

Navajo Female Participation in High School Volleyball and its
Correlation/Impact on Postsecondary Success

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify, describe, and analyze Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and its affects on success in higher education. The research was an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, namely volleyball, has within the Diné culture; and how the impact of those role models who provided leadership through athletic instruction had on the lives of Navajo female student athletes in their postsecondary experiences.

The qualitative research was an opportunity to recognize that the interviewing process is synonymous and conducive to oral traditions told by Indigenous people. The population consisted of 11 Navajo female student athletes who were alumna of Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona, located on the Navajo Nation and who had participated in four years of Mustang volleyball from 2000-2010, either currently attending or graduated from a postsecondary institution, and although not a set criterion, played collegiate volleyball.

Results indicated that participation in high school volleyball provided the necessary support and overarching influence that increased self-esteem or self-efficacy that led toward college enrollment, maintaining retention, and long-term academic success. Diné teachings of Aszdáá Nádleehé (Changing Woman) through the age old practice of the Kinaaldá ceremony for young Navajo pubescent girls marking their transition into womanhood, the practice of K'ée, and Sa'ah naaghái bi'keeh hózhóón were all prominent Diné principles that resonated

with the Navajo female student athletes. The leadership skills that the Navajo female student athletes acquired occurred based on the modification and adaptation of two cultures of two given societies: mainstream non-Native, Euro-centric society, and Diné society. The lifestyle, cultural beliefs, and teachings define the identity of female student athletes and the essence of their being.

To all the female stronghold of my life,
who always exhibited insurmountable
strength, tenacity, and wisdom.
I am always humbled by your example.

To Nalí Irene W. Yellowhair, Nalí Sadie Wilson, and Masaní Jeanette Parrish,
who were the foundations of my identity as a Diné woman.
I will always strive to fit your mold.

To Shimá Gladys Yellowhair and Shizhe'é Thomas J. Yellowhair,
who always expected nothing short of success
I am a fulfillment of your prayers.

To my beautiful children:
Dekoda Marie, Natani Sage, Autumn Kree, and Nabahi Diné,
who were always my reasons to strive
You will always be the beneficiaries
of my inexhaustible hard work
and unconditional love.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The success rates for American Indians in education are bleak. In 1994, the *American Indian Digest* (Russell, 1994) reported that 52% of Native Americans graduate from high school, 17% attend college, 4% graduate from college, and 2% attend graduate school. Joseph Pluchinota (1996) stated that “less than 0.8 percent of all college students are Native American” (p. C6-7). Numbers reported from universities in Arizona more than a decade later do not show a substantial increase. College Results Online (2009) disaggregated five-year graduation rates from Arizona’s three universities and reported that only 26.2% of Native American males and 36.6% of Native American females graduated from the University of Arizona; 32.1% of Native Americans males and 40.4% of Native American females graduated from Arizona State University; and 18.5% of Native American males and 18.2% of Native American females graduated from Northern Arizona University. Those percentages, when compared to their Latino, Asian and White counterparts, are the lowest.

In the United States Census (2000), it was reported that 9,379 Navajos earned a bachelor’s degree or higher within a selected population group of 135,908 Navajos. Of the 9,379, 6.9% were 25 years old or older, 14.25% of those females, and 13.3% male. More recent data from the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance’s [ONNSFA] *2010 Annual Report* (2010) shows trends with Navajos in postsecondary education. The first was an increase in college enrollment from 2006 to 2010 based on Navajos who applied for

assistance. A reported 11,208 applied for the Navajo Nation Scholarship; whereas, in 2006, only 6,714 students applied (Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance, p. 1). When 2010 data were disaggregated by gender, however, it showed that 65% of Navajo women and 35% of Navajo men were present in postsecondary institutions, further suggesting that Navajo women were more willing to pursue a college education (Ibid, pg. 2).

The retention of American Indians in education has been the focus for many tribes, the basis for acts of legislation and aim of school improvement in many public and private schools. Also a focus has been the role of extracurricular activities for youth in grade schools, which has long been viewed as having a positive correlation on academics and overall well-being of the student. However, little is known about the role of extracurricular activities, such as participation in sports, on female high school students' college-going aspirations and success. This study sought to examine the role of high school sports on aspirations for Native American females.

Personal Background of a Diné Woman Athlete and Coach

From the time that I was born, I knew that I was going to leave home to attend school, but returning home was not a question. It was defined and set during the time of my birth 35 years ago. My father, Thomas J. Yellowhair, has iteratively stated how at the time of birth for any infant, the father takes the placenta in which the child was housed during the gestation period to a specific place according to gender. For a female, it is said that the placenta is either returned to earth beneath a juniper tree or hung from its branches. For the male,

the placenta is placed beneath a pine tree or hung from its branches. Returning the placenta back to either tree ensures a healthy life and guarantees that the child will live with strength to surmount all of life's difficulties or obstacles. My father tells me that he returned the placenta of my birth to Mother Earth beneath a young juniper tree atop Dził Yéagéén or Black Mesa, Arizona. Where my placenta was placed has also defined where *home* is for me. The placement has defined the way in which I conduct myself toward fellow human beings and to Diné in general; it has also defined the underlying basis of my role as an educator and a mentor. My thinking, my understanding of my place in the tangible world, is defined by immemorial teachings of the Diné.

Like so many female athletes at Monument Valley (MV) High School within the Navajo Nation, I, too, attributed much of my success to athletics and former coaches. After graduating from MV in 1995, I knew that I was going to college. I knew that I wanted to continue on my athletic path, and I knew that I was going to give back to the sport and my community. Despite these truths, I learned that the road to success was a lot harder than I ever imagined. With teachings acquired through athletics, my home, and my culture, I eventually earned my bachelor's degree from Arizona State University. An opportunity to return to Kayenta presented itself so I moved my family back home soon after graduating.

I started teaching at Monument Valley High School in 2000 as an English teacher and became assistant coach for the softball varsity team. In that first year of teaching, I knew I answered to my true calling as a mentor to Diné youth.

Because the Diné culture is a matrilineal, female-based society, females are taught that their role in maintaining and sustaining harmony within the home is crucial and their role is best described as being the epicenter of wellbeing, or Hozhó. Therefore, mentoring youth, especially adolescent females, is a powerful role to fulfill. Females learn quite early that they are nurturers, and are bounded by roles outlined by our clan system as mother, sister, daughter, or granddaughter.

An assistant coaching position for volleyball was available during my second year of teaching so I applied. I soon realized that coaching volleyball was different than softball because leadership as a Diné woman was more prevalent; here, I embraced this role with my athletes by advising, inspiring, and consoling them about the matters of the game, or of life. My father introduced concepts of Diné leadership early in my childhood; and as the first born child of the family, he always stressed the importance of leading my siblings through example. I have come to understand that leadership in Diné culture highlights two types of leadership: Hózhóóji k'ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on peace) and Naayéé'ee'ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on protection)—teachings I hope will pass on to my athletes and students.

All my life, I grew up in an area that exemplifies the essence of beauty. My people, the Diné, refer to this place as Tódinéshzhee', when translated into English, literally means the *place with fingered waters*. But most are familiar with John and Louisa Wetherill's given name, Kayenta; as it now commonly referred to. The Wetherills, despite the presence of Diné, are considered the founders of Kayenta; however, the presence of Diné predates the arrival of the Wetherills.

Kayenta is located on the Navajo Nation in the northeastern part of Arizona and is typically described as a rural, American Indian community, home to over 5,000 residents, mostly Diné.

The Navajo Nation, undoubtedly the largest of all 278 native reservations, sprawls across three states in the southwestern United States (New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah) with 25, 351 square miles, making this homeland slightly larger than the state of West Virginia. The U.S. Census (2000) reported 269,202 estimated Navajos in the United States; of that total population, Navajo Nation Office of Vital Statistics reported in 2001 that 168,000 Navajo people resided within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation. Members of the nation are relatively young because the U.S. Census (2000) marks 24 as the median age for Navajos. Navajo society once existed as a “distinct cultural, national, and racial/ethnic group long before the establishment of the federal government of the surrounding states” (Wilkins, 2003, p. 6). Today it runs rampant with modern conveniences.

Job opportunities in and around Kayenta are quite limited, but those employed work for Kayenta Mine, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, the Navajo Nation Shopping Center, Kayenta Unified School District, the Indian Health Services, the Navajo Nation, the Kayenta Township, and an assortment of small local businesses. According to the U.S. Census (2000), 34% of children in Navajo County live below the poverty level. In Kayenta, however, that rate is higher, but reliable statistics for rural native communities are difficult to obtain. The closure of Peabody’s Black Mesa coal mine on December 31, 2005, resulted in further economic hardship for the community and schools.

In Kayenta, residents have access to colleges and universities from nearby towns by way of distance learning coursework. Diné College, Northland Pioneer College, and Northern Arizona University have made satellite campuses available. Recently, Northeast Arizona Technological Institute of Vocational Education (N.A.T.I.V.E.) opened a state-of-the-art campus. These educational opportunities allow community members to continue their education without having to leave home. Oftentimes, the lack of economic opportunities in the community prompts its children, upon graduation from high school, to leave their families and move away to continue their education and to find employment.

Kayenta is the first Native community in the United States to become an incorporated township. Kayenta Township, having achieved status as the first municipally structured government on the Navajo Nation, encouraged township officials and elected members of the local chapter of the Navajo Nation tribal government to share local governance.

