfortable or uneasy. I again informed both the mentees and mentors that this research was being used for the completion of dissertation requirements. The participants were also assured that the questionnaires and the audio tapes that contained the answers from the interviews would be kept under lock

and key with the researcher and would remain secured with him until such time as they were destroyed.

The length of each interview ranged from 30 to 45 minutes for the mentees and approximately 1 to 2 hours for the mentors. The individual interviews were conducted by the researcher with the mentors at a different date than with the mentees. The mentors were given the choice of where they wanted to meet for the interview. The same held true for the mentees. Some chose a coffee shop; other interviews were held over the phone. The telephone interviews were conducted based on convenience and geographic constraints (several mentees no longer lived in the Boulder area). In all cases, the interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by an outside editor in preparation for data analysis. Directly following the interviews, whether face-to-face or over the phone, the researcher categorized the participants' answers in a format that reflected their answers.

All 10 mentors were asked to respond to the questions on the nature of their mentoring relationship in a face-to-face interview, with the exception of one mentor who was interviewed by phone (she lived more than 60 miles away). Regarding the randomly selected 10 mentees, 5 were interviewed by phone. The remaining 5 could not be reached for an interview; and thus, data on their current status and perceptions regarding their mentoring experience were collected through their mentors. Attempts had been made to contact these latter 5 mentees by phone and written correspondence, but were unsuccessful.



## **Data Analysis**

In regard to data analysis for qualitative research studies, there are many similar processes as well as a few different processes, according to qualitative authors, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Huberman and Miles (1994). For example, Merriam (1998) described the common strategy wherein findings are initially organized into descriptive accounts of themes or categories that cut across the data. In the present study, as regards general organization of the data, the research questions served as a basis for the major categories, and the sub-categories were based on the balance of questions asked during the interviews.

The researcher used all of the data collected by organizing notes, questionnaires, audio recordings, and the typed transcripts to ensure the accuracy of each interview. After organizing the data collected, the researcher read and re-read the information that emerged to ensure a sense of the entire scope of the data, as suggested by Agar (1980), who advised researchers: “Read the transcripts in their entirety several times. Immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts” (p. 103). In this regard, Merriam described writings related to data analysis for a case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single bounded unit.

After the identification of themes and categories was described, the researcher began the process of coding. The coding process is a step to separate data according to situational factors of “who, what, where, and when” (Merriam, 1998, p. 185). More specifically, the researcher used open coding, as explained by Creswell (1998):

The researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information. Within each category, the investigators

find several properties, or subcategories, and looks for data to dimensionalize, or show the extreme possibilities on a continuum of the property. (p. 57)

Guided by Creswell (1998), the phenomenological data analysis proceeded through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings. In the process, I, as the researcher, also set aside all prejudgments, bracketing my own experiences—a return to “natural science,” in the words of Creswell (p. 52)—and relied on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience (Creswell, 1998).

## **Chapter 4. Results**

A primary objective of the interviews was to capture the effects of the relationship between the mentor and mentee. The results focus on the research questions asked with respect to the student athletes' perception of the relationship, how they felt it may have influenced or added to their career goals, and, finally, if there are any implications for duplication of this model for future mentoring programs for student athletes at the university level.

For the purpose of this study, an ideal mentor is someone who positively influences the student athlete in his or her personal or career goals. The study revealed that all interviewed athletes reported a positive relationship with their mentor; two mentees found that they had more effective experiences with their informal mentors, as opposed to the assigned mentor they received through UCAMP. These mentees worked with others who were also involved in UCAMP, but not as their official mentors. One athlete actually worked with a donor who seemed to take a special interest in him, and they shared more in the area of career goals, as opposed to his assigned official mentor. The other was a student who seemed to gravitate towards her coach, who took a special interest in her abilities both on and off the court.

### **Gender and Ethnicity Effects**

This study looked at an almost equal number of males and females and found no noticeable difference in their experiences. Rather, the differences seemed to be based on

the individual relationships formed between the mentor and the mentee. Although the expectations might have been that the students of color would have had the most profound experiences, the results were almost the opposite. Instead, it appeared that the foreign students reaped a more meaningful impact on their lives and career goals. One factor was that they were away from home and in a foreign country, faced with having to learn a new language and adjusting to a new culture. Therefore, they seemed to depend more on the relationship with their mentor. Even so, the relationships were still dependent upon the compatibility of the two, the mentor and the mentee.

### **Mentors and Mentees' Experiences Related to the Mentoring Relationship**

This section identifies the results from the research of the experiences of both the mentees and their mentors regarding the nature and effectiveness of the mentoring relationship: the athletes' experiences and successes in their academic, career, and personal goal achievements and those and input of the mentors. In summary form, these findings are initially organized according to the three major research questions, which serve as the overall themes of the study. Accordingly, an overview of the responses to each research question, first by the mentors and then by the mentees, respectively, is presented below. Following this overview, a brief description of salient, related findings is provided in this section.

### **Research question 1.**

#### **What Was the Nature of the Relationship Between the Mentor and Mentee?**

##### ***Mentors.***

All 10 mentors reported having had a positive experience in mentoring their student athletes. They reported mutual respect and acknowledgment for each other's role and past and present history. The mentors admired the athletes' ability to play their sport and maintain an academic standing that allowed them to remain eligible for an active role on their team roster.

Whereas mentoring was never intended to replace family, most mentors agreed that their mentees became an extended member of their own family system. Likewise, when they met the parents of their students, the parents expressed relief in knowing that their son or daughter had a local connection and people who cared about him or her.

##### ***Mentees.***

The student athletes reported a number of strengths and gains from having had a mentor and being in the program. In this regard, salient among their responses were respect for their mentors' roles in the community, the mentors' willingness to share their time and skills as community members, and most of all, mentors' life experience in terms of having been where the mentees were now—ready to embark upon their personal and career futures. It was also of particular note that the mentees talked about meeting their mentors' families and feeling accepted by them in the absence of their own family.

## **Research question 2.**

### **Which Characteristics of the Student Athlete and the Mentor Made an Impact on Satisfaction With the Program?**

#### ***Mentors.***

In addition to this more general research question, the mentors were also asked the more specific question, *What was the mentor's reason for becoming a mentor?* In response, all 10 mentors agreed that they wanted to give back to the university due to their own past experiences as a student. They understood how students are looking for direction and guidance during their college years and could use some help balancing the demands of college life. All 10 mentors admitted they had never mentored a young person before; however, they felt qualified and confident without any formal training. When asked if they had been a student athlete themselves, 4 reported having some kind of athletic experience while in college. Even though it seemed to be an advantage, so many rules and programs had either changed or been implemented, that it did not really make a difference. One mentor said that because they did not have NCAA rules when he was an athlete, he could not imagine what it must be like to always be on guard against the many restrictions that impact one's life as an athlete.

Unanimously, the mentors reported personal gains and insights after having mentored a student athlete. "I had no expectations, but walked away having gained far more than I could have ever imagined. I gained a friend and an addition to our family. I enjoyed being able to give back," said one mentor.

### ***Mentees.***

All interviewed mentees reported that they enjoyed working with their mentor. For the most part, they referred to their mentor as a friend, career guide, and as a connection to their career goals. One typical response was, “For the most part, I really enjoyed working with my mentor; he was always there for me when I need him.” Another mentee related, “My mentors were like parents to me and my team mates, doing little things like being at our practices, showing up at our events, and just simple things like making a cake for the whole team for birthdays.” All 5 of the mentees who answered this research question mentioned some involvement with their mentor’s family, either having dinner or meeting them at some event. There were many examples of encouragement and encouraging words of support, such as, “They were just there for me.” One mentee explained, “It helped that I had a husband and wife [the mentor and his wife] who were retired and that seem to make it easier for them to be so available for me.” According to the mentees, it also helped to have someone that would be honest; it also helped just being able to talk openly with an adult who had been there. All 5 mentees felt that their mentor’s age was a positive in that he/she was older and had the experience of either being an athlete or having been away from home before; so it made it easier to relate to each other. Finally, 3 of the 5 mentees who were interviewed directly were foreign students and reported how good it was to have an American adult to be there to help in their transition to both the university and a new country.

### **Research question 3.**

#### **What Improvements Can Be Made in the Program?**

##### ***Mentors.***

The mentors were overwhelming with praise and recognition for the coordinator and the importance of having someone to call on when the need for direction and guidance presented itself. This also reinforced the importance of the training and communication between the UCAMP office and the mentors. Not knowing that the program would eventually be discontinued, a number of the mentors felt it was important that the same criteria for recruitment be available to future mentors coming into the program. The mentors felt there was the need for training and ongoing consultation as a whole. Because this was one of the only programs utilizing outside mentors, it added an importance to the relationship of the university with the outside community. The program was seen as an excellent marketing tool and recruitment strategy for new incoming student athletes and their parents who knew how difficult it was to be away from home and in a strange environment for the first time.

##### ***Mentees.***

The student athletes enjoyed coming together with their mentors and meeting other mentors who had additional information and guidance to share. They talked about their relationship with their mentors and how those who were not matched with a mentor had expressed wanting one. They liked the social functions and the interaction with their mentors in such settings. Mentees further shared how they enjoyed making a connection with people who were already working in the community or related field they themselves



planned to enter. Another plus was just having someone who was there if the mentee just wanted to talk or hang out with. Some mentees suggested they would have liked the program to sponsor more social time to give them the opportunity to talk with other mentors (community people).

### **Related findings.**

All 10 of the mentors stated they met their expectations. Most of them just wanted to volunteer their time and resources to a student athlete. Most of the mentees did not really know what they were getting into, but by the end of the time commitment, they agreed that they had gained more than they had expected. The international students seemed to gain even more; they were adjusting to a new country, transitioning to college life, and meeting new teammates. Also, many of them were fairly new to the English language. This was one of the more outstanding experiences in collecting the data. I admired the international students with their multiple issues, yet they were able to view their experiences in a positive way, which was rewarding on both a personal and academic level.

Another finding was related to the amount of time given by the mentor and the availability of the mentee, with both having demanding schedules. The relationships that seemed to work the best, with high ratings, were the ones where there was weekly contact and face-to-face time spent together. The women's tennis team had the most mentor attendance of any of the sports. This may have been because 4 of the 10 mentors made it a point to attend almost all of the daily practices, and they even made it to some away matches. The mentees viewed this as going above and beyond. The NCAA rules made it

difficult at times to do such things as honoring your mentee's birthday or taking them to dinner. However, the tennis team was small enough that their four mentors would bring a cake for the whole team or invite the entire team over for dinner. The coach said that this added to the team's operating like a family, and the mentees benefited from having time and exposure to the mentors, whether assigned or not. The mentors' comments complimented the coordinator and consultant of the program for their work in recruitment, training, and ongoing support. Everyone thought it helped knowing these key figures were there if they needed guidance or help with a problem.

Most of the mentees focused their answers on their relationship with their mentors and how the relationship developed. Only two of these mentees seemed to feel they had been matched with people who could not really help them. However, they were able to connect to other members of the program and therefore had more success with informal matching, spending more time with these mentors while still seeing their official mentor on a monthly basis.

The study found that having prior athletic experience was helpful, but not the only requirement for being the most effective mentor to a student athlete. Many of the student athletes stated that they were more interested in having their personal and career goals met than having someone who was a former athlete. This was reflected in the answers and the experiences they shared in the interviews. The feeling of satisfaction in the relationship and the coming away with a strong personal relationship with someone who "had been there" was more beneficial to the student athlete. This seems to support and add to the success of their experiences and time spent on campus, while pursuing an

education and gaining a career. This was especially true with international students, who had to deal with being away from home, adjusting to being in a foreign country, and learning both a new language and the customs of a country they had not lived in before.

In fact, data from the interview with the international students seemed to provide a clearer understanding of the importance of a mentor-mentee relationship than this researcher had anticipated. The students from the United States, for the most part, were not too far away from their families, or they were able to see them on a more frequent schedule. But, this was not the case for those who were from countries outside of the United States. Even the student athletes admitted they were not looking for what they eventually gained from the mentoring relationship: a new connection, an extension to their family, and a support system. This finding was of great value to this study and future replications of mentoring programs for college students.

Overall, all of the mentors and mentees who were interviewed shared their experiences and how they walked away with positive and meaningful experiences from participating in UCAMP. Although the program does not exist the way it officially did in the years 2000 to 2005, the mentors all agreed that they were open and willing to mentor again someday. The mentees, having had a mentor, felt they would have more reason to participate in such a program as a college student mentor or even within their current job setting.

### **Nature of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship**

Of the 10 mentees and 10 mentors who participated in this research study, all were able to visit during the semester two to four times, either by face-to-face contact or

by telephone. Most exceeded the minimum requirements of 2 to 4 hours a month. Many of the mentees used texting and voice messaging as a means of staying in contact with their mentors. Most went out of their way to visit in person, even if just to hang out. Mentors were monitored by the coordinator of UCAMP. This person made sure the two were meeting a minimum requirement of two to four times a month and also let them know that he or she was available for consultation with issues or problems as they might arise. All 10 of the mentors made a regular attempt to attend their mentees' practices and games, both in town and on the road. Four of the tennis mentors were avid attendees of the tennis practices and games. According to the mentees, this was an important part of the engaging process in their relationship.

Three of the non-teaching faculty members, a coach, the coordinator of UCAMP, and the student alumni director had an open-door policy for their mentee, as well as any of the student athletes. This allowed for informal and unscheduled meetings to occur almost daily or at least on a frequent schedule.

A majority of the mentees' recommendations seemed to center around the importance of the matching. Other comments reflected on the endless efforts their mentors made to reach out to them in light of the students' demanding practice and academic schedules. In many cases, regular meetings were not always possible.

The international students, however, spoke of the value of having a relationship with someone locally. When other students would go home for breaks, holidays, and at the end of the semester, they still had a friendly voice on the other end of the phone and that meant they were not alone. This mattered a great deal when they were homesick and

missed their family. These students spoke to the added value of their relationships with their mentors, given the fact that they were coming from countries outside the United States and thus were adjusting to a new country, language, and social and cultural differences.

