

Measuring the Effect of Intercollegiate Athletic Success on Private Giving and Enrollment

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Abstract : Increased popularity and visibility of college athletics have contributed to an environment in which institutions - most of which lack self-sufficient athletics department budgets- reallocate monies from the university general fund and seek additional funding sources to keep up with increasing levels of spending on athletics. Given the prevalence of debates on student debt levels, coach salaries, and athlete pay, empirical evidence on whether this spending yields an expected return on investment is necessary. This study considered the relationship between the independent variable of the winning percentage of the men's basketball team at a mid-major university, moderated by NCAA tournament appearance, number of applicants, number of enrollments, average SAT score of students, and donor giving to the university general and athletic funds. The results indicate that, other than a small correlation between athletic success and number of applicants, only when NCAA tournament appearance is used as a moderating variable, these purported benefits are not supported, suggesting the need for a reevaluation of athletic department spending and perceptions on tangible and intangible benefits for universities.

Keywords : athletic success, enrollment, NCAA, private giving

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