According to *Kayenta's Early Days* (1991), the foundation for Monument Valley High School was laid years ago in 1940. At that time, the public school boasted 26 students and was located in a one-room school house near the only trading post at the time. From those roots, Kayenta Unified School District #27 evolved and now comprises of three schools: Kayenta Elementary School (KES), grades K through 5 with an enrollment of 696 students; Kayenta Middle School (KMS), grades 6 through 8 with an enrollment of 595 students; and Monument Valley High School (MVHS), grades 9 through 12 with an enrollment of 755 students. Total enrollment for all equals 2,046 students.

The 755 students at MVHS are drawn from the immediate community and areas surrounding Kayenta. On a typical day, the district transports half of its student body; some students waking as early as five in the morning and traveling as far as 60 miles one way to come to school. Breakfast and lunch are served daily, and over 80% of the children are eligible for free or reduced meals. Of the 755 enrolled students, fewer than ten are non-native.

The halls of Monument Valley High School celebrate the history of athletic success throughout the school's 50 years of existence. Acrylic painted murals record "State Championships" for basketball, volleyball, and cross country; whereas, girls' and boys' basketball each have a recorded three championships; cross country garnering 11 championships; and volleyball, undoubtedly the most respected sport in the high school today, has marked program success with seven championships and five other championship appearances where the team fell short as being "Runners-Up."

Volleyball at Monument Valley High School is one of the most reputable and respected programs in the state of Arizona. Lucinda Nash, former head coach of the MVHS Mustangs, says the number of female student athletes she has coached since her career commenced in 1974 numbers well into the thousands. The program, according to Nash, was not always successful. She remembers a time when MVHS was not invited to the Farmington Invitational because tournament sponsors felt that MVHS was not competent enough. Former Head Coach Lucinda Nash explained that to most, the Farmington Invitational "looks like just another volleyball tournament, but to people who know the history,

understand the [meaning quite more]. In the seventies, Farmington High School would not invite the Mustangs saying they wanted to have a high level of competition. That implied that [the Mustangs] could not play well enough. Since [MVHS] started winning it, it became very important to continue [the tradition]...” (Lucinda Nash, personal communication, 2/28/12).

This experience and others like it prompted Nash to strengthen her program, to prove naysayers wrong, and to win. Nash’s desire to win, dedication to the sport, ability to lead, and love of volleyball all birthed solidity and success with her volleyball program. The model for success is a path that female student athletes apply to their own lives, therefore, mimicking the same success Nash executes in Mustang volleyball.

Purpose of the Study

The tradition of athletic success at Monument Valley High School has been celebrated by the Kayenta community, proving to be the source of pride for thousands of alumnus and the community for the past 50 years. This span of time has allowed MVHS to produce many student athletes, but tracking their postsecondary endeavors has not been done, especially for the female student athletes seeking higher education.

The purpose of the research was to identify, describe, and analyze Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and the impact it has had on their success in higher education. The research was an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, Diné culture, and coaching/mentoring of

student athletes, has on the lives of Navajo female student athletes in their postsecondary success.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. Did participation in high school volleyball provide necessary support and increased self-esteem or self-efficacy that contributed to college enrollment, retention, and long-term academic success of Navajo females?
2. What Diné cultural practices, beliefs, and values contributed to Navajo female athletes' postsecondary success?
3. What leadership skills did Navajo female student athletes acquire during participation in volleyball?
4. What were the long-term effects of Navajo females' participation in high school sports (volleyball)?

Significance of the Study

There have been a number of studies in research that analyze the impact athletics has in the lives of adolescents. But research sensitive to minority populations, such as Navajo female student athletes is quite limited. Traci Nemechek's (1997) *Navajo Hoops & Higher Learning: A Study of Female High School Basketball Players and Their Post-Secondary Academic Success* is a relatively recent analysis of the impact sports has on the lives of young Navajo female athletes, but it focuses on the sport of basketball only. Nemechek formulated two main hypotheses: female Navajo participation in high school basketball does contribute to future postsecondary academic success and that the

basketball players' support system played a significant role in the student athletes' future academic or athletic success. Because her focus is on the sport of basketball only, the correlation of other sports and success in postsecondary education is relatively unknown.

This study allowed for elaboration on Nemechek's research with current data in another sport. The study also explored how the role of athletics shaped female student athletes' leadership abilities and paved the way for postsecondary academic success, how the role of coaches and other mentors helped mold female student athlete's characters and identified key elements of Diné cultural beliefs, teachings, and values that contributed to overall student athlete academic success in postsecondary education.

Ultimately, educators will gain from this in-depth study of the experiences of female student athletes and their participation in volleyball and the success it encourages in higher education, as a way to recruit and maintain retention of American Indians in higher education.

Delimitations

1. Only those female student athletes who were alumna of Monument Valley High School from 2000 through 2010, participated in Mustang volleyball, graduated from college or were close to graduating, were included in this study.

2. The location of the study was in Kayenta, Arizona, located on the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona.

3. The limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size. One high school within one school district was selected for the study. The source of the

information used to obtain this sample may not be complete. This may affect the generalizability of the study to other high schools and districts.

Assumptions

An assumption of this study was that former volleyball players could remember ten or twelve years in the past about their experiences when a member of the Mustang volleyball team while in high school. Another assumption was that the participants of this study answered all of the interview questions openly and honestly.

Definitions of Common Terms

Asdzáá Nádleehé (Changing Woman): is one of the most important of Navajo Diyin Dine'e and is a significant figure in many ceremonies, especially the Kinaalda, where her acts are recounted (Markstrom & Iborra, 2003, p. 399).

Colonialism: is the control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory, or people (colonialism. (Dictionary.com, 2012)

Decolonization: A term used by Indigenous people to describe a reversal of colonization, a "process by which colonies become independent of the colonizing country" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2012).

Diné: The Navajos call themselves Diné, which means *the People* (Bungarten, 181, p. 150). However, Wilson Aronilth (1992) stated that the full name is supposed to be Naa baa hii Diné which means "a warrior and a hunter" (p. 77).

Diyin Dine'e: A term Navajos use to refer to their deities; it means *Holy People*.

Hozhó: is a complex cultural, philosophical, and spiritual concept that orients the Navajo universe (Dowell, 2009, p. 132). *Hozhó* expresses “the intellectual notion of order, the emotional state of happiness, the physical state of health, the moral condition of good, and the aesthetic dimension of harmony” (Beverly Singer, *Hozhó of Native Women. Women Make Movies*, 1997).

Hózhóóji k’ehgo Nanitin: On the female side is the *hozhooji* which is the “beauty way,” the nurturing, the compassion, the loving side of a person's personality and teachings associated with this concept (Cheryl Singer, personal communication, 2/22/2012).

Indian Country; Used to describe the “278 Indian reservations or other lands inhabited” by over 2 million individuals identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (Wilkins, 2003, p. 53).

K’é: Refer to forms of social harmony and order that are based on affection action (Witherspoon, 1977, p. 88).

Kinaaldá: “a ceremony that recognizes and celebrates the reproductive and regenerative powers of women, is based on the traditional [narratives] of Changing Woman, who grew from womanhood in four days or years (versions vary), experienced her first menses, and had a ceremony performed in honor of her new status. The ritual emphasizes behavior and actions that will mold the young woman into the ideal Navajo woman and mother. Culminating on the third day as the woman’s matrilineal kin, notably women, mix a huge corn cake batter and then place it into a pit in the ground for overnight baking. The Kinaaldá ends

with the performance of the Blessingway on the final night. Guests are fed and presented with portions of the corn cake” (Denetdale, 2001, p. 8).

Linguicide: is an intentional annihilation of a language (Knowledgerush, 2009).

Naayéé’EEK’ehgo Nanitin: On the male side is the aggressive side of leading and sometimes includes the teachings of the “don't do” taboos (Cheryl Singer, personal communication, 2/22/2012).

Reservation: a tract of public land set apart for a special purpose, as for the use of an Indian tribe (Dictionary.com, 2012) Retrieved February 27, 2012, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/reservation>.

Resiliency: is ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like. (Dictionary.com website, 2012).

Sa’ah naaghaái bik’eh hózhóón: is comprised of two Navajo words: *sa’ah naaghaái* and *bik’eh hózhóón*. *Sa’ah naaghaái* means “our body, flesh, blood and soul” and *bik’eh hózhóón* means “our mind, spirit, voice and feelings” (Aronilth, 1991, p. 47). *Sa’ah naaghaái bik’eh hózhóón* are the “roots and foundation of the teaching of our philosophy, lifestyle, our learning, values, beliefs, and language” (p. 47).

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and appendixes in the following manner. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature dealing with evolving trends in the practices and procedures used to evaluate female high school athletes’ success in higher education. Chapter 3

delineates the research design and methodology of the study. The instrument used to gather the data, the procedures followed, and determination of the sample selected for study is described. An analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The study concludes with the references and appendices.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is separated into five categories: Diné Women, Leadership, Academic Achievement, Effects of Athletics and Extracurricular Activities, and Retention in Higher Education. The chapter begins with Diné women because of the esteemed position women hold in Diné societies.