### **General comments from the mentors.**

Based on the interviews, some of the general comments from the mentors are as follows:

- I received more out of the relationship than I thought I had given.
- It drew me closer to the department and the university.
- I think these are great kids and parents to have worked with.
- They will call me if they need something.
- Their schedules are very demanding and they don't have a lot of time, but when you do connect with them, they seem to just enjoy having someone there on the sideline cheering them on.
- I've gained new insights from mentoring with UCAMP.
- From meeting the athlete, their parents, to meeting others in the program, it was an overall broadening of experiences and new relationships.
- Just to help out a student, especially the ones who were far from home, was sometimes a bit overwhelming.
- The recruitment by the coordinator and how the program was presented and marketed were all done very well.

### **Interviews With the Mentors**

The following are descriptions of the results of the face-to-face and telephone interviews with the 10 mentors in the study, who had been matched to the randomly selected mentees, and all of whom were participants in UCAMP from 2000 to 2005. (See

Appendix D for the mentors' responses to the 26 interview questions.) These adult mentors brought a range of experiences and personal contributions to the program and to the mentees. With the different mentors, I have varied the format for reporting their experiences. In some cases where I quote the mentors' responses, I have included the questions posed to the mentor, their responses, and some related comments. In other cases, I have summarized or presented salient points reflecting their voiced experiences in the mentorship relationship. Please note that of the 10 mentors in the study, only eight interviews are presented, because two of the interviews represented husband-and-wife mentor teams wherein each had his/her own mentee.

#### **Interview one.**

The day I received notice that my IRB was approved, I immediately called my mentors and began to set up appointments. My first mentor lived the farthest from campus and my office. She was not only a mentor, wife, and mother, but a strong advocate of UCAMP and other programs of the university. To my surprise, she was not only willing to talk to me but wanted to do the interview right then. After reading the consent to her over the phone and sending her a hard copy electronically, we began the interview (it is important to note that because of distance, this was the only phone interview with a mentor).

To the question regarding her reason for wanting to become a mentor, she responded, "I just wanted to help a student out, especially one of the ones who was away from home, and who also were not use to being away from family." This same mentor was one of the best examples of practicing what she promised. Sharing her experience of

mentoring a football player, she related that the two of them hit it off from the start, and soon after, the athlete met her family: her husband and her children. As time progressed, they became open and were able to talk about most subjects.

For this mentor, choosing UCAMP was explained as follows: “One of the reasons for becoming a mentor had to do with the support and the encouragement from the program coordinator.” The program coordinator would make calls, make suggestions, and reassure the mentors that they were on target with the relationship. Being the coordinator is a role and position that is critical to the success of the mentor-mentee relationship and the effectiveness of the overall program operations.

In asking this mentor if she had any experience as an athlete, she said, “I had one year of college; now my husband, he is the CU graduate. I’ve just always been a strong supporter of the athletic department.” Although education is important, it is not the only criterion for making mentoring relationships a success. This mentor gave more based on who she was than what she was. Her ability to make a minority athlete comfortable in her home, over the telephone, and when attending his games and practices made a world of difference in how fast their relationship developed and how successful it became. The mentor spoke of how the player seemed to feel relaxed in her home and with her family. Even telephone calls were more than just an update sometimes; it was just the fact that someone on the other end was there to listen and care without any expectations.

In answer to the question, “Considering the experience you had with UCAMP, how would you rate it?” the mentor stated,

I would give it the highest; for whatever reason, my match was someone you just clicked with. He became a part of our family. Giving was good and important and

what they give back through the relationship equals being a friend, an extended member of your family. My mentee was from Washington DC, he was a freshman, a young father, working on a career, all while learning to become a young adult man. Finally, I found myself going to his games and enjoying being there for him, so he always knew someone who cared was in the crowd for him. Being a mentor to my mentee was fulfilling to me.

In the words of this mentor, the biggest impact on her life from being a mentor was “my mentee becoming an addition to our family that shows how close the relationship was and is to this day. We still communicate with each other, and it works both ways.” In responding to how she was able to provide support to her mentee, she reported,

I think it was a good support system for my mentee just knowing someone was there. When he got engaged, I was there and he let me in on the engagement. He also spoke about how important it was to have someone in town for you when your own family couldn't be there for encouragement and support.

When the mentee had his birthday, he spent time with his mentor and her family. More recently, when he became a new assistant coach at a very well-known university on the East coast, he called his mentor to tell her of his good news. The relationship is not only a good one, it is very special.

In regard to being a mentor in UCAMP, the mentor explained,

I gained the insight and the need for how to help a student who was open and willing to accept me. I learned what student athletes goes through, and the limitations people don't understand, given the NCAA rules and all the restrictions that the student athlete has to endure. The general public just doesn't have a clue what kind of pressure these student athletes are under while trying to pursue a college degree and fulfilling their career goal all at the same time.

When asked about whether or not she felt her background played a role in her mentor-mentee relationship, this mentor stated that having three older brothers probably helped her out a lot. Still, her impression of herself was of being a people person:



I was the youngest, a female, so I had to learn how to get in there and fight for what I wanted and be who I wanted to be in a household of boys, who were all very competitive. Since I didn't have a sports background and I never played competitive sports, I would say that it wasn't my background as an athlete or having a mentor, since neither I had. No, it was my background of just being more than just a survivor, but a participant of life in a competitive household of boys that helped me to prepare for becoming and being a mentor and a support to someone else. It was nice, to be out there, know you have a relationship with a student athlete, and you support them. Again, we found another family member. I think one of the other things which helped me to know that our relationship was genuine was when I met his parents, also attending his wedding. Again, I felt treated like I was just an extension of his family, also. Boy, you get to see them grow up and mature, you see the many changes and challenges that they go through, and even get to be there when they come to you for help.

As to considering her mentee a friend during their relationship, she replied,

Yes, definitely. [We were both] very comfortable with each other, just so many little things that gave you the message that you were more than just another person, a person who was truly in their lives. I could really feel it when he introduced me to his parents. My mentee was always excited to see me, and sometimes I would see him first before he saw me, like at games, sitting in that big crowd when he did spot you. I just knew it meant a lot to him to have you there.

In regard to whether the mentor felt she was a help in the steps toward her mentee's career, she replied, "No, not a help; he had his own plans and goals pretty much outlined. I was just there for support." When asked if she admired her mentee, she explained,

He made some big choices and decisions for himself and his life before he graduated from college in 2004. With all of life's challenge he never seemed to change, he was always himself. When it came to personal stuff, we really didn't discuss a lot of personal issues. If he got hurt during a game or when he had to have surgery, I can remember going on campus and just being there for him or visiting with him. I can remember his telling once that he had a little boy. I know that was personal and still pretty important to him and for him to share with me. I think that speaks to how well he felt about his comfort level in speaking to me about personal things.

She added,

My mentee played football and he played wide receiver, and sometimes punt returner. I think I was pretty well informed about his sport and his position, and

that did help in our relationship and how we got along, because I would always show an interest in his game and his performance.

To the interview question regarding how she showed interest in her student athlete, the mentor reported,

By going to his games, awards ceremonies, banquets, and other things like that. Also, making telephone calls during the off season; when he did move, he kept in touch with me. I can remember once he came all the way to Greeley, Colorado for his birthday. I had also made him some cookies on that day.

The mentor went on to explain that her mentee had invited her to his games and practices. In this regard, she added,

As I stated earlier, yes, I attended his practices and his games. We attended during the season, at games, and we communicated as much as sometimes 2-3 times a week. My mentee would call and talk, unless he was feeling down in the dumps, then it might take a little longer for him to come around.

The researcher then asked the following question, “The UCAMP program has been discontinued; do you have any suggestion about its future?” The mentor was positive in her response:

Yes, it should be reinstated. Furthermore, I would suggest they have someone like the coordinator who ran UCAMP, someone who is there for the athlete and mentor. Having that kind of person really helped to make the program a success. Most important, the athletes have to want this program in order for it to work for them.

The mentor was asked to speak to the comment of the researcher that “the age of the athlete can make a difference in how you get along” She addressed this statement and again talked about her satisfaction with the mentorship experience:

No, he was 18 and I was in my 40s. I think it really had to do with our personalities. I enjoyed doing this, it has been a valuable experience for me, and yes, I would consider doing it again; for me another football player, maybe living in Greeley, that would work best for me. I would agree to be another mentor again, yes I would.

### **Interview two.**

Although this was a husband-and-wife team, each of them had their own mentee as well as their own experiences. “We both met the coordinator at a function, maybe it was the Buff’s Luncheon, and we were there face to face; also, the CU newspaper had an announcement for recruiting mentors, so we both agreed to sign up.”

Neither were graduates of CU, but they each had college degrees, one in math and the other in computer science. They both ranked the program and their experiences highly. Neither had prior formal experience as mentors; they had no children, nor did either of them play sports in college or on any organized teams. The couple actively attended the women’s basketball games, eventually getting to know the coach and the players quite well.

The couple was satisfied with the mentoring program and even ended up adopting the entire women’s tennis team and the coach. Given the restrictions of NCAA—disallowing athletes to receive gifts or money individually—the couple gave to the team as a whole. When there was a birthday, they brought cake for the entire team, and when it came to dinner, they invited the whole team to their home. This went on for years, and to this day, they still have the coach and the team members to their house. They think of themselves as surrogate parents or grandparents.

Their life has been impacted by being a mentor as this mentee graduated from college, got married, had her first child, and brought the baby to the United States from Sweden to spend time with them. They are like grandparents now to her child. They write and talk frequently.

The researcher's inquiry regarding mentorship support received the following reply: "We are still there for her, and we have maintained a close relationship even though she has returned to her home in Sweden." Continuing this thought, he (the husband as official mentor) explained in more detail,

Our mentee was really easy to give support to and she listened, even if she didn't always take in everything we said. She was just a very workable persona to interact with. Oh yeah, we helped our mentee to get her driver's license. We gained a family member and some personal fulfillment out of being involved and giving to a student athlete. We think who we were and what we wanted to give made the difference. Our back ground really didn't make us so much better prepared, it just added to the experiences of being around for a while. Being there for the tennis team has been our thing, and that has put us in touch with a number of campus and support members of the Buff Club and UCAMP. We have a mutual respect for each other, so I don't think we would call it a friendship, rather more like a friendship, but we were still the adults and we were able to maintain a relationship that supported an atmosphere of trust and good feeling for one another. We were mentors and that didn't mean we were there as a friend, but I'm sure our relationship felt like friendship at times, but with a different kind of respect between us.

### **Interview three.**

April 8, 2009, I headed for Broomfield to meet with a wonderful couple who had served as mentors from the beginning of the program. I had not seen them for at least two, maybe three years. I was glad that their names had come up as matching one of the mentees who had been randomly selected, because they could provide experience from the first year to the last and comment on some mentors who were still, unofficially,

mentoring students in certain programs. As I pulled up and sat in the local Starbucks, I set up my tape recorder and tried to account for the background sounds which reminded me of a live NPR (National Public Radio) show. When they arrived, we greeted each other and picked up on our conversation about UCAMP just as if we had seen each other the day before. I gave them the written letters of invitation and the consent forms to sign. Then off we were into a 2-hour interview and conversation.

This couple was equally pleased with their experiences as mentors. Both had had their own separate mentee. The husband explained why he had wanted to be a mentor: “I wanted to be a help. We have always been connected to the university in some way, and this seemed like a good way to increase that time by joining the program.” Agreeing, the wife said, “I too was very excited to be a part of the program and in following the athletic department. And we both heard about the program at a luncheon where it was introduced to booster members and volunteers.”

Both stated their experiences were positive as members in UCAMP. When it came to their experiences of having mentored, they both agreed they were still helping out, even though the formal program had been discontinued. The husband had participated in sports and felt like that was a plus. Even though the wife had not competed, she still felt a connection to her athlete and to the program as well.

The husband stated that from his experience as a mentor, he now has a different insight into just how challenging and difficult it is to handle and maintain grades and balance your personal and career life while trying to gain an education. For the wife, “It

drew me closer to my mentee. They are great kids, and this process helps you to feel like you were a part of something good.”

The husband stated that he not only felt that he got to know his mentee, but he was also able to meet his family and spend some time with them as well. In regard to spending time together, he spoke for both his wife and himself:

Yeah we even made it a point to attend practices and games, whether here or away, when we could. That seemed to mean a lot to them, the fact that they had someone there for them. It’s also important to note that we seemed to adopt the whole team—even some who had their own mentors. With the restrictions of the NCAA rules, if you wanted to do for one, you had to do for all—like a birthday cake, it would be for the team instead of for the one whose birthday it was. This seem to naturally make everything a team treat, which we enjoyed doing. From working and being in the work force, we both seem to bring life experiences along as our background experience, and that did help in our relationships.

We both volunteer on campus in the athletic department, so we get to see and meet most of the athletes while volunteering. While we both were older than our mentees, I guess you could say we had a friendship with them.

Having had both college experience and the background of being a college athlete, the husband, felt that it helped him to introduce his mentees to others outside the university setting and make some positive connections. As far as sharing personal things in their mentoring relationships, the husband explained that his mentee had family close in the area and so the mentee seemed not to need too much in the way of personal sharing with him (the mentor).

In conclusion, the husband, speaking for both his wife and himself, gave the following appraisal of their UCAMP experience:

Overall, we both seemed to have a very positive experience in working in the UCAMP program. And still, to this day, we try to mentor in an unofficial way. We have continued contact with our past mentees and see them from time to time as well.

When asked whether they would consider another mentoring relationship, the wife enthusiastically answered, “Yes! I look forward to being a mentor again.” Similarly the husband said,

I too would have to agree. We had an age difference with all of the young people we mentored, but it didn’t seem to matter; in fact, we always felt like we were serving as extended family to them, and they to us. I would very much look forward to mentoring again. This was and continues to be a positive experience. So yes, I too would mentor again and look forward to it.

#### **Interview four.**

This mentor serves as Director of the Student and Alumni Association for the university. Although he and his mentee did not complete some of their goals, one would say their relationship was still successful. His mentee was put on academic probation and, ultimately, was removed from the football team due to his academic standing. It would have been of great value to know what the athlete felt was the turning point in his academic and personal career path that took him in the opposite direction from his goals. But, due to his current legal situation, I was unable to interview this mentee. Instead, I was able to have a very long and detailed conversation with his mentor who shared some feedback and told me the athlete’s story.

In the mentor’s office, as we talked, I informed him of the purpose of the study and gave him a copy of the invitation letter and the consent form. With the tape recorder on, he began,

I am a former football player of this program and a college graduate. Having spent much of my career as a hospital administrator, I got involved with the Alumni Association at CU, and they brought me back for a job here.