Diné Women

The discussion regarding Indian women, or Diné women, must occur with the understanding that an Indigenous paradigm exists amongst American Indian scholars. This paradigm consists of concepts central to the meaning of “Indigenusness, sovereignty, colonization, and decolonization.” Jennifer Nez Denetdale, whilst critically analyzing western perspectives of Diné history, promotes a method of research that “reclaims Diné intellectual tradition, revalues Diné philosophy and advocates for Diné sovereignty” (Lee, 2010, p. 33). Denetdale and other prominent Diné female scholars feel the necessity for transformation of Diné thinking, which allows them to detach from the colonized thinking that has forced American Indians, especially Diné, to devalue their philosophy and history.

Linda T. Smith (1991) clarifies that decolonization

does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (p. 34)

It is imperative that Indian scholars “rewrite and re-right their position” so that this transformation can occur (Smith, 1991, p. 39). Transformative scholarship

acknowledges and respects the status of American Indian women within their societies. Diné women, prior to colonization, were highly regarded as leaders within their communities. This changed when Diné women, such as Juanita, wife of Navajo warrior, Chief Manuelito, were subject to patrilineal and patrilocal mindsets. Denetdale (2007) shared that the creation narratives describe the integral role of women in Diné society:

Importantly, creation narratives feature prominent female deities who provide the foundation from which Navajo women continue to define their traditional roles as grandmothers, mothers, and daughters. These maternal roles are positions of power for Navajo women. Also, the fact that Juanita and her daughters are remembered as grandmothers who were benevolent, generous, and loving is a testament to the centrality that *Changing Woman* holds for the Diné. Our stories of our grandmothers and grandfathers serve to renew our faith in the strength of the old ways. (p. 157)

Denetdale takes back the word *stories* and inserts *narratives* as a way to transform terminology used to explain and describe Diné values and culture. This form of empowerment is necessary to fully grasp and understand the creation narratives of the Diné. It is especially important to do so in order to combat the perpetuation of colonization with renditions such as Sheila Moon's (1984) *Changing Woman and Her Sisters*. She exploits the narratives of the Diné in a way that asserts that the role of the Diné is fitting for all women in today's society. She writes:

These Native American myths of the Feminine goddesses are exceedingly powerful and important for American women. (And men also) American Women, of all the world's women, probably play more roles and are more culturally variegated than most others. Therefore the many facets that each of the myths expresses, and the complexity of interrelationships delineated, are unusual and unusually helpful for the contemporary woman called to play many roles without becoming fragmented. (p. 1)

Moon, through colonial discourse, affirms her identity and role as a woman with the narratives of the Diné. Further narratives explain that the Diné introduced the concept of K'é (kinship) as early as birth. We become familiar with relations so that we know who family is and understand that it is through family that we are cared for, loved, and regarded with the utmost respect. I am of the Bitter Water clan, or the Tódích'ii'níí; and born to the Tlááshchi'í, Palm Streaked with Red clan; my maternal grandparents are of the Naakai Dine'é clan, or Those That Roam Seeking for Dwelling clan; and finally, my paternal grandparents are of the To'áhaní, Near The Water clan.

This introduction delineates my being, the essence of my identity amongst the Diné. It is a practice of reverence for the kinship system, K'é. It is imperative to understand that K'é guides, teaches, and orients the Diné. It acquaints one with who their blood relations are and “classifies the world into categories such that proper relationships with everyone can be defined” (Lewton & Bydone, 2000, p. 480). It leaves the world void of strangers and surrounds them with family. Gary Witherspoon (1977) shared, “It is impossible to have order and harmony among unrelated entities. *K'é* terms refer to forms of social harmony and order that are based in affection action” (p. 88). Most importantly, K'é illuminates Diné society as matrilineal and matrilocally based.

The female, the lifegiver, is held in high regard amongst the Diné. Jennifer Nez Denetdale (2001) shared, “Navajo women are central forces in their families and communities. They enjoy a measure of autonomy and authority even though, beginning with the reservation era in 1868, economic and political institutions

have favored Navajo men's participation" (p. 1). This stronghold of the Diné, or the understanding of Navajo female's authority, is traced back to time immemorial, with narratives about Diné inception.

The status of Diné women is tied to Asdzáá nádleehé, or Changing Woman, an ancestral figure or deity, fundamental in Diné cosmology. Narratives passed on to generations through elders have survived thus far. In understanding the sanctity of Changing Woman, Diné have understood that the main clan leaders, Dawn Clan, Blue Twilight Clan, Yellow Evening Clan, and Folding Darkness clan were worried that their existence was in jeopardy because the Fourth World was running rampant with monsters. To protect their existence, and to protect the main clan leaders, Changing Woman was born. Atop Ch'ool'i'i, present day Gobernador Knob in New Mexico, a mist (cloud) formed. The presence of this mist was seen for four days by Diyin Dine'e, the Holy People. On the fourth morning, Dawn Spirit came upon a baby girl in a spirit of Mist, Moisture, Clouds and Rainbow. He bestowed her upon First Man and First Woman as her foster parents.

Ruth Roessel (1981) in *Women in Navajo Society* explains that Changing Woman is the most sacred of all deities because of her "regenerative and reproductive powers." Quoting Marion E. Gridley, Roessel wrote,

The Navajos believed that there were many Holy People, or spirit beings, and that Changing Woman was the most sacred of all. She helped to create the people of the earth, who were the ancestors of the Navajos. . . . Changing Woman taught the people how to live in harmony with all things—the elements, the mountains, the plants, the animals. (p. 17).

Cultural presence, according to David Wilkins (2003), is a “well-defined territory, a common language, a shared heritage of customs and beliefs, and a sense of ideological distinction” (p. 6) that separates them from all other Indigenous nations. The Navajo people have displayed cultural presence since time immemorial, despite anthropological dissection of their existence.

According to Marie Allison (1982), *culture* is a term which has been used particularly by anthropologists to describe the actions and meanings of man in society. She says that the term refers to two aspects of society; the first being objective things such as art, music, language, dress, games, morals, language, knowledge, values, and beliefs; the second referring to the design or deep structure which guides behavior in society. The importance of Allison’s study is that it confirms that patterns for behavior are established within the perimeters of a people and that these patterns, over time, can be modified because of the dynamic and changing nature of culture. The Navajo people have had athletics incorporated as part of their culture long before the introduction of the boarding school system. The nature of athletics for Diné has been reshaped over the past 50 years, even going so far as to replace cultural practices that marked or highlighted athleticism, endurance, and stamina for Diné youth.

One such cultural teaching of the Diné is to greet the new day, Morning Twilight, with a run to the east. Wilson Aronilth (1991) explained that the foundation of a young woman’s role in life is based on Hozhó, or beauty. He wrote:

Everything she does is finished in beauty. This is a young woman's responsibility. Her activities are to develop courage, mental strength, hope and love, to live beautifully. A young woman was taught to become aware of her values during the process of her growth. She is told one becomes aware of her immediate discipline, education, teachings, beliefs, culture, her mind and thoughts, by rising early in the morning and running towards the East direction to greet and meet the spirit of Early Dawn. This is where the roots and foundation of good thoughts, thinking and materialistic values are found. (p. 165)

The practice of greeting the early dawn has been replaced by activities, such as the sport of volleyball, and other sporting events, to serve as a platform for Navajo youth to display their athleticism, mark their stamina and endurance, and serve as a rite of passage. It has even gone so far as to unite the Diné community. Reyhner and Eder (2004) wrote that "athletics . . . served a valuable purpose in bringing together dispersed Navajo camps and providing recreation for young Navajos" (p. 270). Ingalls, Hammond, Dupoux, and Baeza (2006) shared that research literature supports the notion that "cultural context has a significant impact on educational outcomes for minority students" (p. 16). Their research further affirms that cultural teachings, such as greeting the Early Dawn in a run to the East, still thrive with families in the 21st century.

When young Diné females cross the threshold of womanhood, or menarche, they must participate in a Kinaaldá, a beauty way ceremony for puberty. Traditional healer Wilson Aronilth (1991) explained the origin of this revered practice:

As a baby, Changing Woman (Asdzáá Nádleehé) grew up around Mt. Huerfano. She was raised by First Man and First Woman, her foster parents. They furnished her with mist, moisture, plant pollen, the pure freshness of clouds, sunrays and the most powerful elements which are: air, water, fire, and pollens. By being nourished with these sacred elements, she grew up in twelve days and became one of the most beloved

of all Holy People (Diyin Dine'e). On the twelfth day, she became a mature young woman; this means she reached her womanhood. When she reached this puberty stage, all the Holy People were notified to perform a Puberty Ceremony (Kinaaldá). The first Kinaaldá was held at the home of First Man and First Woman around Mt. Huerfano. The Dawn Spirit, Talking God (Haashch'éélti'i) performed this ceremony. This is where the beginning of the Blessingway Ceremony (Hózhóójí) began. (p. 94)

Navajo females hear this narrative of Changing Woman throughout their lifetime; they are reminded of her strength, her embodiment of the female role and think only to match her fortitude.

Leadership

It is practice in the Diné tradition to receive a warrior name. A Navajo name identifies us and reminds us that our shadow is a constant companion of ours, serving as a conscience, a protector if you will. According to elders, four stories explain how a Navajo name is given. But I only use the explanation my father gave me upon the receipt of my Navajo name. My name was given to me so that the Diyin Dine'e (Holy People) would recognize me as their child during ceremonies and whenever a prayer was offered on my behalf. Wilson Aronith (1991) once shared the narrative about Monster Slayer's experience with a Giant, or with evil. The teaching with our Navajo names is that it should not be shared because we do not know when Evil might approach us. Mr. Aronith shared:

Our forefathers used to say, "Don't tell your Indian name to anyone except a medicine man. Because if you do, your ears will dry and fall off." This is talking about the Indian name, not the European, Anglo, Spanish, or other foreign names we use today to identify ourselves. The reason we are not to tell or call out our Indian name is because of what one Holy Person did. This was Monster Slayer. When he was going to kill the Great Giant that walked about killing human beings, Monster Slayer came near where this Great Giant lived. The Giant smelled him and said, "Who goes there? I smell a human being." So Monster Slayer answered the Great Giant by giving his name. At the same time, his ears dried up and fell off. Then an

Air Spirit told him what to do. After that, the Spirit told him never to give out his name to anyone, because you never know it might be your enemy or an evil one. This means his name saved him from the Great Giant. Later he destroyed the Great Giant. (p. 58)

The Navajo name is a way the Holy People (or Nature) recognize their children; the Navajo name is a reminder of how I will achieve good health, happiness on the journey of life. It is also protection from danger, harm, or other negative occurrences that may be encountered.

It is important to understand that Navajo names denote leadership status amongst the Diné. Names are given based on personality traits or on gender, or sometimes it might happen after they have performed an honorable deed. There are names that represent peace and some that represent warfare. My father awarded me with Áhozho' Yildeezbáá, which means “She who seeks blessings of happiness and beauty on a warrior’s path.” Close knit relations of mine often comment that my presence perpetuates happiness and that my laughter is contagious. This name represents peace, and it is a reminder that my mind, thoughts, behavior, and attitudes should exude happiness and affability; therefore, a constant reminder of the leadership role that I must fulfill on a day-to-day basis.

I have come to understand that leadership in Diné culture highlights two types of leadership: Hózhóoji k’ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on peace) and Naayéé’eeek’ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on protection). These concepts of leadership in Diné society acknowledge the fact that everyone possesses leadership qualities. It is a matter of how these attributes will be unearthed from certain individuals and how they will be applied.

As an intermediary, it is important to recognize leadership in both western and Navajo worlds are being viewed through vastly different perspectives, or through different mindsets. Warner and Grint (2006) discussed that a mutual incomprehension exists when a cross-cultural analysis of American Indian and western approaches to leadership is done. Leadership of American Indians displaces the “imperialist foundations of the American way of leadership” (p. 226). The first difference lies in the positional difference on leadership. They explained that western leadership holds that “leaders are those who hold leadership positions”; whereas, American Indian leadership is “open to anyone who has the skill to persuade others to do something they would not have otherwise done” (p. 226). American Indian leadership is explored through a western cultural mindset, which prevents one from truly understanding the differences. Warner and Grint (2006) explained that the western approach to leadership is “identified with an individual leader whose traits propel him (and sometimes her) to positions of authority over an organization or community” (p. 226). American Indians, on the other hand, “tend to be more related to the requirements of the community, to be much more dispersed throughout that community, and to be rooted in situations rather than individuals” (p. 226). An interesting point brought up by this study was that the concept of leadership is analyzed from one perspective only, through Euro-centric values and assumptions.

To this day, leadership indicators identified from other research studies such as aspiration, academic performance, character traits, and future planning are

applied to Indigenous leadership. This practice of research perpetuates the Euro-centric mindset and should be revisited and reexamined so that an Indigenous paradigm exists, forcing a redirection of research on American Indian leadership.

The acquisition of leadership status for Diné youth has transformed to fit bicultural lifestyles of today. Diné youth, females in particular, participate in extracurricular activities that encourage their leadership capabilities. Research abound confirms that participation in these activities affects their leadership capacity. Dubosz and Beaty (1999) studied the relationship between athletic participation and high school students' leadership ability. In comparison to non-athletes, findings from the Dubosz and Beaty study proved that athletes “demonstrated significantly greater leadership ability” and that “female athletes showed greater leadership ability than did male athletes” (p. 1).

In the discussion of leadership, it is important to understand that many definitions are offered. Some may be used within the context of the Euro-centric, western perspective of leadership. Leadership from one source is defined as “the capacity to guide others in the achievement of a common goal. Decisiveness, determination, interpersonal and organizational aptitude, loyalty, self-efficacy, and self-discipline are considered some of the attributes of effective leaders” (Dubosz & Beaty, 1999, p. 2). Dubosz and Beaty affirmed that “there is a dearth of empirical research examining the extent to which athletics plays a role in the development of leadership abilities” (p. 2). This makes for an almost non-existence of research for American Indian female athletes and leadership. Another

makes it a point of clarity to show what leadership may look like, how it may be carried out, and its relationship to efficacy of coaching staff.

Sullivan and Kent (2003) examined the efficacy of intercollegiate coaches and their leadership style. They concentrate on personal attributes and its influence on behavior. Specifically, they say that self-efficacy is one of the most influential in predicting phenomena in athletics. Self-efficacy refers to the “situation-specific belief that one can act to successfully produce a given outcome” and that it “pertains to contextualized judgments of personal capabilities” (Sullivan & Kent, 2003, p. 1). Some behaviors influenced by self-efficacy include success, effort, persistence, and thought patterns like goal setting and attributions. Lastly, their study concluded that

motivation and character building efficacy should predict the motivational factors of leadership (e.g. social support and positive feedback); strategy efficacy should predict decision making and task factors of leadership (e.g. democratic and autocratic behavior, training and instruction); and finally, teaching efficacy should predict the training and instruction. (p. 1)

Leadership was a central focus of the research study, but it is also tied inextricably to academic achievement.

Academic Achievement

Literature on academic achievement and American Indians focuses primarily on the dismal success rates in the realms of higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) compared completion rates for bachelor's degrees of minority students at four-year institutions. Data concludes that Asian/Pacific Islander students had the highest six-year graduation rate, followed by White, Hispanic, Black, and

American Indian/Alaska Native students. NCES also pointed out that 40% of American Indians and Alaska Natives earned a bachelor's degree within six years, placing them at the lowest percentage when compared to Asian/Pacific Islanders (67%), Whites (60%), Hispanics (48%), and Blacks (42%). This pattern held for Asians/Pacific Islanders, Whites, and Hispanics at each institution type; whereas, Blacks and American Indians/Alaska Natives consistently had the lowest graduation rates of the five racial/ethnic groups.

Even with the abysmal numbers collected by NCES, hope lingers with the number of AI graduates increasing each year. For those that do succeed, the question then becomes what prompts a person, a member of a minority group, an athlete, to succeed. Joan L. Duda (1983) discussed the nature of motivation, or succeeding and failing, as “a complex and multi-dimensional construct” usually dictated by two types of achievement orientations (p. 63). The first, ego-involvement, are judgments of goal attainment that are based on “social comparison.” That is, an athlete has more or less of a desirable characteristic, behavior, or outcome than significant others. The second, task involvement, goal attainment is “mastery-based.” Duda's results suggest that sports for females, particularly Mexican-American females, are a prominent experience. More importantly, that their success is mastery based, meaning that it is focused on the group and related to social group membership. Like Mexican-American females, Navajo female athletes also emphasize that success in sports and the classroom is a reflection of effort (i.e., hard work) and that failure is a reflection of lack of ability in the student.

Thornton, Collins, and Daugherty (2006) analyzed resiliency as another factor on achievement of American Indian high school students. Resiliency is defined as ‘the capacity to bounce back or recover from a disappointment, obstacle, or setback’ (p. 5). Resiliency is often an attribute recognized in Indian country because American Indian communities are burdened with atrocious rates of unemployment, malnutrition, alcoholism, and even suicide. American Indians graduating with a high school diploma or with degrees from colleges and universities are minimal and insignificant. Those that are successful possess four important personality characteristics: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose and future (p. 6).

Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jeffries, and Baysden (2000) studied the factors affecting student retention, but mainly focusing on how resiliency encouraged American Indian women persistence in college. They used four major areas of resiliency: (a) caring adult role model or mentor who helped develop a sense of purpose; (b) impact of schools and teachers, particularly those schools and teachers who focus on the whole child; (c) strong sense of spirituality and strong moral purpose in life; and (d) low family stress (p. 388). Results from the study show that the integration of Indian traditional ways and family values encompassing all parts of one’s educational life (i.e., four areas of resiliency) are very important.

In *Counting Coup*, Larry Colton (2000) chronicled the life of Sharon LaForge, a gifted basketball player from the Crow Indian Reservation. Colton explained LaForge

has made it all the way . . . in spite of overwhelming odds . . . surviv[ing] an absent father, diseased mother, jealous husband, tribal corruption, her own weaknesses, a too often brutal culture . . . 150 years of repression and government ineptitude. (p. 412)

Resiliency, an apparent attribute of LaForge and other American Indian women, accounts for their success.