When asked if he still had contact with his mentee, the mentor said that he did not, because the mentee was currently in jail. It was apparent that the mentor had taken this news hard and wished that he could have done something for him. As the mentor continued to tell his story, he wore a look of frustration and defeat as he talked about how he had tried to reach out to the player and to support and encourage him before all his legal involvement had come about.

In regard to his reasons for wanting to become a mentor, he stated,

I wanted to be able to help kids, be there for them in support and any other kinds of needs I might be able to assist in. I chose UCAMP because of Jeanie [the coordinator]; she twisted my arm, she did that very well. She then told me I was needed, so that's how I got involved. She was also how I have first heard about the program.

To the question regarding his highest educational degree at the time of becoming a UCAMP mentor, he responded, "I had my masters in hospital administration; I had worked in that field for over thirty years." And to the question, "Would you rank UCAMP poorly or highly?" he gave this answer:

I would say in between. Oh yeah, my reason for that ranking, I think the initial start of the program was excellent, but then I think, my feeling is that there was no longer any support for it and I think as the support died out there was need for more things within the program. It just fizzled out. Also, I know Jeanie tried to keep it going at that time, but as it started to fizzle there was nothing she could do to stop the fall of the program.

Addressing the question as to his experience as an athlete before becoming a mentor, he replied, "I played athletics here at the University of Colorado. I think being an athlete myself helped in my role as a mentor." As to how his life was impacted by being a mentor, he made the following comment:



Well right now, you know, initially it was great, and right now when I think of my mentee, I get depressed at his situation. For me, I guess it was knowing that he's just sitting in jail without even being able to make bail to get out, so it's a bad deal.

Similarly, the mentor's response to being asked the gains he received from being a mentor in UCAMP reflected his mentee's current situation: "I gained a young person that was looking for some guidance and some help to mature. And sometimes I feel as though, I already said, with his situation now that I didn't accomplish that." Explaining how he had provided support to his mentee, he stated,

Any time he came around I was always here for him. When he was up or down, especially when he was starting and then he was knocked back down again and there was a coaching change. So he went through all of that and I just kind of hung in there with him and so I was just here for him to offer support.

To the researcher's questions concerning the mentee's involvement with his family, whether he admired his mentee, whether they could talk together about personal matters, and how much time they spent together, the mentor responded,

I always tried to treat my mentee as a son, part of my family. First, I did admire my mentee, because he was dedicated. I thought that his background and his desire to play ball and go to school were good reasons. I just admired him for those kinds of things. He just seemed to be a great kid. When it came to discussing personal things, yes, I did and, you know, I don't know if it's unfortunate, but the day I went to visit him in jail, it seemed as though it had more warrant to come out to talk, but we really couldn't talk. In fact, when I went to visit him, I didn't think that I was sitting and talking to him through a window and a telephone. That was very difficult for me. We both had played football and maybe that was an added key to our relationship; we seemed to connect on that level of the game and what it was like to be a player on the football team at CU.

When it came to our time and the amount of contact time we had, I would say weekly, it may have been some weeks or more, but definitely weekly. Sometimes he would just stop by my office since it was next door to the football office and next to his workout area; even when he would go to and from classes, he would often stop in to sit and talk or just shoot the breeze with me.

The mentor's thoughts and suggestions regarding the future of UCAMP were as follows:

As far as the future of the program, well you already know they have stopped it, that is, the formal UCAMP. I don't think that it should be re-instated. It's needed but...I don't think that it should be something that should be started up again unless there is support. And you know the understanding of the type of things that are required for the program to be successful. Again, only if the program is organized properly and the support is there, because the program had a number of volunteers and when the program went away, the kids had no place to turn, you know what I'm talking about?

This interview was one of the more insightful ones; it certainly brought out the importance of student athletes coming together and needing a fair shot at being a success. Whereas every student athlete is responsible for his or her own decisions and choices, it was clear that his mentee had some unusual events that took place as both a student and an athlete. The coach who recruited him had left, and he never seemed to connect with the new coach. Although this may not seem like a big deal to the outsider, it is everything when you think about how most coaches make that first connection with the student athlete, with promises of a great university experience of playing time on the field. The coach also serves as an official and unofficial mentor while the athlete is playing for the team. Things such as academic guidance are the tutoring department's role, but it is the coach who cares—who is able to put the supportive pressure behind the athlete to buckle down and do what is needed to get things turned around and maintain his or her academic eligibility standing.

In the case of this mentor-mentee relationship, I was unable to interview the mentee face to face. I was able to write him and ask for a written response to my questions through the assigned case manager in the prison where he is now residing. This

much personal information can be stated in a research study such as this, because legally, the case has been heard, and it is of public record. Nevertheless, it would have been beneficial to have had his feedback, if for no other reason than to deter some other student athlete who might be put in a similar situation or presented with some of the same choices.

#### **Interview five.**

This mentor is a current member of the university staff; at the time she mentored, she was the second coordinator of UCAMP. The mentee was a track-and-field student athlete, and the mentor had been a track-and-field student athlete in earlier times. I traveled to Lafayette, Colorado and met this mentor in a little breakfast shop where we visited for the next hour and a half about UCAMP and her experiences. In the following passage, she talked about her desire to become a mentor, her reason for choosing UCAMP, her level of education at the time she became a mentor, and her satisfaction with both her mentee and the program:

Well, as you know, I was the second coordinator of the program, and I enjoyed working with students in that age group. Seeing them develop and be on their own for the first time is really, you know, and seeing them find their way, finding themselves or exploring, that even if they don't find themselves by the time they are done at the college experience. Choosing UCAMP was a given since we were running it; besides, it was also my job. And, because it was my job, I knew about the program and what it was all about. I have a master's degree in education.

My experiences with UCAMP were great; I was quite impressed with the whole process, the screening and selection process of the mentors and the approach to getting students interested. Or, if you know it wasn't mandatory, it was something that... I guess the whole design and wanting to be active and participate. So, I really liked the training, all of that was very impressive to me, because it is so important that you know in order to have a solid program. You have a thorough training selection process and a continuing education program as well.

In regard to her prior experience as a student athlete having made an impact on the mentorship relationship, she stated,

My mentee, for the purpose of this interview, was a track-and-field student athlete. I do feel like having had that prior experience as a student athlete helped in our relationship, and it did make a difference in how we were able to get along with each other.

This mentor reported that having a mentee had made a great impact on her life, and she provided her thoughts on why the relationship was so successful and beneficial:

My whole life has changed, I think when you know that you have someone, other than yourself, your family, but even then it makes you think about how you live and your life and sharing yourself and that someone is watching you, you're an example. In my circumstances, because I work in the department, I've had a lot more contact with my mentee and it makes you closer. You have more time to think and, actually, it's such a cliché, but, a better person, but you know, to be professional and things you want to learn. You just think more about the whole process and you see the benefits of having a mentor and you put more into it. I was able to see my mentee because my office was in the department and she could come by and just sit and talk or visit anytime. In addition, you know whether it be academic or issues with understanding how the administration works and why decisions were made, that kind of thing. Because I was a member of the department as a staff member, I could be a help to my mentee in more ways than the average mentor. I also know that being the program director helped me to gain a lot of insight about not just my mentee, but the program as a whole.

Expanding on the benefits of her mentor-mentee relationship, she continued,

In addition to what I have already mentioned, definitely having that experience, it definitely brightened the fire to want to, you know, stay involved with young people. And it's just very rewarding when you see them come in as a freshman and you see them grow and really become responsible young people, that phase you know, I think they come in responsible, but taking personal ownership and taking control of their education instead of, 'teach me.'

In answer to the interview question as to whether she considered her mentee a friend, she replied,

A friend, it depends on how you use that term. I would say I have a small group of friends; and my mentee, while I liked her very much, our relationship was

something other than a friendship. Again, because to me that's a very small, close group and because it was a mentor role, I always kept it at that. Yes, I think we had a very close relationship, but it was always a mentor/mentee type relationship. That probably needs defining; let's just say, it wasn't like we would go to a bar, oh let's go hang out and, clubbing or whatever. Also, it would be an NCAA violation to have a social relationship with your mentee outside of mentor to mentee.

In response to the question regarding the mentor's help with her mentee's career goals, she gave the following explanation, which provided much more information about their relationship:

When I first met my mentee, she was a sophomore, and I think she was majoring in, I think sociology, but I think she ended up in economics, and not that it matters. But she initially wasn't sure what she wanted to major in. As she worked with me, she began to redefine her career goals. She could see that there were all kinds of careers in athletics, that whatever she was majoring in could, you know, most fields there was a value for those, with accounting you have to have a marketing background, basically, she seemed to catch on that sports was more than just coaching. Her determination was always, as far as I could tell, very positive about it. My mentee wasn't a star athlete by any means, but always determined to work hard and she really, I think, raised her performance to as high as her abilities would go. I don't think she ever fell short of her ability. She had a mental toughness about her. So yes, I admired her as a student athlete and as a person.

Talking about how she related to and supported her mentee, including the closeness of their relationship, she commented,

I always let her determine the subject matter and if she felt comfortable enough bringing it up to me, I would give her advice, but definitely tried not to be judgmental in any way. I tried to get the complete picture of whatever was going on or circumstances was and then give suggestions of things to think about. I showed my interest, well obviously athletic, you know, going to her things, practices, and meets. She also introduced me to her parents, wanted me to meet them and said this is who I have been talking about. So, I felt like we had connected after meeting her parents, seeing how she had already been talking to them about me and our relationship. After meeting her parents, when they would come and visit we would check in with each other. We saw each other a lot weekly and some weeks on a daily basis.

The mentor's thoughts on the future of UCAMP were conveyed as follows:

I really felt strongly about the program. But I think if I wasn't running it, I'd still think yes, I think it should be in existence. I'm sorry I can't separate, I think I'd still, even if I wasn't running it, say it needs to be broader and not just for athletes.

#### **Interview six.**

This was the only active coach who mentored a student athlete and was also a member of the UCAMP team, doing screening and interviews for new prospective mentors. It was April 16, 2009 when I arrived on campus to meet with her. This coach felt as if she had unofficially mentored a number of athletes over the years, but she did have a couple of student athletes with whom she would have considered having a more formal relationship as their mentor. She had been assigned a mentee, but they never seemed to get their relationship going on a regular basis.

When asked her reason for wanting to be a mentor, she responded,

Perhaps my role as coach is to mentor all my athletes and to be a role model to them. Being able to be in someone's life that's a positive influence and letting them still—realizing that they still have to make mistakes, but being someone who's going to be an unconditional supporter is important. For me, having been a student athlete and having had a wonderful experience, you know you want to provide that same experience to another group of tennis players. I guess also, a little selfish as well, in that it's fulfillment for me in helping and giving back and wanting to have all different facets of that relationship, because sometimes it will be disciplinarian, sometimes it will be mother, sometimes it will be comforter, sometimes it's friend and academic advisor. So, there are many roles that I took on as mentor.

Continuing her thoughts on the benefits of having a mentee, she explained,

Coaching in a Division One program, you do what you have to for the student's success and the program. It's also fun seeing somebody grow through the course of their whole career and having them come in sometimes as a young, brash, lab mouse and then leave as someone who's got their life together and is on track and realizing that tennis was a big part of that; it allowed them to give that structure and everything they needed to become the person they became.

In regard to her choice of UCAMP, she stated,

Well, I mean obviously being a coach there were opportunities to help in some of the interview processes; and so, being actually a psychology undergrad myself, I thought it was a very interesting program, and I was very much wanting to be of assistance, having been a young tennis player and now a head coach. The coordinator invited me to participate.

The mentor reported her highest educational degree as a master's in sports management. She gave the following answer as to whether she would rate UCAMP poorly or highly:

Highly. You know, I think it was a wonderful program. As I mentioned, when the program started I was a first-time young coach, and it allowed me another group to help with the development of the student athletes on my team.

And when asked about her experience as an athlete before becoming a mentor, she replied, "Tennis, both in college and professionally, and it helped me absolutely." In answer to whether this experience affected her mentoring relationship, she said,

Yes absolutely, but I will say, you know there was talk at some stage, cause I would have loved to have been strictly a mentor of an athlete of another sport. When you help people you help yourself, when I give advice it also applies to me. Being a support to someone, maybe supportive to yourself also, there was just something about the process and seeing growth changes and maturity; you wish that that consistency was there for them all.

The mentor told how she provided support to her mentee:

I supported her by having contact daily and encouraging her on and off the court. I would like to think I was one of her biggest fans. And she knew I was there to support her in personal issues as well as her sport and academic goals.

Regarding in what ways she felt she had gained from being a mentor in UCAMP, she replied, "See someone develop, and growing into who they were and became. It was satisfying to see and watch them grow into who they wanted to become and being a part of that experience." When asked how her background had helped to prepare her for

becoming a mentor, she gave this reason: “I like coaching; I think my background in psychology and being a thinker, always wanting to help in the adjustment needed for life experiences and how life affected me.”

When the mentor was asked about her overall experience as a mentor in UCAMP, she gave this positive response:

Very satisfying; I wouldn't do it if it wasn't a good thing or very satisfying. I thought it was a very good base for them. I would say that once her official education was complete, at that point, I would say there was a friendship, but being a coach/ mentor and not just necessarily a mentor, you know, the relationship—there was a little difference prior to her finishing her tennis and her graduation and all that stuff. But while she was here, that I was close to and as a coach could share things with that I wouldn't necessarily share with all the players, so there was a sense of trust in her.

She now is a mother of two, and I just think for her, college was about re-grounding herself and finding herself and getting herself onto the right line. If she did not, you know, it was a situation where she came to college, after high school she sat out a year, came to college for a year, so she was really out of tennis for 2 years before she came back.

She was smart, and she was a quick learner, and she really tried to put in and she was a thinker. You know she wasn't in tennis, as we say there are hitters, there are hitters and there are players and she was a player, and she was a player because she thought and she knew and she picked up on subtleties. She was the first player I've had that I felt like really picked up on some subtleties that I said, that she actually got it, she got it, and that made me feel really good 'cause then she utilized it also.

When asked to describe her experience in regard to discussing personal matters with her mentee, she responded, “Yes, it was one of those things, whether personal, school, yes, as a part of our relationship, we could talk. I saw it as a part of helping them in and with their life.” The mentor reported that she felt her past experience as an athlete was helpful in her relationship with her mentee:



[I played] tennis, and as a player and a coach, I was very familiar with the sport, and it helped very much in our relationship. I, being her coach, was at them all [practices] and her games as well. [I made] sure she had the best opportunities to be the best she could, like following up with her academic and managing her load, yet trying hard not to coddle her. [I saw her] probably on average like eighteen to 20 hours a week.