Thornton, Collins, and Daugherty (2006) offered traditional culture or enculturation as another factor that lends itself to academic achievement, or success, amongst American Indians (p. 7). Schools must be sensitive to the culture of American Indians, namely their traditions, knowledge, and language. Doing so fosters lifelong learning environments and produces meaningful educational experiences. Instead of understanding the “links between resiliency, enculturation, learning styles, effective teaching, and achievement,” educational institutions typically perpetuate culture, values, and norms of the dominate society. Dropouts of American Indians, typically twice the rate of the national average, are indicative of the adversarial position native students are in. It is suggested that schools should “promote peer interactions, improve extracurricular programs, encourage collaborative relationships between students and staff, and develop strong linkages with community groups” (p. 6).

Academic achievement of American Indians can be affected by athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Effects of Athletics/Extracurricular Activities

A tenet of Navajo teaching is to maintain a key concept of Navajo philosophy called Sa’ah naaghaái bik’eh hózhóón. It is comprised of two parts: sa’a naaghaái (soul, body, flesh) and bik’eh hózhóón (mind and spirit). When

joined, it is best translated by Navajo poet Rex Lee Jim as “May I be everlasting” and “beautiful living.” Denetdale (2007) stated the phrase “encapsulates a declaration to live a healthy and wealthy lifestyle and the practice of applying its teachings to life” (p. 10). It is a phrase with many meanings on multiple levels. It is with this teaching, this cultural principle, brought to the Diné by the Holy People that “has been the foundation for renewal and survival into the twenty-first century” (p. 10). In order for this concept to thrive amongst the Diné, it has been adapted to fit the workings of Navajo biculturalism today. Navajo female athletes are a prime example of adhering to this ancestral adage.

Studies support the relationship between the participation of sports and an athlete’s overall well-being. It can be said that current research also supports that Navajo female athletes have modified elements of sports to adhere to the Navajo culture and value system. Greenleaf, Boyer, and Petrie (2009) shared that female athletes, post high school, reported “feeling strong, coordinated, and physically fit (i.e., physical, self-competence) and being independent and intrinsically motivated (i.e., instrumentality) were associated with higher levels of physical activity” (p. 723). It can be said that Navajo female athletes prioritize their health and well-being because of cultural values learned within the home, but that this understanding is also affirmed by their participation in high school sports. John Cheslock (2007), in *Who’s Playing College Sports? Trends in Participation*, reported five major findings of current trends in college athletics, two of which dealt specifically with women. The first found that “women’s athletic participation levels substantially increased during the late 1990s,” but explained

that the levels tapered and slowed considerably in the early 2000s (p. 5). The second trend showed that “women’s participation still lags far behind” the participation of men (p. 5). These numbers are not disaggregated by race, only by gender. Women are, in fact, a minority in the world of athletics, further widening the gap for female athletes who are of a minority race.

Research supports the claim that athletic participation positively correlates with attendance in college. Kelly P. Troutman and Mikaela J. Dufur (2007) ascertained that there are numerous benefits of high school participation in sports, especially for female athletes. The study of Greenleaf et al. (2009) reported that “there are immediate as well long-term benefits to sport participation, and that girls should be encouraged to get involved during their high school years” (p. 726). Positive effects of sports is further exemplified by another research study that found “females who engage in an interscholastic high school sport have higher odds of completing college than do their [male] counterparts” (Troutman & Dufur, 2007, p. 1). However, the study excluded American Indian females, and specifically, Navajo females. Despite the absence of American Indians or Navajo females in research, research proves that athletic participation positively relates to educational attainment. But the question of whether or not sports or other activities promote higher achievement remains a lingering question in academe.

Beckett A. Broh (2002) felt that it was important to specify what the effects of extracurricular activities were on high school achievement. To do this, Broh isolated the types of activities to answer the question of whether sole participation in extracurricular activities lent itself to higher achievement. To

answer the overarching question of what student athletes gain through sports that assists them academically, three explanations (the developmental model, the leading-crowd hypothesis, and the social capital model) are presented. The developmental model explains that sports participation teaches characteristics necessary for success such as building a strong work ethic, having and maintaining respect for authority, and the ability to persevere, or overcome obstacles tactfully.

The leading-crowd hypothesis suggests that participation in sports “offers students-athletes higher peer status that facilitates membership in the leading crowd” (Broh, 2002, p. 72). And last, the social capital model is having the ability to gain benefits from association in social networks. Social networking, in this case, involves the family, school, and community as hubs of social networking. The three explanations aforementioned show that “interscholastic sports typically offer greater structure and routinization, much larger and more intense social networks, higher social status for student athletes, and stronger identity with one’s school (p. 82). The researchers concluded that athletics promotes the development of students, their social ties among their peers, parents, and schools, and these benefits explain “the positive effect of participation on achievement” (p. 69).

An important point brought forth with this study is that it affirms that the effects of athletic participation are positive, but specifies three explanations that link participation in sports to educational achievement: the development model, the leading-crowd hypothesis, and the social capital model. The first, the developmental model, has to do with what athletes learn or what develops

character building and “increases their desire and ability to achieve academically” (Broh, 2002, p. 71). The second, the leading-crowd hypothesis, suggests “that sports participation offers student athletes higher peer status that facilitates membership in the leading crowd” (p. 72). The last, the social capital model, is “generally recognized as the ability to accrue benefits through membership in social networks” (p. 72). Broh concluded that “structure, adult supervision, and parental involvement are all characteristic of the activities that promote development and social development” (p. 87) in student athletes; thus promoting achievement in high school and beyond.

Dubosz and Kent (1999) agreed that “widespread athletic participation among high school females is a fairly recent phenomenon” (p. 2). Given the history of American Indians and forced education at the turn of the 19th century with the advent of the boarding school system, the implementation of Title IX in 1972, this proves to be true. But with the participation in high school competitive sports today, and the established presence of females in athletics, we see positive effects. National Federation of State High School Associations reported that during the 2005-2006 high school year, almost 3 million girls participated in school-sponsored sports; representing roughly 41% of high school athletes and the highest rate of participation ever (Taylor & Turek, 2010, p. 316). Fejgin (1994) proved with longitudinal data that sport participation has a positive influence in the following areas of an athlete’s life: grades, self-concept, locus of control, and educational aspirations. Because most studies leave the American Indian female

population out of the studies, we can only assume that statistics are also telling of trends with female American Indians.

The positive effects of athletic participation, especially for females, are discussed commonly in the research. Taylor and Turek (2010) reported that participation in sports enhanced school adjustment and self-esteem. Females performed better with coursework, had higher grade point averages, and had more motivation to perform well in all aspects of the school setting. Self-esteem, as defined by Taylor and Turek (2010), is “the evaluation of how one feels about one’s self-concept” (p. 317). Females who participate in sports generally feel better about themselves and take better care of themselves in the emotional and physical well-being sense of the word.

Research regarding the educational attainment of American Indian female student athletes is a scarcity. The question of what encourages adolescents to succeed in academics and how they benefit from athletics has been a question prompting researchers to action. Braddock (1981) examined the differences of athletic participation and educational attainment relationship amongst Black and White male adolescents. The study concluded that that there was, in fact, a positive association of the male’s participation in several areas such as “grades, academic self-esteem, educational plans, college enrollment, [college] attainment” (p. 345). Braddock’s study is limited to the male Black and White adolescent population, leaving the absence of females and other minority populations neglected. But we gather that the same benefits for the aforementioned populations can be applied to other minority and gender populations as well.

Extracurricular activities such as athletics have a direct correlation on retention in higher education.

Retention in Higher Education

It seems that in the last 500 years educating Indigenous people has been a priority for the non-Indian population, namely the United States of America. Education, however, is defined differently by the non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities. Non-Indigenous people emphasized the European modality of education that includes much of the basic curriculum that is taught to this day; whereas, Indigenous communities, on the other hand, taught their children the ways of their people, ways to survive, ways of their culture, and ways of their ancestors. The fact that the meaning of education amongst the Indigenous is dissimilar to concepts of western education proves that these two distinct worlds clash. The Indigenous people taught their children to survive and to exist in a metaphysical world.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs played an important role in imposing the dominant culture on Indigenous people. Treaties were signed in exchange for peace, land, things of the like, but it was education that was a priority for the government. The first treaty that was ever to contain a stipulation for education was the 1794 treaty of the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge tribes. Ninety-five out of 118 treaties that initially took place over the course of the late 1800s and early 1900s mentioned how education would be given in exchange for the lands received. There was no doubt that deception played a huge part in these negotiations. Land was the thing the “white man” needed, but it was the Indians

that inhabited much of it. They needed to get rid of them and they either were going to be “moralized or exterminated” (Hirschfelder & de Montano, 1993, p. 94). The mindset was that the sooner they chased these Indians off these lands, the sooner it would be for them to occupy them.

If the people in these tribes knew that they would someday be fighting the pangs of deculturation, they would never have agreed to such terms. There were tribes who knew what was being lost at these institutions. It was the Iroquois that once said, “Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the Colleges of Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your Sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the Woods; unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, knew neither how to build a Cabin, take a Deer, or kill an Enemy, spoke our Language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, or Counselors; they were totally good for nothing. (p. 93).

They knew that the education that was used for the children was detrimental to their culture. The meaning of education was clearly different, considering that both the Indian and non-Indian approaches toward education served other distinct purposes.