When the interview question was posed regarding the future of UCAMP and suggestions for its improvement, the mentor commented,

I think it would be great if it [UCAMP] was brought back. I think it gave every mentor/mentee a relationship time; sometimes it was difficult, depending on the time that it took or the direction that it took. So, you had some that were very on the professional side. Going through the process that we had since we did the interview took place previously, I'm sure there are new techniques, or new ways or something, maybe that we could keep filtering through, you know, 'cause you want everyone to be successful, and it's obviously a two-way street. So, I think more education on the student athletes' side for them to really understand what this program is and how it can or will be important, 'cause I don't think you necessarily want unsuccessful.

She also talked about her mentoring experience in terms of family:

I met her parents and the way, you know, I want this program to be is that once you're a member of the program, you're always a member of the family. So, it's kind of like whether you've graduated. We had a girl in town on Tuesday who finished 10 years ago. She wasn't a player of mine, but I invited her to come over and meet the team. So, now she receives my emails, but now she's kind of more connected to the current team—that's what I mean by being a part of the family here.

In regard to her thoughts about being part of another mentoring experience, she said,

I haven't taken a serious look at other programs just because of the time, you know. I still have contact with my mentee, and she keeps me updated on her life and her family. I hope the administration will consider starting another mentorship program. Right now, everything is focused on money and funding and that will determine what the future might look like for a mentoring program.

### **Interview seven.**

This mentor was both an adjunct college professor and a coach for one of the local private high schools, along with having played basketball. She explained to the interviewer her reason for becoming a mentor: “ I just wanted to give back, having been a student athlete myself.” Knowing the coordinator of UCAMP helped in her decision to become a part of UCAMP. In general, having a master’s degree and working on post-graduate studies helps one to appreciate the academic and career goals of a student, as in the case of this mentor. When asked the question, “Considering the experience you had with UCAMP, how would you rate it?” the mentor replied, “My experiences would have to be ‘highly’ and a very good program, and overall, always enjoyed participating in the events and the gatherings.” In answer to the interview question, “Did you have any experiences as an athlete before you became a mentor, and if so, what sport? this mentor provided the following response, which included how this experience had helped the mentoring relationship:

I worked with youth in both high school and college men’s basketball and some coaching at the college level. And yes, I think it helped me in my role and relationship; specially having been there myself, I could relate to the challenges an athlete is up against. Having been a mentor has helped me to make small suggestions and changes where ever possible.

In terms of being friends with her mentor, she reported, “I didn’t consider my mentee a friend, because that wasn’t my role as a mentor; rather, I saw myself as an adult role model and someone who was there to assist and help, while providing support and encouragement.” As to whether the mentor aided in steps towards her mentee’s career goals and whether she admired her mentee, the mentor responded affirmatively,

Yes, she was a business major; so working in the field, I would make suggestions about the career and about future finding of a job. I did admire my mentee, because she was able to do the academic and still be a competitor in her field of sports.

The mentor's time spent with her mentee was based upon the mentee's availability, given the mentee's schedule; this usually meant once a week or sometimes every other week; but they would often talk by phone. In regard to the future of UCAMP and whether she would seek another mentoring relationship, she commented,

Given the program is no longer in operation, I do think it should be reinstated. It's still a mystery as to why it was discontinued. It was an excellent program to help the student athlete to prepare for the real world and real work experiences.

The mentor explained that because of the distance, the mentee was not able to meet her family or to visit her home. As to mentoring again, she answered positively, while promoting the benefits of the program:

I would consider mentoring another athlete again or any young person who I could offer time and experience to. Again, I was sorry to see the program go away. The program was a way to help the student athlete to enter the real world, while also addressing the cultural issues for so many who were now living in a community like Boulder, Colorado. There is a lot of negative stuff out there about sports, and a program like this helped to bring out the positive while building character in the student athlete. The program simply helped the athletes to take the high road positive and reassure them it will work out.

#### **Interview eight.**

This mentor mentored a football player who was unavailable for an interview; however she continues to keep in contact with him and follows his career. Her reason for wanting to be a mentor was related to her wanting "to give and be a part of the larger picture." This mentor was a full-time, non-teaching faculty member and a journalist. Although this mentor was a female and her mentee was a male football player, they were

able to formulate a very meaningful relationship, as she reported. In terms of rating

UCAMP, her reply also reflected her own involvement in gaining from the program:

I would have to say on a scale of 1 to 5, a 3; I would have liked to have done more, but if I look at the potential of it, I would say it would have been a 5, because there are a lot of opportunities to do good work there. I just did not; I could have and/or would have liked to have been more involved. I think I have been impacted in many different ways; I like to think of myself having mentored every player. I have something to say to everyone. I'm often accused of being too nice, but there's always going to be somebody to say something bad about you, and what you do. My approach seemed to work in giving support to my mentee; we were able to stay in touch with each other. From this experience, I was able to gain a sense of responsibility when talking to young adults.

The mentor described how her background had been a help to her in her mentoring relationship:

[Being] raised by a single parent and struggling to get to the point where I was or could appreciate knowing and being in a position to help someone else who came out of a similar background was rewarding to me.

Referring to her overall mentoring experience as excellent, she explained the importance of her family's involvement with the mentee as well as her presence in his life:

Making calls between each other and being able to share my family with my mentee also was a positive. My mentee got to meet my nephew who was 11 at the time. This also helped my nephew, as he became attached to my mentee. Now seeing my mentee having gone on to the NFL, my nephew still holds on to that relationship that they shared. My mentee came from a strong family background and that had already paved the way for much of his success and his future. Still, I would like to think that our time together was also an aid, just being in his presence may have helped to make a difference. Throughout the time I worked with my mentee, I was able to attend his games and see him play. I had covered football a couple of years while working as a journalist. I saw him weekly, and because we both were on the same campus, this was easy to do.

When asked about the future of UCAMP and suggestions for improvement, she offered,

Now that the UCAMP program has been discontinued, my feeling are they should re-instate it. Maybe with a different format, perhaps with more activities that are arranged by the college. The biggest obstacles I saw was trying to get together

with your mentee one on one, due to the NCAA rules around not being able to purchase things (like food, dinner, etc.).

The age difference between her and her mentee did not seem to be a problem. Her concluding comments on her mentoring experience were as follows:

I thought it was great that he was an athlete and he knew where he wanted to go in his career and future. Looking at his career and his past and present, he states that his time at CU and UCAMP made a big impact on him. I might consider mentoring again, but for now, I'm back in academics and my time schedule all are so different.

Please note that the second and third interviews represented four mentors: two couples. Therefore, there were a total of 10 interviews, all in person except for the first interview, which was conducted over the phone, because the mentor lived in Greeley, Colorado.

### **Interviews With the Mentees**

Using the same format as that of the above-presented interviews with the mentors, the following are descriptions of the results of the telephone interviews with the five mentees who were available to be interviewed. Following these descriptions is the status of the remaining five mentees who could not be interviewed. (See Appendix D for the mentees' responses to the 26 interview questions.)

#### **Interview one.**

This interview was conducted by phone from the mentee's home in Sweden. It was about 7:30 p.m. her time when I called. She and her family had just finished dinner, and she had put her daughter down for bed. Not only was it important to be able to match her answers and comments to her mentor's, but it was an opportunity to be able to have a foreign student's view on the mentoring experience, which would add another element to

the study. She said that she enjoyed her time with her mentor and felt that their relationship was compatible. “In one way for me, they were my American parents; I could go to them for anything. They supported me always; therefore for me, they were more family than a friend.”

The mentee felt she could trust her mentor and felt comfortable discussing personal issues:

“I definitely looked up to them [the mentor and his wife]. I still do today, and they’ve been honest with me, and they’ve been guiding me through, through school, and my starting on my adult life. I moved there when I was 18 years old; so I was just, I was very young and starting to become independent. But, they helped me with difficult decisions, and since I couldn’t call my parents all the time, they were always there for me. So, I definitely looked up to them, and therefore I would consider them a role model. Just our relationship and the fact that we became so close. I mean I have a daughter now and I consider them her American grandparents. So it’s—to me, they’re more than just mentors, they’re so much more than just mentor, they are family to me. I love the fact that they’re part of my life. I mean I was very homesick when I was in the U.S., so I was determined to stay to finish my studies and to go through it. But, it was difficult at times, and they were always there supporting me. So I’m very thankful for that.

It is important to note that when the mentee had her child, she returned to the United States from Sweden and spent about three weeks with her mentors (her official mentor and his wife—her unofficial mentor), so her daughter could come to know them. Given the fact that neither of them had children, they too reported this as a very positive experience and time in their relationship with their mentee and her daughter.

She answered the interview question, “Did your mentor’s profession or career make a difference in your relationship?” as follows:

It did help, because I wrote, I know in school I had to write a paper about it. I can’t remember what it was, but then I wrote about my mentor’s career. When I got to CU, I thought I wanted to be a doctor. Then I realized that if I study for 4 years in the U.S., then I have to go to medical school or, otherwise, I’d be looking

probably to moving back to Sweden and starting all over again. So it was, you know, I had to switch majors, because I knew I didn't want to; besides, I couldn't afford med school at that time. So, I think they helped me to make up my mind, guiding me through business, because he, my mentor, was a business type and courses, and he had been very successful in business; so it helped me to hear about what he's done and, what the possibilities are in the US. Then, also, when I applied for jobs when I was done with college, I had an extra year I could work, and he helped me to apply for work. He also helped me to prepare for job interviews and the whole process.

The mentee continued her explanation of the mentoring support she had experienced:

They were always there for games and even a couple of away games. With tennis, and our team being so small, it was easier for them to connect with our whole team, and they got to know us all. I worked with both of them, even though [the husband] was my primary mentor I knew both he and his spouse. They didn't have children, so together they were their family.

As regards her mentors' taking an interest in her career goals, she stated,

I can definitely say they helped me through it, and the job I got was definitely the wrong one for me, but, hey, were they to support me, and they were there for me when I needed help. [My mentor] played tennis and had been a teacher; he got more involved and followed the team, which helped him also to add to teaching and playing tennis, so that added to our relationship as well.

When asked the age and gender difference between her and her mentor, she responded: "Mid 50s for him, and he was a male. It was important that both my mentor and his wife were married, so their age was an added plus. They lived and had gone through a lot, and their career knowledge was helpful. This helped me a lot where someone my own age wouldn't have the same kind of experience and insight."

The mentee related her experiences as a student athlete in UCAMP as follows:

I just remember being so homesick at first. I wanted to go home to play tennis and studies; my studies were always first, number one, and tennis was a big, huge part of my life. I knew I wasn't going to go pro or anything like that, so, going to school was very important to me, and I was going to do it. So, coming to the US and studying was a big deal to me. It is incredible how much support you get, how much help you get, all the international students, especially student athletes. There

are tutors, there are mentor programs, and there are computers, study hall, just lots of that; it was just incredible that I could be a part of it. And being able to play sports and get great education, all at the same time. It was incredible, and all the friends and the connections. I'm still in contact with a lot of the girls on my team and my coach, and the guys on the men's team. You just get such a network by just being student athlete and just having your own community almost.

She emphasized that she would definitely recommend UCAMP to others. In regard to her trusting her mentor, as before, she included both the mentor and his wife in her response:

Yes, we had the relationship, both of them. I mean we had the relationship we had just built on trust. And I felt that I could open up to them very early. I thought that they were people that cared about me, not just, now this might sound really strange, but in Sweden everyone is really, I mean you go into a store and no one will pretty much talk to you, no one talks. It's like you have your own space and you don't really say hi to people or to strangers.

This mentee added the following thoughts regarding her mentor-mentee relationship experience:

My mentor helped me get my driver's license, and he helped me with my school work. We talked about jobs and stuff, so most definitely, I took their advice and some things I didn't agree with and we talked about it; other things, I definitely agreed on. Most of the jobs I did myself, a few things my mentor helped me with, but it was mostly me. It was also good for my parents to know I had my mentors there for me if I need someone.

### **Interview two.**

This mentee was a female tennis player from Germany who enrolled at the University of Colorado at the age of 19. She currently lives in Florida and works in a field that was closely related to her degree and career goal. The following excerpts from her interview include feedback about her experiences in UCAMP and working with her mentor. When asked, "Did you enjoy your time with your mentor?" she replied,

Yes, absolutely, they [the primary mentor and his wife] made me feel like family. I really appreciated having them around. One was very interested in tennis; he spent time abroad in the navy, and he knew what it was like to be in a country that



you didn't speak the language so good and the feeling of being away from home. That helped me. He taught me a lot, like tipping in a restaurant, things you don't really think about until you're confronted with them. Our relationship was built on trust; I trusted them both, and we were able to work around all the NCAA rules and guidelines. They were part of my life; we still talk at least once a month now.

In response to the question concerning whether she was comfortable with discussing personal issues with her mentor, she replied,

Ah...to a point, yes, but not everything, example: per my boy friend and I. I didn't share everything, so again we had a friendship, but I would probably go to a close girl friend to talk about really personal things.

When asked if she considered her mentor as a role model, she gave this response, which included some of the many ways she had been helped:

Yes, but best example was just how loyal they were to each other and to others; they supported others and they were there for you no matter if we won or lost. They were always there for me and my teammates. They were just good role models for me and others. They helped me grow into the individual I am today. They helped me with my life changes, and now I find myself doing the same in my life for others. When you are first away from your parents, for me, they helped me to plan and to do things I needed, like my money spending, my athletics, and academics, so I felt like it was very positive for me. They didn't have children, and I'm sure the mentees were like having children for them and for me.

To the interview question, "Did your mentor's profession or career make a difference in your relationship?" she explained,

[My mentor] was a computer software specialist, so it really didn't influence it, per say, and his wife wasn't from an athlete background, so I guest not. They did attend games and practice; that was another reason why I picked them. They were mentoring another teammate, and I saw that relations and I wanted the same for myself.

In a similar vein regarding her mentor's interest in her own career goals, she replied,

He, as an example, took me to see Lindsey Davenport when she came to Denver. Afterwards, she gave a press conference. He and I went and taped it, and he even encouraged me to ask her questions; that was so great. Also, it helped with his

suggested places I could call for an internship, people he knew, a lot of social networking he brought to our relationship.