Education, up until the latter part of the 1900s, was contrived to be a form of cultural genocide. The history of Indian education has always had one goal in mind, and that was to assimilate the Indian. It was Indian Commissioner Thomas Morgan who said that it was “cheaper to educate Indians than to kill them” (Eaton, 1989, p. 4). This quote embodies the mentality of most of the non-Indians who felt that it was their duty to take part in the acculturation of the American Indian people into their own mindset. The non-Indian and their view of education was deemed as much more significant only because they felt that they were more superior to the American Indian race.

The political status of both American Indians is determined by their Indigenous ties to their ancestral homelands. Unfortunately, the acknowledgement of sovereignty or the power to govern within one's territory and deal on a nation-to-nation basis has deteriorated since the conception of colonization. The power to self-determine things such as education has been a priority and is seen as a way to decolonize and separate as distinct nations. What we find is an effort by Indigenous people to oversee and instill changes that combat the pangs of deculturation.

Unfortunately, the reality with most Indigenous nations is that they “have little authority over the various school systems” (Spolsky, 2002, p. 141). Schools, formerly known as boarding schools, fall under the control of the federal government; public schools operate under local district school boards and also answer to three different state educational systems (Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah); and charter and community schools have their own boards. The schools are “strongly influenced by accreditation agencies and suffer increasing pressure from examination-driven state and national standards” (p. 142).

However, the Navajo Nation Council called for the maintenance of Navajo-English bilingualism through the use and teaching of both languages in schools using the Navajo Nation Education Policies of 1984 (codified as 10 N.N.C. Section 101 et seq.). With grants from the federal government, the Navajo Division of Education has direct authority over the Headstart program. These programs are spread throughout communities on the Navajo Nation; 150 centers in 110 communities. Of these centers, only 25 implement the Navajo immersion

curriculum required in an Executive Order issued by the Navajo Nation President. Instruction in these few schools is given in Navajo. The curricula for these schools, according to Spolsky, are to teach basic vocabulary and grammar because of the children's slight knowledge of the Navajo language.

An effort, such as the Navajo Nation Headstart programs, to combat linguicide on their land is promising. Language is symbolic because it signifies a source of power. We have seen the detrimental effects of this truth. Indigenous nations need to empower themselves once again by taking their language, cultural life ways, and homelands back.

The need to recruit and retain American Indian students in postsecondary education and training has been of utmost priority for Indigenous nations in the past 50 years. Institutions such as Arizona State University and other institutions of higher education understand that the recruitment and retention of American Indian students is of utmost importance. Especially when Betsey O. Barefoot (2004) stated that "the high rate of student dropout between the first and second year of college is a major concern for the majority of the U.S. colleges and universities" (p. 9).

Atrocious truths about college dropout prompted Peterson Zah, former advisor to the President on Indian Affairs at ASU, to lead the campaign to retain its American Indian population. *Indian Country Today* (Fitzpatrick, 1985) reported that when Zah first began work at ASU in 1995, there were only 93 American Indian students who earned degrees. In 2007-2008, the National Center for Education Statistics ranked ASU fourth in the nation among universities

awarding over 200 American Indian students with undergraduate degrees. The university also ranked sixth in the nation for American Indians receiving graduate degrees. Today, the American Indian population at ASU numbers 1,400 proving that the effort to retain Natives in higher education is successful. It can be said that because of success with retention and graduation rates at ASU, the drop-out problem is not as threatening as it once was. But this was not always the case.

In analyzing the retention rates of American Indians in higher education, James A. Larimore and G. S. McClellan (2005) discussed that this issue is addressed “through theoretical frameworks developed without regard to the ethnicity or frameworks that used Euro-Americans as the primary reference group for the initial construction of the theory” (p. 19). Fortunately, there is an emergence of scholarship that makes use of indigenous-based perspectives or theories that addresses Native American retention. Heavyrunner (2002) has “applied resiliency theory to the question of Native American persistence in higher education using the Family Education Model, an indigenous-based approach to addressing Native American retention in education (cited by Barefoot, 2004, p. 19). Culturally sensitive models such as the one implemented by Heavyrunner have found that family support, staff and faculty support, institutional commitment, students’ own commitment, and connections to their homeland and their cultural ways were key factors in students’ persistence with education.

But discussion about why students leave or drop out from college is a question most retention research answers. Some reasons that force a student to

drop out include boredom, lack of academic challenge, poor “institutional fit,” failure to connect to the campus social systems, financial problems, general dissatisfaction or desire to transfer elsewhere (Barefoot, 2004, p. 12). Student dropout has stirred many institutions of higher education to action with the adoption of retention programs.

Okagaki, Helling, and Bingham (2009) reported that American Indians who succeed in college “have positive beliefs about themselves as students and about the importance of education in their lives” (p. 157). For American Indian students to do this, they must understand, embrace, and develop bicultural efficacy. Bicultural efficacy is defined as “the belief that one can be true to one’s ethnic identity and still function effectively in the majority culture” (Okagaki et al., p. 159). Researchers also proved that bicultural efficacy was “positively correlated with American Indian college students’ academic identity and belief in the instrumental importance of education” (p. 172). Essentially, when a Native student attends school, they do so with the belief that they will succeed. They do so knowing that that their culture will nurture them while displaced from their homelands, drawing strength from their identity.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to identify, describe, and analyze Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and its affects on success in higher education. The research was an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, namely volleyball, has within the Diné culture; and how the impact of those role models who provided leadership through athletic instruction had on the lives of Navajo female student athletes in their postsecondary experiences.

The researcher chose a qualitative method because it was culturally sensitive to the Diné. The human element was best captured by way of the interviewing process. The historiography of Indigenous people, especially the Diné, has been captured primarily through the eyes of non-Natives. The qualitative research was an opportunity to recognize that the interviewing process is synonymous and conducive to oral traditions told by Indigenous people and used “as vehicles to create histories that better reflect Native people’s perspectives” (Denetdale, 2001, p. 7).

Population and Sample

The population or data sources for this study consisted of Navajo female student athletes who were alumna of Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona, located on the Navajo Nation; participated in four years of Mustang volleyball from 2000-2010, either currently attending or graduated from a

postsecondary institution; and although not a set criterion, played collegiate volleyball. Yearbooks were used to formulate a database of female student athletes who participated in Mustang volleyball from 2000-2010. A total of ten varsity squads with a total of 85 females were identified. Because this study was about the correlation and impact of volleyball on postsecondary success, the database was shortened to only include those females that currently were in college or had already earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a four-year accredited college or university. Of the 85, ten earned their bachelor's degrees, 11 were enrolled in an accredited four-year college or university program of study, and the rest chose some other post high school path (i.e. military, work). A total of 21 females fit the criteria for the study, but only 11 were available for interviews. All interviews were conducted in Kayenta, Arizona.

Instrumentation

The instruments used to collect data for this study included a set of 13 interview questions. The interview questions focused on leadership, the impact of positive and negative college experiences on their success, advice for American Indian youth in their quest for a college degree, skills necessary for college success, lessons learned from participation in volleyball, importance or non-importance of Navajo culture in their lives, influential people in their lives, importance of athleticism for Navajo people, and the influence of former athletic scholarship winners (see Appendix A).

Data Collection Procedures

Because the study was based on Navajo female athletes who attended Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona, approval from the Kayenta Township (Appendix B), Kayenta Unified School District #27 (Appendix C), and the Navajo Nation Kayenta Chapter House (Appendix D), and were needed to begin the Institutional Review Board approval process.

A planning meeting for the Kayenta Chapter was attended on November 1, 2010 so that the study could be added to the agenda as an item for the voting approval of the Chapter officials. The research prospectus was presented to the Kayenta Chapter and all those in attendance on November 17, 2010 approved. Mr. Stanley Clitso, Chapter President, drafted a resolution November 24, 2010.

November 8th, 2010 the Kayenta Township was approached with the research prospectus and a presentation. On that same day, the Kayenta Township approved the research and forwarded a letter of support thereafter.

On November 10, 2010, KUSD #27 approved the study at the November 2010 board meeting and the Superintendent, Mr. Harry Martin, drafted a letter of support shortly after.

All letters showing local support were forwarded to Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as commencement with research could not occur until approval was received. ASU IRB required doctoral candidates who were conducting human research had to complete modules with Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative's (CITI) Human Research Curriculum and Responsible Conduct of Research Curriculum training online.

These were completed in September 2010. An application for exempt research was submitted to the ASU IRB office on November 29, 2010. ASU IRB Committee approved the application with Exemption Granted status on January 19, 2011 (see Appendix E). An application was also submitted to the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation office for a Cultural Resources Investigation Permit on January 13, 2011. The NNHPO approved and forwarded Permit Number C1105-E on January 28, 2011 (Appendix F).

As per procedures for the Navajo Nation Institutional Research Review Board, a Research Protocol application was submitted on January 13th, 2011 (pending ASU IRB approval) so that the deadline for the February meeting was met. NNIRRB suggested that upon initial approval from ASU IRB, the form could be inserted prior to the February 2011 meeting. The NNIRB approved the research protocol on February 15th, 2011 (see Appendix G). Paperwork with necessary markings was not received from the NNIRB Chair until May 2011, so the interview process was much delayed.

Former student athletes were contacted through electronic mail and a list of those interested were generated. Because time was a source of conflict for many, face-to-face interviews were scheduled during the holiday breaks in November and December of 2011. Candidates for the study were conducted by telephone to finalize interview appointments. Once scheduled, the female student athletes met at MVHS. A couple of female student athletes required telephone interviews because they were located in Kansas and California.