She continued,

[We both had] the love for sports in general, love of animals, and the love of travel, outdoor adventures, skiing, a lot of what he did more of when he was younger; still we shared these things. He loves tennis himself, and he and his wife enjoyed being around CU athletes. I remember the luncheons, and I miss them. Everyone was always so friendly and treated you like you were a star. It was so special and such a special feeling when you went through it.

When asked to explain more about her relationship with her mentor, the mentee added,

He had solid values, I could see; and because I knew him and how he had been a successful business man himself, that added credibility. Back then, I was pretty insecure; my boyfriend experiences were not that experienced. I listen to my mentor more now than at first. It took me a while to see and understand they were right about a lot of things. I was always focused on academic; I would study on my own. They were there for me as a family, like my academics.

As the questions were answered and the discussion continued, the mentee indicated she was presently working as a project manager for a large sports company in Florida. Her relationship with her mentor and his wife continues to this day, and they talk on a frequent basis. Finally this mentee shared, “My relationship was special because we both invested time, caring for each other. They went out of their way to help me and others.”

### **Interview three.**

This was one of the more challenging mentees to track down and get an interview with. When we finally made contact, the interview was conducted over the phone. This mentee expressed an interest in both the program and sharing his experiences. He was a male tennis player who was here from his country, Serbia. Since completing his

bachelor's degree, he had earned a master's degree in engineering. He was still here on a visa and presently working as an engineer after graduating from the University of Colorado. What was particularly interesting in his story and experiences was that although he had had a formal mentor, he really connected with an informal mentor with whom he felt he had a much better connection—they seemed to relate more to one another. Still, he credited a lot of his success to having had someone to mentor him along his academic and sports career. His informal mentor was a member of the CU Buffs Club, a donor, and a strong supporter of UCAMP. The mentee discussed this situation as follows,

My [formal] mentor was a great guy; we maybe saw each other once a month and usually for short time periods. Sometimes, it just felt like he didn't know what to do with me; we just didn't really connect in a way that I was looking for. He was nice, but older, and just didn't seem to have that much in common with each other. Not really a friend, but someone I did respect and respect him for who he was. When it came to talking about things I could share with or trust, we just never got to anything that heavy I would want to share anything about." He went on to say that they never talked about anything personal or confidential, and they didn't share much in common.

Regarding his informal mentor, he continued,

My informal mentor—we seemed to hit it off from the start; we had much more to talk about, and he could relate to my career and my career goals. I probably spent a couple of hours a month time with him, and we could talk about all kinds of things. We seemed to talk about career and work-related issues a lot; this seemed to be more of what I needed and was looking for. My informal mentor was an older gentleman, and he had a wife and family. But still, it was something about him and the interest we shared with each other that made a difference. We just hit it off and the relationship worked.

This mentee concluded with the following suggestion for UCAMP and the benefits he had experienced from a mentoring experience with his informal mentor:

I think for the future, if the program continues, student athletes should be matched with someone they have more things in common with. There is a need to have someone to talk to about stuff that comes up in your life. I am glad I met my informal mentor because I gained a great deal from that relationship; and still, to this day, we communicate, and I think of him as someone I can call if I need advice. He also helped me in many of my decision about my education and my career. I think this was because we could relate more to each other about our career interest and professions.

#### **Interview four.**

It took a few weeks, but this mentee and I finally made contact on June 9, 2009.

The mentee had been sick after caring for her two little ones. She was currently living in California and enjoying full-time motherhood. As we began the interview, I asked her about her experiences with UCAMP and if she enjoyed her time with her mentor. Similar to the mentee from Serbia, this mentee was more comfortable with her informal mentor:

I was lucky that she was young and able to relate to me and my needs. My official mentor and I never really hit it off. We met a couple of times, but she seemed to be very busy. But, my coach and I began to have this additional relationship, which truly became more of a mentor to mentee. So, she will be the one my answers will relate to, not the one I was officially assigned to.

Keeping in mind the above statement that this mentee would be referring to her informal mentor when she answered the subsequent interview questions, her responses to inquiries whether her mentor was compatible and if she considered her mentor a friend were as follows:

Yes, some areas were, I was more outgoing, she was more reserved. We seemed to balance each other off in that regards. We still talk on the phone today, sharing about our lives, my kids. But, as a player, we maintained player/coach relationship. We would still go to lunch, shopping, and dinner. I could tell her anything. She was always so available, yet she could kick our butts when we needed it that made us question ourselves and what we were doing or not doing. She taught me a lot about strategies of the game, playing and educated all on the game.

Speaking of the positive influence her mentor had on her personal life, she shared,

I can remember when my grandpa died, who I was very close to, I was a junior. She was there for me; she was really concerned for me. She even asked if I needed to take some time off. A couple of times, we would just go to lunch together and talk, that meant a lot to me, and I will always remember that.

The mentee told how her mentor's profession or career made a difference in their relationship:

She was my coach. There were things I couldn't do with my coach. We had to keep that relationship professional or it wouldn't have worked. A couple of times, me and others crossed that line and it caused problems, but we were able to re-group.

She explained that she had not met her mentor's spouse or family because her mentor was single and her family was out of the country.

In regard to her mentor's taking a special interest in her career goals, the mentee replied affirmatively, "Yes, she definitely, not pushing me in any direction, she knew I had potential in other areas." When asked what other things she and her mentor had in common, she explained,

All the girly stuff we did together or talked about. She was 26 years old and I was 19, almost 20, and we, both being female, could relate to a lot of stuff, also because she had played tennis herself, it all helped. She had just come out of a lot of this stuff herself; she was coming in at 26. Being 5 years older helped, she could relate, and the balance, and when to do and take time off all played an important role in our relationship and how we got along. She was really good as your coach; when she kicks your butt, you say okay and come on with it.

The mentee shared these thoughts about what it was like to be a student in UCAMP:

I can remember two other mentors who were like the team's mentor; they were truly there for all of us, but especially for the foreign students. It was great for those who were away from home and had no one. At least I got to go home; they didn't, so that was a good thing. For my experience being in and seeing how other

teammates benefited from the program. More so for the foreign students it's a really great program—for those who have no one close to go home to or family to see while in college.

#### **Interview five.**

I conducted this interview by phone because the mentee was working in the athletic department of a college in Illinois. I explained the study and sent a copy of the letter of invitation along with the consent sheet, and she agreed to the interview. After a brief conversation and establishing that she remembered me, we began our conversation.

She began by relating her satisfaction with the mentoring relationship, emphasizing the importance of having daily contact with her mentor:

My experience, overall, was positive. I think my mentor and I were a good, very good match. Her working in the athletics and that being something I wanted to go into. It was also very positive, because I got to interact with her on a day-to-day basis, and that's what I think can definitely make or break a relationship. Having the time to talk and be around was good. I strongly believe in that day-to-day interaction. She worked in a building that I spent hours and hours in, and just having the interaction consistently really helped build and grow the relationship, you know, and it established that much more trust. And so, when she and I were together, that was good, she definitely was someone I would confide in and I could easily go into the office and shut that door, I mean, it always helped.

When the mentee was asked if she thought of her mentor as a friend, she replied,

[I considered her] a friend, definitely, a friend at like, a professional friend, you could say. I mean, she's not someone I would go and have a drink with, but it's not someone I would get, you know, like salty with. It's someone that I trusted completely, and I would tell her just about anything. So, yes I would consider her that kind of friend, a professional basis I guess.

She also thought her mentor was a good role model:

Oh, she definitely was [a good role model]. And like I said, career based, she's someone, and she had a role and a job at the university that I know someday would like to be at, maybe not necessarily with the CHANCE program, because that's what she was doing at the time, the director of, at the time we were working together. She was a strong woman. I definitely look up to her and in the athletic

department because she was doing something close to what I wanted some day to be doing. I did have a positive experience, excellent alright, but nothing negative, no I was fortunate.

The mentee continued her description of the support she had received from her mentor and personal satisfaction she had experienced during her mentor-mentee relationship:

She was the Life Skills director, so she was, like she was my counselor and what she did today was revolved a lot around my life, you could say as a student athlete, cause one of her goals was to, you know, to be there for student athletes and that was the time, my living and breathing, so yah, it did have an effect on it. She was at a few of the meets. This did help in the forming of the relationship, cause you could tell, it made it more personal. It showed she cared; and if she wasn't there, she definitely looked me up or would look at the results in the paper. It just showed compassion—it shows. It makes it more a sincere relationship, more of even a parent, you know, when you are doing well, knowing when you don't do so well.

With respect to meeting her mentor's family, she remarked, "I think I briefly met an uncle in Denver, at one point. And I mean, we of course talk about family, and she definitely met my parents."

Giving an affirmative answer to the interview question regarding whether her mentor took a special interest in her career goals, the mentee stated,

Yes, my mentor did; and like I said, talking about the well-being of student athletes, her profession was kind of like making my life and my future and my outlook better. One of my mentor's duties was putting on career night and professional development sessions. And, of course, she encouraged me strongly; she encouraged me to attend all events, everything she was doing or putting on. So, she had a definite hand in on what I'm doing now and how I got to the point of realizing what I wanted to do. Sports was our main thing we shared in common.

In reference to whether having things in common, such as being the same gender as her mentor, was helpful in their relationship, she responded,

I actually relate to males just as well. I don't know if it's being in sports that made the difference or not. But maybe, actually, working in the field a little bit longer,

seeing the importance of strong females and female role models, it wasn't until I had left the university setting that I realized that being important and seeing that side of things. So maybe she being a female and not married gave her more time and availability to give to me as her mentee helped our relationship. I was lucky to have her, and I don't know what all she had to give up herself for that same thing either.

Speaking about both the importance to her relationship of her mentor's background as well as the significance of having a mentor, she explained,

I would have to say that in general, a person's background and their life, like their experiences, make them who they are. I didn't know a lot of details about my mentor's background, but I do know that it obviously made her who she was, and it made us get along that much better.

I think I had a very fortunate experience being a student athlete, especially I think, knowing that all student athletes go through issues and you have your, like, social balancing of your social life and your academic life and competing on the field. And I think I was just fortunate to have UCAMP established at the time, a time in your life that you could say when you need a focus and need someone to put pressure on you. I did, I need someone to keep me in the lines, between the lines, and the ultimate goal of graduating and getting an education. And I mean, my case. That she was great at doing, I mean definitely highs and lows, which I would say with any program you would have, maybe more of the time when I was there.

This mentee continued in great detail regarding the importance to her of having had a mentor:

I was lucky to have had my mentor, someone you could confide in and say, sometimes, maybe too much. And sometimes, you know, you'd have that closer conversation that you needed to have. And she was real; she would tell you she would give me a different outlook and perspective on things. You would know which things were unfair, and it could be an unfiltered conversations like that, with someone just to help you think through your thoughts, 'cause sometimes, I think, at that point in your life, you can be very confused. And then, there were times you don't know—there are judgment calls, and you don't know what's right and what other people are doing is right or just what. She was, I think, someone who understood and sometimes, you know, I wouldn't have to say it all, she would just understand where I've been; because, you know, we go back to her experiences as a student athlete. And there is chaos, and I think as a student, not just as a student athlete's life, but maybe more so in a student athlete's life,



coming from the benefits you could say, I would say that, you know the revenue-generated sports gets—the attention that comes with it on campuses; and it can be a culture you can obviously get caught in, and having someone know who have been there and can tell you, you know, you need to stay focused. Also, I guess, having someone to help you to stay in between the lines, to have a relationship with someone who understands where you're coming from and who redirects you at times, I think made my experiences that much better.

### **Status of Remaining Five Mentees Not Interviewed**

Interviews with the remaining five mentees (Mentees 6 through 10) could not be conducted, because these mentees were unavailable or could not be reached at the time of the interview process. Instead, the interview questions were answered by their mentors. These answers by the mentors were based on continued contact, ongoing relationships, and the personal and/or professional progress of the mentees in their field of study and career advancements since graduation. An update on their status, based primarily on information provided by their mentors, is presented below:

#### **Mentee six.**

This mentee never returned the phone call. She now lives out of the area and her mentor had not had recent contact at the time of this research study. The mentor did receive information that her mentee had graduated from college on time and had initially reported working in her related field. From time to time, the mentor was in contact with her mentee, but not much more was known about her mentee's satisfaction in UCAMP. The mentee did attend all the UCAMP functions and was a very active member of the athlete department while attending CU.

### **Mentee seven.**

Information on the status of this mentee was supplied by his mentor, because I was not actually able to speak directly with him. The mentor reported that this mentee is now married and living back East. Another reason for this mentee's unavailability is that he was on a recruiting schedule for a university. He was currently an assistant coach for a large, upper-division university. According to his mentor, this mentee seemed to credit much of his success to his time at the University of Colorado and his time working with such people as his mentor. Although he was always a self-directed individual, he shared his success and career to having people, like his mentor, in his life while in school. His progress as an athlete was demonstrated by his ability to graduate in 2004 and to have accomplished a job and career in his desired field of interest: sports and management.

Because only 10% of the total population in colleges and universities ever get a chance to go into the National Football League, getting a job at a major university as a coach has to be ranked in the same high percentage of successful goals and accomplishments. The mentor perceived that the mentee felt equally comfortable with him (the mentor), given his frequency in calls and physical visits to her home. For a young minority male who came to Colorado for an education, I can only think that he received more than he ever anticipated when it came to his learning of life issues and career positioning.

The mentee completed another unusual task. He was a football player with a child, yet still remained focused enough to not only complete his educational goals, but also leave the university with both a wealth of personal knowledge and experiences that

would help in his future as well as values he could share with other young college athletes who might find themselves in the same position. Overall, given the evidence of his career and the continued contact with his mentor, the UCAMP experience seems to have been a success for this mentee.

**Mentee eight.**

This student athlete was also not reachable, but according to her mentor, she did graduate from college and was working in the area of her major. She appeared to have been very active in her sport and in UCAMP, according to her mentor and her coach, both of whom verified her post-college activities and updates.

**Mentee nine.**

This mentee did not respond to my calls or messages; however, his mentor was able to fill in many of the pieces of his career and life. He is now an NFL player and very successful in his career. This researcher was also able to track down numerous articles and reports of his career and his involvement in the community. By all indications, he appears to be very fulfilled in his career and his life off the field. He is active in local nonprofit organizations and is a giver of his time, money, and energy to helping others, especially youth. He completed college and graduated. According to his mentor, he had often talked about how meaningful his mentor's time was to him and his career, having been in UCAMP and working with her.

**Mentee ten.**

This was the only mentee who had a number of personal problems off the field that ultimately led to his becoming ineligible to play in his sport. His conversations with

his mentor continued long after he stopped playing. He may have been too uncomfortable to be interviewed. His mentor felt he was an example of how a young student athlete without continued guidance can fall between the cracks. And even when a program such as UCAMP is made available, it may be too little and too late for some. The approach of mentoring requires a certain commitment from the mentee as well as his/her mentor, if they are to have a fair shot at being successful in a mentoring relationship.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

Based on the findings, UCAMP has proven to be a very positive and meaningful experience for the student athletes and their mentors. By the time the tenth mentor had reported his experience with the program and his student athlete, it was obvious that the program had been a success in the eyes of the mentor and mentee participants. Similar experiences and results from having worked with each other became a common theme in the interview and data collection. The bonding that developed between the mentor and mentee emerged in the study as a factor of primary importance to the success of the relationship and the ultimate satisfaction with UCAMP.

It was during the first and second year that many athletes said that their relationship with their mentor would not only go beyond their academic stay, but would follow them throughout their entire life. The findings seemed to suggest that mentoring programs can produce a genuine relationship and a bond that will grow and develop over a period of time. Many of the relationships in this study, which were formed over seven years ago, are maintained to this day, and the mentees continue to share time, personal experiences, and seek advice and guidance from their mentors. The mentors and mentees perceived their relationship to be one of mutual respect and admiration for one another. Friendship was not a goal. Because of the age difference, both the mentor and mentee reported a different kind of relationship other than friends, more like a relationship with a family member.

A program such as UCAMP goes beyond the university's efforts to provide academic support and guidance; it offers a safe place for the student athlete to seek personal insight, career goals clarification, and an objective voice in his or her life decisions. By offering such a program, the transition and the progression from being a college student to a healthy productive member of society can best be achieved and experienced.

This study was conducted with student athletes who had all participated in a Big Twelve university setting and played a major role in the outcome of the study. In general, student athletes who participate in any additional programming, beyond their basic schedule, seem to best reflect an eagerness and willingness to grow and learn as much as possible. Studies have reported mixed findings regarding the role of the mentors in such programs (Lester & Johnson, 1981). The relationship between mentor and mentee might best be described as that of coaching (Lester & Johnson, 1981; Merriam, 1983; Miller, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978). The focus of UCAMP was not to enter into the student athletes' daily world of sports, but to take more of a social and personal role in the relationship. The student-athlete participants in this study came from four different intercollegiate sports: football, men's tennis, women's tennis, and women's field and track. These student athletes seemed to share some of the same thoughts on schedules and time commitments to such areas as practice, time away from campus life, travel, and the high demand of studying and make-up work, while participating in their sports. In some cases, depending on the sport and the coaching, a student athlete might spend as much as 20 hours of practice, weight training, and meetings with special teams, and in some cases,

rehabilitation. The high demand on the student athlete might have, in some cases, played a role in the availability of time spent with his or her mentor.

Another factor was the academic demand of the student athlete. UCAMP had no requirement for academic support, because the school and athletic department supplied a full-time academic support department and staff who were always available for tutoring and support. Consequently, the greater demand was placed on the sensitivity of the mentor to the mentee's needs for career growth, and personal and career goal attainment in his or her future.

### **Effects of Having Had a UCAMP Mentor-Mentee Relationship**

This study reported the successes and trials of the participants in regard to their mentor-mentee relationship; yet, overall, the participants' stories reflected an overwhelmingly positive response to the process of having mentored a student athlete and having participated as a mentee. These two groups of participants reported having met their expectations and the goals they had set out to accomplish. In addition, they were able to meet and gain even more than they had originally anticipated. The research indicated the existence of a natural relationship between the mentor and mentee over the time they worked with one another.

Although other mentoring programs were made up of peer relationships, or students in college being mentored by their faculty members, UCAMP was the only successful mentoring program that was developed with adult mentors from the community who did not have active ties to the university, except as supporters or alumni,

and in some cases, had no relationship or ties to the school. Yet these mentors were able to give of themselves and gain a meaningful relationship with a student athlete.

The feedback and suggestions regarding ways to improve UCAMP were positive and rewarding, although each participant's input was based on his or her own individual experience. The mentors' comments ranged from more time, less restriction from the NCAA guidelines, and the desire to repeat the experience again with another student athlete. Similarly, the mentees enjoyed drawing upon the experiences and knowledge of someone who had been in their area of interest, and learning firsthand from someone who had been there or who was currently there. The training was another area that was reported to be helpful and rewarding to the mentors; the opportunity to ask questions and hear the answers from others who were learning at the same time was rewarding and meaningful to the mentoring process.

#### **Characteristics of gender, race, and age.**

Addressing the research question as to which characteristics of the student athlete and the mentor made an impact in satisfaction with the program, the findings showed that common characteristics, such as age, race, and gender, had little or no impact on satisfaction with the program for either the mentor or the mentee. However, having someone who was just a little older allowed the mentees the opportunity to listen and perhaps adhere to their mentor's life-learned lessons. Still, the consensus was that none of these characteristics made a difference during the time of the mentor-mentee relationship. This was seen in both the matching, where mentees did not request mentors based on the above characteristics, as well as the reports from both the mentors and mentees. Thus, it



can be concluded that age, race, and gender did not represent a reason or cause for successful experiences during the UCAMP mentor-mentee relationship.

**Characteristics related to a successful relationship.**

In regard to the mentees' requests for a mentor, they were each asked to state what they were looking for in having a mentor—what characteristics in a mentor they preferred. Often their request took a career focus and was motivated by their desire to have someone who would help promote their particular interests and career goal—either someone working in their related field of interest or who could share experiences and offer career guidance. An assumption of UCAMP was that having a mentor-mentee relationship might be a way of further examining and contributing to the athlete's career goals and aspirations. Several questions in the mentees' application for a mentor addressed their needs and desires as to characteristics regarding a perspective mentor. For example, the application asked such questions as, "What would you hope to gain from having a mentor? What might you expect from this experience? Do you have a preference of male or female mentor? Is age a factor or concern?"

General mentor characteristics that were found in the study to contribute to a successful mentoring relationship, which coincided with those in the literature, included a combination of some or all of the following traits:

- A desire to help student-athletes and to value them as people;
- An interest in establishing a personal relationship with a student-athlete;
- A willingness to commit time and effort to developing the relationship;
- An ability to persist in the relationship for at least two years;

- A willingness to maintain confidentiality;
- An ability to establish trust;
- An understanding of the characteristics of college-age student-athletes;
- An ability to communicate clearly and regularly;
- A sincere desire to avoid negative criticism and confrontation;
- An ability to provide constructive feedback;
- Excellent listening skills. (Boyer-Stephens & Patterson as cited in Dixon, 2000, p. 20)

In regard to mentee characteristics in this study that seemed to make a difference in the mentoring relationship, these also were consistent with successful student-athlete mentees described by Murphy and Owens (as cited in Dixon, 2000). Accordingly, the mentees in this study demonstrated several common characteristics, including a combination of some or all of the following traits:

- An ability to clearly articulate career needs;
- A willingness to assume responsibility for one's own professional growth and development;
- The capacity to set goals and make decisions to achieve them;
- A willingness to spend time reflecting on the achievement of goals;
- An ability to be receptive to constructive feedback. (p. 20)

As mentioned earlier, these characteristics seemed to outweigh the more traditional traits, such as age, gender, and race.

***Bonding: An essential component.***

The findings suggested that bonding was a necessary element in the success of the mentor-mentee relationship. In particular, the student athletes stressed the fact that just having someone to talk to and someone who was caring and honest was meaningful and fulfilling in their mentorship experience. Moreover, the relationship between the mentee and the mentor's family was another important factor that contributed to the bonding process and rapport-building with the mentee. For the majority of mentors, their success in developing and maintaining a strong bond with their mentee fulfilled their goal of giving back to the university and/or the student, which was very important to them and constituted the reason for their initial involvement in UCAMP. The majority of mentees felt their mentoring relationship was good, but in two cases, the mentees felt more connected to an informal mentor in the program, rather than their assigned mentor. Nevertheless, the bonding component remained the essential reason for the success of these informal mentor-mentee relationships.

Whereas social ties and/or connection—bonding—did not represent the primary goal of being involved in UCAMP, both groups stressed the importance of having developed a bond with one another through time spent doing fun and non-structured activities. Organized school activities, such as the fall picnic and meetings sponsored for career planning were all additional social functions to add to the mentor's time spent at games, meeting for lunch, eating with the student athlete in the dining hall, or having him or her over for dinner at the mentor's home. With the restrictions placed on the mentor-mentee relationship by the NCAA, the mentor-mentee relationships were built on more

natural activities, such as face-to-face meetings, lunch at each's own personal expense, and the avoidance of outside distractions. For example, whereas in other settings the mentors could buy their mentees' lunch or spend money on them, in the UCAMP model, this was prohibited due to NCAA guidelines and rule. The mentors stated that this type of restriction was somewhat hard at first, but they could see why this was needed later in the relationship.

In essence, the primary reason for the success of the mentor-mentee relationship and, in turn, the success of UCAMP was the successful nature of the bonding process and its impact on not only the mentee but also the mentor. The importance of this bonding in the success of the relationship and satisfaction with UCAMP brings to mind the benefits of the therapeutic alliance, extensively researched in the counseling psychology literature, which speaks to the quality of the partnership between the counselor and the client. Applicable to the mentor-mentee relationship, "this partnership incorporates client preferences and goals....[It] is an alliance based on *listening* to the client without being judgmental or giving unwarranted advice. Some would say that the therapeutic alliance *is* the treatment program" ("The Therapeutic Alliance," n.d., p. 1). Similarly, in this study, such alliance or successful bonding of the mentor and mentee was found to make the critical difference in regard to the overall success of the relationship in meeting the goals and expectations of both mentor and mentee as well as satisfaction with UCAMP.

### **Benefits of the Mentor-Mentee Relationship**

In the study, the mentors knew they were entering on a career path with their mentee, but they had no idea how much their general lifestyle and behaviors would also

be key to the relationship and an impact on the student athlete's life. The time spent weekly and monthly was largely based on the quality of their time together, not the length of time. This was affirmed by the mentees and the mentors' reports of what they did together, and when and how they communicated with one another. Also, given the high demand of the student athletes' schedules and academic requirements, any time was considered good and positive in the mentor-mentee relationship.

Although there were no major differences in experience for the mentor and mentee, each reported his or her expectations as being met and fulfilled while participating in the program. Mentees reported that by having someone who was not associated with their day-to-day academic life helped them to debrief and let go of emotions and pent-up feelings. These results suggest that a mentoring relationship with an outside mentor, from the community or related areas of interest for the mentee, would have a better outcome than that of a peer or teaching faculty member who was assigned as mentor.

Thus, the natural flow of the study looked at the relationship between two subjects who had expectations, but were willing to fulfill the needs of the other. The findings suggest that having a mentor alleviates some of the social and emotional stresses of being away from home, learning to cope and deal with the demands of college life, and balancing a sports agenda. Moreover, comparing the answers and the findings of the mentor to the mentee helped to support the hypothesis that having a mentor will increase the success of the student athlete upon graduation as he or she enters into the career field.

Moreover, it was only after graduating that the student athletes remarked how much they had respected the opinions and suggestions of their mentors.

### **Coordinating and Training as Key Components of a Successful Program**

This study opened up a new way of looking at coordinating and training in mentoring programs. One of the study's most important findings was that the relationship between the coordinator, and the mentor and the mentee was instrumental in making the program successful. Based on the interview data, communication between the UCAMP coordinator and the participants was a critical component of the UCAMP experience for both the student athlete and the adult mentor. Having someone who was a link between the university and the participants was a daily need in preventing issues from arising and in handling sometimes the most minimal of concerns. No problem was too small to be addressed and handled in a caring professional manner. The participants all agreed the coordinator played a major role in nurturing the athletes and the mentors. It took a watchful eye to ensure safety, program integrity, and continuity throughout the operation of the program. Therefore, forming and fostering a genuine and trusting relationship between the program and the mentor and mentee was essential.

The training was the other area of appreciation, voiced more by the mentors than by the mentees. This was, perhaps, because there was more emphasis placed on the mentors than the mentees. Social functions were viewed as a great opportunity for the mentees and the mentors to meet and make that first connection in a relaxed and comfortable setting. The follow-up session was noted as a time to come together and hear from other mentors and mentees who had been in the program for a while. This gave new

mentors a chance to ask questions and hear how the program worked from people who had already been through it.

### **Implications**

The implications from this research study are based on the relationship between student athletes and their adult mentors. The relationship formed between the mentor and his/her mentee provided an environment of support, trust, and an achievement of personal and career goals. The interaction between mentee and mentor had little or no impact on academic learning or services. This was mainly because the athletic department provided academic tutoring and educational support services. The success of the mentoring relationship was based upon compatibility, training needs, expectations, and the natural events shared between the two. These events included birthdays, sharing a meal, and visiting the mentors home and family. The mentees also spoke of how important it was—how much it meant to them—to have someone in the crowd cheering them on.

The results of this study suggest that having a separate mentor outweighed having someone, such as a peer or member of the teaching faculty. The social support aspect of the relationship seemed to be most rewarding and gratifying for the student athletes; some enjoyed simply having someone to talk to. Others looked for the opportunity to develop their future career goal and direction. The findings showed that the adult mentors seemed to have fulfilled their goals of mentoring a student athlete and had learned and experienced new challenges and gains from giving time to a young male or female athlete. The student athletes also seemed to have had an equally rewarding experience from participating in the program. They really had no idea of the outcome or, in fact,

what was going to come out of working with someone who represented their desired career. Even though both the mentor and the mentee were prepared for the goals of the program, they still seemed to come away with more than they had bargained for.

Although the literature contains numerous examples of youth mentoring in the corporate, education, and legal areas (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Scandura, 1992), and even in the medical profession (Bright, Duefield, & Stone, 1998), there is still little that has been successfully documented with regards to student athletes at the collegial level. One of the most frequently reported issues was that student athletes undergo increased levels of stress and demands from their schedule, as they are adjusting to college life, while trying to meet the demands of being an athlete with practices, meetings, and a travel schedule that makes studying and attending classes a challenge, to say the least. According to this study's findings, having a mentor seemed to provide some alternatives for mastering such demands and increased expectations.