Female student athletes were asked 13 questions (see APPENDIX A). The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one-and-a-half hours long. The transcription of the audio recordings took over 180 hours and produced well over 150 pages.

Data Analysis

All qualitative data (interviews) were recorded into a digital voice recorder, then edited, coded, and analyzed. Following standard methods of analyzing qualitative data, the data was read multiple times, codes were developed that reflected themes or patterns found in the data, and the data were reread and placed into mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

As stated in Chapter 1, the study identified, described, and analyzed Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and its impact on success in higher education. Interviews were conducted with 11 former female student athletes from Monument Valley High School. Table 1 displays biographical information of the participants. To protect the identity of the female student athletes, pseudonyms were used and based on strong Navajo women in my life.

Table 1

Biographical Information of Participant Interviewees

Female athletes	HS Cohort	College Attended	Collegiate athlete	College grad	In School	Major	Current job	Marital status
Kathleen	2001	Arizona State BA; NAU (Doctorate of PT)	No	Yes		Kinesiology; Physical Therapy	Physical therapist (TCRHCC)	Single; no kids
Dekoda	2001	Glendale CC; San Jose State	Yes	Yes		Physical Education	Substitute teacher; mom	Married; 2 kids
Shawl	2002	Fort Lewis College	No	Yes		Physical Education	Mom	Married; 2 kids (soon 3)
Autumn	2003	AZ Western Univ. CC of AZ	Yes	Yes		Psychology	Leasing Agent for Military	Single; no kids
Jeanette	2004	Mesa Community College; AZ State University	Yes	Yes		Chemistry	Medical laboratory Scientist Banner Page Hospital	Single; no kids
Mayzie	2004	Mesa CC; Fort Lewis College	No	No	Yes, graduate Fall 2012	Physical Education-Secondary Ed	Full time student	Single; no kids
Vangie	2007	Northern Arizona	No	Yes		Exercise Science	Navajo Nation	Single; no kids

		University						
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Table 1 (continued)

Female athletes	HS Cohort	College Attended	Collegiate athlete	College grad	In School	Major	Current job	Marital status
Liz	2007	Glendale Community College; Haskell Indian Nations University	Yes	No	Yes, graduate May 2012	American Indian Studies	Full time student	Single; no kids
Susan	2008	Blackhawk College; Trinity International University	Yes	No	Yes, graduate Fall 2013	Bio-Pre med but Exercise Science	Full time student	Single; no kids
Zonnie	2009	Northern Arizona University	No	No	Yes, graduate Dec 2013	Psychology	Full time student	Single; no kids
Sadie	2011	New Mexico St	Yes	No	Yes, graduate 2014	Microbiology	Full time student	Single; no kids

Interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one-and-half hours in length.

Interviewees were asked to respond to 13 open-ended questions (Appendix A) related to their experience as an athlete in high school and/or in college and its impact on success in higher education. The questions are as follows:

1. Define “leader”?
2. How did you view yourself in high school? Were you a leader? Why or why not?
3. Now that you’re out of high school and working/going to college, what positive experiences at MVHS prepared you for college success? And what recommendations would you make to better prepare ALL students for college success?

4. What is your general observation of female athletes' college enrollment and postsecondary academic success? How does that compare to male athletes?
5. What skills do sports teach student athletes that prepare them for college enrollment, postsecondary academic success, and life?
6. What advice would you give/have for American Indian youth, especially females, in their quest to attend, persevere, and succeed academically in college?
7. What skills are necessary for college success?
8. What do you attribute these skills to (i.e. home, school, sports, culture, teachers, coaches, family, friends)?
9. Explain the importance or non-importance of Navajo tradition and culture in your life?
10. What people were most influential in your life (i.e., childhood, high school, college)?
11. What impact has athletics had on your life?
12. How important are games/sports/physical fitness to Navajo people? Specifically women?
13. How much of an impact did former MVHS athletic scholarship winners have on your desire to attend college (+/-)?

What follows is a summary analysis of their responses.

Question 1

Define Leadership

Question 1 asked, "*Define leader?*" When asked to define leadership, several themes emerged from the responses of the female student athletes. The majority of the student athletes defined leadership using characteristics or traits exhibited by the leader and their personality. Some commonalities include being selfless, persistent, charismatic, and assertive. They also felt that leadership was

best captured by the roles and responsibilities they fulfilled such as setting an example, taking charge of a group, and taking action that will benefit others.

Examples of how leadership is defined using characteristics or personality traits are included:

A leader has to sacrifice their own free time . . . is criticized by other people so that they [can] accomplish what the group wants . . . stick with what they believe . . . being persistent. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

A leader is someone people feel comfortable following because they are smart and have people skills. . . . They are someone to look up to and you want to follow. (Dekoda, 01/20/2011)

A leader is someone [who can] recognize that they've failed . . . and learning from that . . . and trying not to repeat that mistake. (Shawl, 1/21/2011)

A leader is confident . . . a risk-taker. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011).

Someone who knows what they want and not necessarily have to have a lot of people to determine you're a leader . . . have the charisma that everyone likes. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012).

Following are examples of the student athletes' definitions that show how leaders carry out roles and fulfill their responsibilities:

A leader is someone who guides a group in the direction of a common goal . . . and does what is best for the good of the whole group. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

A leader is someone who possesses good communication skills, presents themselves in a positive way, and leads by example, someone you can look up to. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Someone who takes charge of a group, goes above and beyond . . . a role model. (Jeanette, 1/20/2011)

Someone that everybody else can look up to . . . look to this person to interpret their actions . . . set an example for them. (Autumn, 01/24/2012)

A leader is someone who [takes] the initiative to have people look up to you. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

Leader is someone you can look up to . . . can handle responsibilities and just be a good role model in so many ways. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

A leader is someone that can handle pressure . . . adversity . . . challenges. A person who can handle adversity and take it in stride and can show others that it's okay, the water is a little cold, but it's alright, everything is going to be okay . . . that's a leader to me. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Question 2

Question 2 asked, "*How did you view yourself in high school? Do you consider yourself a leader?*" All student athletes considered themselves a leader during their time in high school, especially in their role as volleyball players.

Their leadership was displayed in various ways. Most of the student athletes tied their exhibition of the leadership role to the social aspect on and off the court.

Examples of their responses included the following:

I kind of knew what people were expecting of me and I don't like to disappoint people so I tried my best to embrace the [leadership] role. (Sadie, 11/22/2014)

In high school . . . I was a leader. People came to me when they needed help or advise. At the time I didn't really think of it. I just felt like I was doing something good for them. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Honestly, I didn't see myself as a leader until my junior or senior year. I was a very competitive person and I really wanted people to know that I meant business when it came to sports and academics, and I tried my best to be a leader in different ways. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

I [was] outgoing; talking with everybody, being friends with everybody . . . I didn't stay within one clique. I thought about people's feelings because I didn't want to hurt [their] feelings . . . so I was careful [about] how I said stuff because sometimes when you say something mean to somebody, they're going to remember that one mean thing you said. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

I would say I was a leader. A lot of that had to do with the level of volleyball I did play . . . [and] I could tell that a lot of people looked to me to make decisions for the team. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

But three of the student athletes specified that their leadership capacity was extended academically as well, maintaining above average grade point averages, stellar students. Below are examples of their comments:

In school, my brother and sisters were okay in school and my mom would say my brother and sisters did okay in school, but when they got into high school they kind of pooped out. So I thought I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be like my brother and sisters. It is like sibling rivalry. I want to be better, and I want my mom to like me more. In that sense I wanted to be a leader in my family. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

I would say I was a leader. I was good in school academically. I had friends. On the volleyball team, I was one of the ones that wanted to motivate people. Yeah, I considered myself a leader. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Was I a leader? I would say, yeah, as an honor student you're a leader [because] you're considered to be one of the smartest kids in school . . . you do what you do to inspire the younger classmates, your own classmates, to try harder in school. And I was a leader on the court. I played volleyball . . . as a setter. The setter is the person who basically controls the court; you're the brains of the whole operation . . . and I was a leader in different ways, in the classroom, on the court, on the field, my positions in the clubs, my position as Miss MVHS. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

A couple of student athletes felt that their leadership role was more prevalent at home than it was on the court or in the classroom.

Being an older sister, with four siblings, I wanted to be a good example for them . . . also helping my parents in any way they needed help . . . like if they needed advice on decision making. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

A very small number of athletes did not see themselves as leaders, but upon reflection, felt that it was a matter of confidence that they lacked. They felt that they should have stepped into the leadership role more during high school. Others did not deem themselves as leaders because they did not display leadership capacity in an overt manner. But under certain situations, especially in volleyball, the leadership role was fulfilled. Following is an example:

I say I was [a leader] somewhat. I still feel that way now. . . . I just sit back and almost do my own thing. I don't try to tell people how to do it because I feel like there are certain people who don't react or deal with that very well. In a game situation, it (leadership) would happen on its own . . . depending on the situation. I would see myself doing things like trying to encourage teammates or give them advise on how they should change something or trying to call the shots. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

As far as my team, I didn't really have the full confidence to take that leadership [role]. . . . I could have been a better leader now that I look back. . . . I could have stepped up a little bit more and had more confidence. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

In addition to assessing their leadership roles, one student athlete made it a point to clarify that there were leaders who were good or bad, or had a positive or negative influence over a group of people. It was pertinent that these individuals understood that influence. Their comments include the following:

Yes, I definitely felt that I was a leader, but I was humble and not cocky about it. There are leaders who are bad people . . . even though they are good at what they are doing. They don't treat people very good. I think if you're going to be a leader, you need to know how to treat people right. They need to make people want to be around them and follow them if they want to be a leader. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

Question 3

The first part of Question 3 asked, "*What positive experiences at MVHS prepared you for college success?*" Common themes that emerged from student athletes' responses about positive experiences at MVHS that prepared them for college success focused on three areas: sports, other extracurricular activities (non-athletic) they were involved in, and experiences stemming from the classroom.