Another factor to consider was that although the mentors were there to assist as advisors, the school provided an excellent academic department for student athletes, where their academic needs were always met: Tutoring was provided, as were study sessions, resources, career options, and the availability of on- and off-campus resources when needed. By not having to worry about the academic demands, the mentor-mentee relationship had a more natural development and more social opportunities. Indirectly, the NCAA rules and guidelines helped to support a relationship that was also based upon a mutual experience of time, cooperation, relationship building, and non-monetary issues. (As discussed earlier, the NCAA does not allow any use of money with a student athlete.)



In reviewing many other types of mentoring relationships, there was always the issue of taking the mentee out to dinner, buying items, presents for birthday, holidays, and so on. The NCAA rules helped to eliminate the distraction of exchanging gifts. The study participants reported the importance of just having someone to talk to or being able to visit with—someone who was not interested in the mentee purely because he or she was a star player or a member of the university sports team. The student athletes and the mentors reported the importance of the friendship and bond they had developed. One mentee said that just knowing that his mentor was at his practice or meeting him after a game meant the world to him. Likewise, the mentor reported similar feelings of fulfillment from being there for the mentee in the absence of family members. The mentors knew they were not there to substitute for or replace family, but in a short time, in most cases, they became an extension of the player's family support system.

### **Suggestions for a Mentoring Model for Student Athletes**

The results of this research study suggest a number of conclusions regarding the effects of mentoring student athletes who are in a university-based program. These conclusions have led to recommendations for mentoring programs provided to university or college student athletes, as well as recommendations for further research on mentoring, relationship building, and program components for best practices in the areas of mentoring relationships. Application of the information provided by both the mentors and the mentees in this study can add to the success and promotion of future mentoring programs for student athletes. The following is a list of suggestions for developing such a program, based on this study's findings:

- Coordinator - The mentoring program should have a coordinator who has the following characteristics: energy and enthusiasm, authority to access resources to promote the program. The role of the coordinator is important, because this person is both a salesperson and a support to the student athlete who is searching and not always aware of what it is he and she is looking for.
- Voluntary participation - The program is voluntary, and no student athlete should be pressured to participate in a mentoring program, because the success is built on trust and open communication between the mentor and the mentee. Both should have a willingness to be there from the start.
- An assistant coordinator or outside consultant - This is someone who has training and/or background in some kind of human service, psychology, or related area, such as counseling. This is helpful in the selection process of mentors and the matching of the mentor to the mentee. Whereas psychological testing is not a requirement, being a good judge of character is a must, because the pairing of the mentor to the mentee is so important to the engaging process and the success of the program.
- Mentor recruitment - Recruitment is important for both the coordinator and the consultant or assistant. Each will have an equal role in interviewing and reviewing the background of the mentor in relation to the mentee's request. Some mentors will have a career match while others will bring personality traits to the table. Because the mentor is someone from the community and not a member of the teaching faculty, he or she will more likely be a natural mentor who can provide the time, interest, and natural skills the mentee is searching for.
- Value of a mentoring program - Having a mentoring program adds to the university/college in its recruitment efforts and shows it to be sensitive to the needs of incoming student athletes. It also reassures parents who are sending their sons and daughters to a new setting and, in some cases, a foreign country. The institution's administration must buy into it if a campus-run mentoring program is to be successful.
- Use of outside mentors - Although most of the research focused a great deal on peer mentoring and faculty matching, this model of using outside mentors, who may or may not be alumni or supporters of the university/college, can add to the public relations efforts of any institution.
- Matching of the mentor to the mentee – Matching should take place after the mentor has been interviewed, a background check has been completed, and a face-to-face interview has been conducted. The match is based on

the request of the mentee, who will be looking for someone who has a background or interest similar to that of the student athlete. Whereas other programs differ, this model requires that the mentor be at least 25 years of age. Mentors should have no more than two mentees at one time. They may, however, be asked to speak to someone else's mentee about career advice or guidance. The mentor and mentee are asked to give a 2-year commitment to the program, unless one or both should feel the need to terminate their relationship sooner.

- First meeting – This usually takes place at the fall social, and for UCAMP, this was the athletic department picnic and cook out. The coordinator would usually introduce the mentor to his or her mentee, and the two would set up some means of getting together throughout the upcoming semester. The expectation is that the mentor would try to communicate at least 2 to 4 times a month, depending on the schedule of the student athlete.
- Training – A number of useful agenda items to help the mentor and mentee establish their relationship include role playing, listening and communication skills, drug/alcohol concerns, relationship issues, family troubles, academic problems, and so on.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The conclusions and implications seem to suggest a number of recommendations for the structure and operation of mentoring programs within a larger university system or college setting, as indicated above. In addition, the study opens doors to several possibilities for additional research opportunities that would best assist the higher educational system in developing more effective programs not only for student athletes, but for mainstream college students as well. Included in these observations is future research related to the foreign students who are not only living away from home for the first time, but are confronted with learning both new customs, and in some cases, a new language. They are, also, competing with team mates who are bargaining for a starting position on the same athletic team or sport.

Even though stress goes with the turf of being a student athlete, academic achievement is a goal that is shared by all. However, it is a different kind of competition for the student athlete. Instead of competing with another classmate, it is competing with the demands of scheduling time to study, completing research papers, going to the library, and working on projects that require time and attendance. And yet, most are able to meet these demands and carry a strong GPA while participating in sports. In this regard, future researchers might look at comparing student athletes who had a mentor with those who did not. They might also analyze differences in GPAs as a result of mentor involvement.

The mentee's perception of these relationships would be exceptionally valuable for future replication. Although UCAMP was conducted with mentors from the outside rather than academic instructors, an investigation comparing the two might be of great value. For example, What difference comes from a mentee's having a mentor who is not connected in any way to the student's academic grading, versus having someone who might, at some point, be the student's instructor? UCAMP was the only program researched that had used outside mentors. The feedback of the mentees would also demonstrate the types of relationships they enjoyed and the student's growth due to that relationship.

The current study closely resembles a case study in the sense that, according to Creswell (2003), "the researcher explores in depth a program...an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The case(s) is bounded by time and activity" (p. 15). Similarly, this study provided in-depth stories and reports of the mentors and mentees' experiences

regarding their relationship during a time-limited period. Moreover, one can see how individualized the participants' experiences were, and how the outcome was best described in a story telling format.

Regarding future research, the case study could be used as a methodological approach to replicate this study and to provide more in-depth information about the mentor-mentee relationship and the process regarding how that relationship was created. In concluding data collection and writing the summaries of each interview, this researcher can now see how using a case study format for future research on this topic would lead to a more detailed case-by-case summary of the individual lessons learned in a qualitative format. Furthermore, according to Stake (as referred to in Creswell, 1998), being able to open and close with vignettes would help to draw the readers of the study to a more insightful view of experiences and lessons learned. In future research on the topic of interest here, the case study approach would also allow the researcher the use of storytelling, while providing a historical account of events that took place from beginning to end of the study period. Moreover, the researcher would be able to identify key issues of the study, in addition to its purpose and method, so as to help the reader see just how the study came into being, as well as the background of both the researcher and the participants. In regard to future research, these are just a few of many ways in which the use of a case study would provide a more individualized, in-depth look at each chosen participant's experience and role as a mentor or mentee in a model such as UCAMP (Stake as referred to in Creswell, 1998).

This study has opened the door for further interest and investigation on the impact of student athletes' successes when they are mentored and have help, beyond that offered by the universities and colleges. Another valuable aspect of the study would be to expand the investigation beyond the scope of the mentee's career and personal gains. Moreover, future research could be conducted with students who are not athletes, but are also learning to cope and adjust to being away from home and are facing the stresses and challenges of being a new university/college student. A future study of assessing the needs and support gaps related to the student athlete would add light to the future success of mentoring programs for student athletes. A final suggestion is that future studies on mentoring incorporate relevant aspects of the extensive therapeutic alliance literature.

### **Personal Reflections**

The findings from this study have been both fact finding and revealing. This researcher discovered that one can only benefit from the stories and personal testimonies of the mentees and mentors in the study, whether the relationships were successful or not. So much was gained throughout the process of listening and recording data. Far more information was destroyed, and much more knowledge was gained than anticipated. The fact is, it seemed to take on a life of its own. Although courses in research have indicated that the findings will broaden one's knowledge and respect of objective and practical findings, the information far exceeded this researcher's wildest imagination.

Because there have been no prior studies conducted on this program, and most of the work from other programs reflected subject bias and favored the designer's goals, this present research study has proven to be objective and beneficial to all involved. After

having spoken at all of the training sessions for UCAMP from 2000 to 2005, I have testimonies and reports on what parts of the program were helpful and what areas still needed improvement and further development. I also thought back to my own experience as a student athlete—my athletic career, playing basketball for a small New England art college. It would have been so helpful to have had an outside connection to the career world I was about to enter. Instead, I was fortunate to have an unofficial support system that did assist and guide me in making some preliminary plans and setting some goals for the future.

I now know it was the positive experiences of having adult role models around me who were caring, interested in me, and willing to go that extra mile to help me become a career-minded individual and stay focused on making my dreams a reality. From college to my working career, I have always found myself surrounded by people I respect and who cared enough to give of themselves in an effort to make a difference in my life, both then and in the future. I am now in the position to mentor, serve as a positive role model, and influence many young adults who are seeking the same kind of guidance and career instruction that I received. It has taken this study, along with a review of the history of mentoring to show just where and how often we are mentored in our society and how important it is to realize how others influence us in our personal and career roles.

As a researcher, I have gained insight from this study by talking and listening to the stories and experiences of the mentors and the mentees. The things I thought would make the greatest difference and impact were not always the most rewarding. Instead, it was the personal gains and the time spent with all of the participants in this study that

seemed to bring the relationships to a higher and more workable relationship between mentor and mentee. Creswell (1998) pointed out that there is a phenomenon that is often recorded during a study like this, which will reveal many hidden points and issues that were not originally obvious before the researcher exposed them. As I listened to the participants of this study, this was made clearer to me. The students seemed to gain a greater appreciation for their adult mentors, and the adult mentors discovered insights and strengths in their young student athletes that they would never have known before.

This study has helped to pull together all of my formal studying of research design and practice: from the in-class or formal study to the process of the IRB application and guidelines to the actual experience of sitting down with the individuals, hearing and recording their personal experiences of having been a mentor and mentee. I would encourage those who are seeking to learn more about a subject, such as mentoring or the life of adults and young adults' time spent together, to use this model and to have their own experiences and growth from being involved in the process of fact-finding and searching for the data to back up what they set out to prove.

I am hesitant to say that a more immediate response to collecting the data would have proven more beneficial, because, in fact, I think that by delaying the interview process, I was able to receive more honest and real-life experiences and stories that added to the overall mentoring experience. Finally working with a committee of professionals that held me to a strict set of guidelines and protocol made this an even more real and surreal experience for me as the researcher. I am leaving with more than just a completed



research model for replication, but an experience that has raised many more questions and opened more areas of exploration for future study and interest.

If this work is an inspiration to others who seek to learn and grow, not only in research but in the areas of mentoring relationships, then I will consider this research undertaking a success. Already, I have experienced other areas of application for this model that will lend a new voice to the role of mentoring. Finally, if the University of Colorado is interested in having the results of a study on UCAMP—a program they funded for some six years—this might be useful and beneficial to future efforts to support not only student athletes, but other types of incoming and existing university students as they fulfill their academic and career success.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

#### **Strengths.**

This program was evaluated from an outsider's view in the sense that UCAMP was no longer in operation when I decided to study its impact on the student athletes who had participated in the program. Although I had been the previous, contracted consultant whose contributions were limited to the design and monitoring of the program, I considered my later role of researcher as representing an independent source. Based on a review of the literature, in most of the programs of mentoring around the country, few were studied from the outside. Rather, most of them were studied from within: a current, paid study conducted by members of the mentoring staff. This obviously opened the door for testing biases. More specifically, from an outsider's view, I was able to avoid being influenced by any internal sources or active members of the program, because at the time

this research study was conducted, the program was no longer in operation, as mentioned above, due to a lack of funding and manpower for carrying UCAMP forward.

A further strength of this study—and perhaps the most important one—is that the findings have provided valuable information, which can be used both to make recommendations for future research. It can also be utilized in designing other mentoring programs.

### **Limitations.**

Although a total of 20 mentors and mentees responded to the invitation to be interviewed as participants, 5 of the 10 mentees were unavailable at the time of the actual interviews. Nevertheless, the researcher was able, with the help of their mentors, to track these mentees down for feedback on the interview questions. Each mentor was able to give honest feedback as to his or her mentee's past experiences, goals achieved, and satisfaction and/or concerns with UCAMP.

If this research study had been conducted closer to the graduation dates of the mentees, perhaps more participants might have been available for the interviews; however, the richness of the study would have been lost. There was something special that happened during the time period of 2000 to 2005 for both the mentors and the mentees. It was as if they both had to have time away from the program and the university to put into practice the lessons learned, both in their academic setting and in their personal and career journey. Also, although there were times I thought more participants would have increased the knowledge and program and personal gains, I now see it would have only been a repeat of data already collected. According to Creswell

(1998), when the information begins to repeat itself, the researcher knows he or she has gathered enough information and events from the subject.

A further limitation of the study is that the results are not generalizable to other mentors, mentees, or mentoring programs and in other settings. This is a common limitation of the qualitative approach because of the sampling technique and the small number of participants. However, in the case of this study, a small sample number was conducive to the purpose of the research: an in-depth view of the lived experiences of the mentors and mentees, which allowed for rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 1998).

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## **Appendix A**

### **QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### **The Impact of Mentorship Program on the Academic and Personal Development of College Athletes**

##### **Questions for the Mentee.**

The purpose of this interview is to gather information about the relationship and the process that took place during the mentor and mentee's time working together. Part A is a list of questions for the mentor, in answering these questions the researcher will be able to use both a qualitative and quantitative approach to assessing the relation and determining whether the mentor had an equally fulfilling experience as his/ her mentee that they were assigned. Your answers will be kept in the strictest of confidence, and you are welcome to see the conclusion of the study and its findings.

##### **Research Question # 1**

What was the nature of the relationship between the mentor and the student athlete?

1. What was your experience like while you were I the UCAMP program? Did you enjoy your time with your mentor?
2. Did you feel like you and your mentor were compatible?
3. Did you consider your mentor a friend? If yes give an example of how your relationship might be considered a friendship.
4. Was your mentor someone who you felt like you could trust?
5. Did you feel comfortable discussing personal issues with your mentor?
6. Was your mentor a good role model for you? Please explain your answer.
7. Did you feel like you had a positive experience with your mentor? What made it positive?

Additional Comments:

##### **Research Question # 2**

Which characteristics of the student athletes and mentor made an impact on the

student's satisfaction with the program?

8. Did your profession or careers make a difference in your relationship? If yes how and why?
9. Did your mentor attend your games or your practices? If yes did this help in forming your relationship, and how?
10. Did you meet your mentor's spouse or family? If yes did you enjoy this, or do you feel it had little or no impact on your relationship? Explain.
11. Did your mentor take a special interest in your career goals?
12. Did your mentor have other things in common with you? Give an example? And how did this make an impact on your relationship?
13. What was the age\_\_\_ gender\_\_ marital status of your mentor\_ and do you think that had an impact on your relationship? If yes, why?

Additional Comments:

### **Research Question #3**

What improvements can be made in the program?

14. Did your mentor have an athletic background? If yes, do you feel like that made a difference? And if no did it matter?
15. Did the athletic background of your mentor make a difference in how you got along?
16. Do you think the type of sport you played made a difference in your relationship?
17. Tell me about your experiences as a student athlete in UCAMP?
18. Would you recommend others to have the same experience you did, being in UCAMP? Yes, explain and if no, share why?
19. Did you consider your mentor someone who you could trust their advice? Did you consider your mentor someone who you could talk to? If yes why?

20. As a student athlete did you follow the advice of your mentor?
21. Was your mentor someone you felt connected to?
22. As a student athlete did you follow his/ her advice? If yes please explain?
23. What was your overall experience while in UCAMP like? Please share.

Additional Comments

### **Questions for the Mentor**

The purpose of this interview is to gather information about the relationship and the process that took place during the mentor and mentee's time working together. Part A is a list of questions for the mentor, in answering these questions the researcher will be able to use both a qualitative and quantitative approach to assessing the relation and determining whether the mentor had an equally fulfilling experience as his/ her mentee that they were assigned. Your answers will be kept in the strictest of confidence, and you are welcome to see the conclusion of the study and its findings.

#### **Research Question #1**

What was the nature of the relationship between Mentor and Mentee?

1. What was your reason for wanting to become a mentor?
2. Why did you choose UCAMP – program?
3. How did you hear about the program?
4. What was your highest educational degree? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Considering the experience you had with UCAMP, how you would rate it, please explain.
6. Did you have any experience as an athlete? If so please give the area or sports you participated in, and where?
7. Do you feel having had prior experience as an athlete made a difference in being involved with your mentee?

Additional Comments:

**Research Question #2**

Which characteristics of the student athlete and the mentor made an impact in the satisfaction with the program?

8. How has your life been impacted by being a mentor?
9. Do you feel you were able to provide support to your mentee? If so please give an example.
10. What did you gain from being a mentor in the UCAMP – program?
11. Did your background help to prepare you for becoming a mentor? Explain.
12. Please explain your experience being a mentor in the UCCMP program.
13. Did you consider your mentee a friend during your relationship? If yes explain how or in what ways made your relationship one of friendship?

Additional Comments:

**Research Question #3**

What improvements can be made in the program?

14. Did you feel like you were an aid in the steps toward your mentee's career? If yes give an example.
15. Did you feel like you could admire your student Athlete? Why?
16. Did you feel comfortable in discussing personal matters with your mentee? Why and how?
17. What sport did your athlete play and how familiar were you with their sport? Do you think that helped in forming your relationship?
18. How did you show interest in your student athlete? Please explain.
19. Did your student athlete invite you to his/her practices or games? And did you attend any of them? Please elaborate on this question.



20. How often did you see your mentee? Weekly, monthly? Occasionally? Please be specific?
21. Currently the formal program UCAMP has been discontinued, do you think it should be re-instated / and if so do you have any suggestions as to how and what it should look like?
22. Do you feel you student athlete's age made a difference in how you got along? Explain.
23. While the UCAMP program was never design to be a replacement for family, did you share tie with you mentee and your family? Did you ever bring them to you home? Or invite them to meet or be apart of your family? Explain.
24. Would you consider mentoring someone again? If yes, why?
25. Did this experience help you to want to be a part of another mentoring experience? Do you still have any continued contact wit your mentee?
26. Do you have any additional questions for me? (The researcher)?

Additional Comments:

## **Appendix B**

### **RECRUITMENT LETTER**

January 24, 2009

As a doctoral student at the University Of Denver Morgridge College Of Education, my dissertation topic is focusing on gaining a better understanding of the impact on academic growth and career advancement. This was achieved by having had a mentor for student athletes attending the University of Colorado from 2000-2005 and who participated in the UCAMP program. In order to complete my study, I am in need of qualified participants. I am inviting you to be a participant to express your thoughts, views, perceptions, and suggestions related to your experiences having been a mentor/mentee in the UCAMP program.

It is my goal to include mentors and mentees who were active in the program and working together to determine the satisfaction with their experiences. Participants will be both male and female, also of all ethnic backgrounds. The interviews will be audio taped, lasting 30-45 minutes, and you will be asked to sign an informed Consent form. Participant's names will be kept confidential. The interviews will be conducted at a mutually agreed upon location and time and scheduled during March and April of 2009.

Analysis of my findings will be presented in the completed dissertation. I am also willing to discuss my findings with individual participants as requested.

Please give serious consideration to being a part of this study. Your involvement and your feedback are very important to me. You may contact me as follows:

Larry Curry  
11772 Larkspur Dr.  
Parker Colorado 80134  
(303) 755-9954

I look forward to seeing you soon.

## Appendix C

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Impact of a Mentorship Program on the Academic and Personal Development of College Athletes

You are invited to participate in a study that will examine the effectiveness of the University of Colorado Athletic Mentorship program in which you were engaged from 2000 to 2005. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the dissertation requirements for a Ph.D. from the University Of Denver Morgridge College Of Education. The study is conducted by Larry Curry. Results will be used in my dissertation and will be provided to complete my requirements for my dissertation in order to fulfill the doctoral degree requirements. Larry Curry can be reached at (303) 755-9954 and emailed at [lc Curry7641@aol.com](mailto:lc Curry7641@aol.com). This project is supervised by the dissertation chairs, Dr. Marty Tombari, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303) 837-8466, [mtombari@du.edu](mailto:mtombari@du.edu) and Dr. Kathy Green, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303)871-2490, [kgreen@du.edu](mailto:kgreen@du.edu).

Participation in this study should take about 30-60 minutes of your time, all interviews will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy. Tapes from all recordings will be stored under lock and key in my office and will be destroyed after seven years maximum. Participation will involve responding to 26 questions about your experience participating in the UCAMP program. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Dr. Susan Sadler, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign below if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called The Impact of a Mentorship Program on the Academic and personal Development of College Athletes. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I agree to be audio taped.

☐ I do not agree to be audio taped.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:

## Appendix D

### MENTOR-MENTEE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEWS

#### Mentors' Responses

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Do you feel that UCAMP did a good job of pairing mentor and mentee?

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Mentor 1	Yes
Mentor 2	Yes
Mentor 3	Yes
Mentor 4	Yes
Mentor 5	Yes
Mentor 6	Yes
Mentor 7	Yes
Mentor 8	Yes
Mentor 9	Yes
Mentor 10	Yes

---

How was your relationship with your mentee?

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Mentor 1	Very open, comfortable, and always willing to talk
Mentor 2	Felt like it was all good
Mentor 3	Really good
Mentor 4	Great
Mentor 5	Good, closer to some than others
Mentor 6	Good relationship
Mentor 7	It was good
Mentor 8	she was easy to work with
Mentor 9	I felt like it was a good match
Mentor 10	Different for each

---

What was the quality of the relationship?

---

Mentor 1	Very genuine, encouraging, trusting
Mentor 2	Good, rated highly, I enjoyed the participation
Mentor 3	High
Mentor 4	High
Mentor 5	High
Mentor 6	High
Mentor 7	Very good
Mentor 8	A good relationship, we talked and met almost daily
Mentor 9	Seemed to be good, he came by my office and we talked a lot
Mentor 10	Good, not seen as much as I would have liked

---

How much time did you spend together during the month?

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Mentor 1	Weekly and at least 2 to 4 hours
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Mentor 2	Once a week or every other
Mentor 3	Weekly
Mentor 4	Daily, as much as 20 hours a week
Mentor 5	Weekly at least for an hour
Mentor 6	18-20 hrs a week, I was also her coach
Mentor 7	Sometimes we might see each other daily
Mentor 8	Daily
Mentor 9	Weekly, sometimes daily
Mentor 10	Weekly, sometimes monthly

---

What are your comments about the program and UCAMP?

---

Mentor 1	Felt the coordination and the training made the difference
Mentor 2	Overall a good program; it was a good contact to the real world
Mentor 3	It was great that why we participated
Mentor 4	I thought all student athletes needed a mentor
Mentor 5	It was a great opportunity to give and share
Mentor 6	It was great, like a family
Mentor 7	I believe it in given my role as mentor and a former athlete
Mentor 8	It was my job, yes, but I also enjoyed it
Mentor 9	Needs support from administration
Mentor 10	Very good program, I enjoyed participating in it highly

---

Do you think the training matched the mentor?

---

Mentor 1	Yes, matched and trained
Mentor 2	Yes, attended all trainings
Mentor 3	Yes, training and the interview process
Mentor 4	Good match and fit
Mentor 5	Yes, and the right people helped it was a great benefit
Mentor 6	Yes, it was well done
Mentor 7	Yes, this was very important
Mentor 8	Yes, the training and the interviewing all matched
Mentor 9	It was great, and the follow-up
Mentor 10	Training and support made the experience worthwhile

---

As the mentor, do you feel your expectations were met?

---

Mentor 1	Expectations met and exceeded
Mentor 2	Yes; I wanted to give back having been there myself
Mentor 3	Yes and the greatest thing that happen to the athlete dept.
Mentor 4	Yes; I got out of it what I wanted to give
Mentor 5	Yes, highly
Mentor 6	Yes, a chance to give back
Mentor 7	Yes, very much so
Mentor 8	Yes, I wanted to give back and share my experiences
Mentor 9	Yes, I felt like I was able to help

---

Mentor 10	Yes, my job is international work, I personally wanted to give back
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### **Mentee's Responses**

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Do you feel that UCAMP did a good job of pairing mentor and mentee?

---

Mentee 1	Yes
Mentee 2	Yes
Mentee 3	Yes
Mentee 4	Yes
Mentee 5	No
Mentee 6	Yes
Mentee 7	Yes
Mentee 8	Yes
Mentee 9	Yes, (according to mentor's report)
Mentee 10	Yes, (according to mentor's report)

---

How was your relationship with your mentor?

---

Mentee 1	Good, with on-going relationship and family involvement
Mentee 2	Very good, on-going relationship
Mentee 3	Good
Mentee 4	Great match
Mentee 5	Fair
Mentee 6	Good
Mentee 7	Very positive we were a good match
Mentee 8	She was career-based, good
Mentee 9	Good we still communicate (per mentor's response)
Mentee 10	Good, given the contact still between us

---

What was the quality of the relationship?

---

Mentee 1	Again, the continued relationship and involvement
Mentee 2	High
Mentee 3	It was good like being a parent
Mentee 4	A good relationship, I could talk to her about anything
Mentee 5	I got along with my unofficial mentor
Mentee 6	Positive, she was really concerned for me
Mentee 7	It was very good, she gave me feedback and we had honesty
Mentee 8	I could call her anytime
Mentee 9	Good, we both are H.S and college alum's
Mentee 10	Reported by mentor: very good

---

How much time did you spend together during the month?

---

Mentee 1	Weekly, and at least 2 to 4 hours; still maintain contact
Mentee 2	Currently bi-weekly and definitely monthly

---

Mentee 3	We saw each other weekly and she called daily sometimes
Mentee 4	Daily and more
Mentee 5	More like monthly
Mentee 6	A lot since she was also my coach, daily
Mentee 7	about daily since she was my coach
Mentee 8	Sometimes daily, I worked out of her office
Mentee 9	Mentor reported daily contact
Mentee 10	Weekly – according to Mentor

---

What are your comments about the program and UCAMP?

---

Mentee 1	Yes, distance didn't stop us from getting together
Mentee 2	Good, I'm sad others didn't have what I did
Mentee 3	It was great, sorry to see it stop
Mentee 4	She was a great match for me, taught me a lot about life and stuff
Mentee 5	We just never hit it off
Mentee 6	Great, especially if you were away from home,
Mentee 7	Good program for me and many who needed someone to talk to
Mentee 8	Highly rated, it was a great match, it was a perfect match for me
Mentee 9	Ok, seemed to enjoy the social aspects of it (per mentor response)
Mentee 10	Ok, according to mentor's report

---

Do you think the training matched the mentor?

---

Mentee 1	Yes, match and trained
Mentee 2	Yes, a very good match
Mentee 3	The training was good and the interviewing
Mentee 4	Good match
Mentee 5	We probably weren't a good match
Mentee 6	Yes because she to was a tennis player
Mentee 7	Yes from what I could tell
Mentee 8	Great
Mentee 9	Seemed to be a good fit according to mentor's report
Mentee 10	Mentor reports yes

---

As the mentee, do you feel your expectations were met?

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Mentee 1	Working in field and graduated, received degree
Mentee 2	Yes, wife and mother, but did work in field and plan to return
Mentee 3	Yes , and some
Mentee 4	Yes, personal and career
Mentee 5	I got my expectations met with my unofficial mentor
Mentee 6	Yes, in playing sports, education and my personal life
Mentee 7	Yes in more ways than I could have imagined
Mentee 8	Yes, academic and for my career, which I'm working in currently
Mentee 9	Apparently, graduated and working in field of study
Mentee 10	Didn't graduate

*Note:* Mentees 6 through 10 were not interviewed in person. Instead the questions were answered by their mentors. These answers by the mentors were based on continued contact, ongoing relationships, and the personal and/or professional progress of the mentees in their field of study and career advancements made since graduation.