All the respondents felt that athletics, especially volleyball, prepared them for success in college because of the lessons or skills they acquired through

participation. A large number of the responses, in citing volleyball, specifically named former coaches as the source of their positive experiences. Others felt that describing specific lessons learned or skills acquired through their experience with volleyball had lasting effects on their lives. They felt that the game affected their efficacy, and this learning they still apply to their lives. Examples of their experiences with athletics include the following:

Mrs. Nash made us write goals. She really emphasized teamwork . . . getting everyone on the same page . . . taking responsibility of our own actions like getting to practice on time. If we went on an away trip, she would assign one person in the room to be the “mom” to make sure that people got to the bus on time. She kept track of how often people were coming to practices [and used it] to determine who was going to the tournaments. Those types of things helped motivate people. (Kathleen, 11/18/2012)

Playing here, being a Mustang, you’re not someone to mess with [because] you just basically dominate on the court. There’s a lot of pressure from the outside, from your parents, from the community because there’s this legacy to win here; and if you don’t [win], then you hear it. And I think it taught me, a lot mentally, emotionally that I had to control my emotions. Whenever I was having a bad day, I couldn’t show it on the court; I had to still play my best. You had to pick yourself up and inspire your teammates, to show them “We can still do this.” (Vangie, 11/21/2011).

Volleyball is just a huge thing here. . . . It was the whole reason that allowed me to get scholarships to play volleyball and basketball [in college]. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Mrs. Nash had this little point system and [it showed that] the amount of time that you put into something would be the outcome of whatever it was. Those that are willing to put the time into it will actually be successful in the end. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

Experiences with volleyball . . . I had a difficult coach. . . . She definitely prepared me for life. A lot of the things she taught me. I can see myself doing them right now. And they are a lot of good habits, like being on time, finishing things that I start. I can see that now that I am older, a lot of my habits in high school were [learned] because of volleyball and sports in general. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

I consider Monument Valley High School a good high school. Academically, I feel it was fairly easy for me in high school. Homework was pretty easy, volleyball really helped me. It was motivation to get good grades. I could be awarded for it. I used to get awards for volleyball. I wanted to be the smart girl. . . . Volleyball and Mrs. Nash helped a lot with that. It helped to set goals. . . . She had us trained to set a goal and to fulfill it. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Being a student athlete, I always felt like I was the only one doing homework on the bus, on the way to an away game. We were given an hour to do homework, and I felt like I was always going over the hour, even while we were waiting to play, sitting in the gym still doing homework. If I didn't do homework, I didn't succeed in class, I wouldn't be able to play. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Volleyball was year-round [sport]. . . . It develop[ed] self-discipline . . . commitment [because you] had to play during the summer. Overall, just playing, having it available [all year] draws a person close to the sport. You are able to get exposed to the aspects of the sport if it's available for a long period of time. And [through] playing, you get put into situations where you need a person to step up. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

A lot of the administrators are "iffy" about athletics and think it's just a waste of time and we should be in the classroom. If anything, what helped me is volleyball because there is that pressure put on you and there is so much sacrifice. . . . You learn that in volleyball. Like now, I would rather be out with my friends and having a good time but I have practice in the morning. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Very few female-athletes cited positive experiences that resulted from academics at MVHS. Comments made about academics are as follows:

[MVHS] had good classes, like taking Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry. That helped me with my major in college. My teacher there was an inspiration. She was my best teacher; she made chemistry fun for me. She made it easy. . . . She really prepared me for what college was going to be [like]. College is college. It's not for everyone because it's hard, it's a challenge. My teacher, with what she did, her tests, the homework that she gave, really helped me. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

In citing athletics having been a positive experience, a few respondents felt that extracurricular activities had an impact on their college success. Examples of comments about extracurricular activities are as follows:

Extracurricular activities definitely prepared me for college, not only academically, but financially . . . you [can also] say emotionally and mentally because being involved with all those extracurricular activities, being an honor student, gave me an opportunity to apply for scholarships. I earned those [scholarships]. I worked hard, worked four years to earn [them]. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

The second part of Question 3 asked, “*What recommendations would you make to better prepare all students for college?*” Common themes that emerged from responses about recommendations had to do with actions that the students needed to do on their own, such as getting an early start on college preparation (i.e., admissions, research on possible schools, scholarship search), managing their time, taking advantage of opportunities to self-improve, enrollment in rigorous coursework (i.e., Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses, and other college preparation classes), and participating in other extra-curricular activities such as Student Council and National Honor Society to boost resumes for jobs, college, and scholarship applications. One female even suggested that the transition from high school to college was a lot easier when attending a smaller college, like a two-year program at a junior/community college. The following are examples of the student athletes’ recommendations:

Just take advantage [of] whatever is around you. Being in Kayenta you can feel like nothing is happening, but there are things happening. I would say take on any opportunity there is, whether it’s being involved in your class or having school spirit. I mean don’t just go home and sit around and watch TV. You need to go out and do stuff. Try and do something different, instead of doing things over and over, try new things is what I would recommend. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

All students [need to get] as much exposure to anything like school or sports because there are a lot of opportunities out there. Not just academically, but what they’re good at, that can help them further their interests in life. Be a part of extracurricular activities, clubs, anything that

they can do on their own time, when they're not in school and on sports teams. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

Putting your arms around somebody . . . like study groups. Just being on a team . . . getting to a class, form a [study] group, show up, be there and you'll be successful that way. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

They need to be disciplined. They need to manage their time. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

Take dual enrollment courses. That really, really helped me; especially when I got into college, I didn't have to take those classes. I already felt ahead as well. I think more students should take those [classes]. I'd encourage them to. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Start early . . . personally, I started a little late and [when] I was a senior I attended a college seminar. They had this timeline . . . and I was so behind. I should've done this freshman year, should've done that sophomore year, but I was barely doing it [senior year]. My main recommendation is to start early, do your research [on scholarships] because there are so many organizations, so many people out there who are just willing to give you money to go school, help you better yourself, to help you better your community. . . . You just have to put in the effort and the time to look for those scholarships. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Since not everybody is an athlete, don't be scared of what you hear and what people tell you. Don't be scared of what's to come. . . . It's the fear that's going to hold you back the most. When I first went to NM State, in the volleyball aspect, I was just holding back and the coach kind of noticed that and she was like, "I want you to be the loud leader and player that you were in high school. I said, "I'll try," but I didn't want to make mistakes. . . . I was content [with just] being there. That wasn't good. I should have been more like, "I want to be on the court. I want to be tearing it up." I had to get over the fear of making mistakes and the fear of [not being] good enough. That's the biggest thing—don't be scared, take it all in. (Sadie, 1/22/2011)

One student athlete made recommendations for those students interested in participating in college athletics. She stressed that even though athletics is a great opportunity, it should not be totally relied upon as a source of success. The focus should be kept on academics because of the lasting benefits. The following are

examples of her recommendation for preparation for athletic participation in college:

I'd recommend working out . . . like weight training. We have an amazing weight room . . . take advantage of that. [But] school is obviously going to get you further than sports . . . take school very serious. Sports are not always going to be there for you, [but] academics is always going to be. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Other recommendations were made for the institutions of learning to implement specific courses geared toward college preparation. One interviewee observed the fact that the high school did not prepare their students sufficiently with study skills and habits necessary for college success. The following are examples of the recommendations for the schools:

Offer more weighted classes. When I first went to MV, the students who came from Kayenta Middle School (KMS) already had the curriculum and were [enrolled] in weighted classes. The students who came from different schools . . . had to prove [capability]. In my eighth grade class, I was the valedictorian . . . and expected to be in weighted classes, but I wasn't. I had to work into it. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

I know you guys have a college prep course and I think that's a good idea. We never had that when I was in high school. . . . I don't feel like I got much help from the high school with [plans after high school]. I would say the college prep course should be offered to all students. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

Little things that were harder, but I had to learn on my own. Like I had to put in a lot of extra work to get the good grades. I wasn't used to doing that here [MVHS]. I wasn't pressured to [complete] homework every single night. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Question 4

One part of Question 4 asked, "*What is your general observation of female athletes' college enrollment compared to males?*" When students were asked about their general observation of female athletes' college enrollment, several

themes emerged. Female athletes who attended college or universities made observations about former classmates and teammates from high school and their experiences with higher education. Female athletes who attended college or universities as collegiate athletes made observations about collegiate athletics and its athletes.

One of the most popular observations made by most of the female athletes was seeing the overall success of the female student athletes with degrees earned and working as professionals after college. In doing so, successful females served as role models for other young women still attending high school or college. The following are examples of comments about overall success:

Most of the girls I know who are all successful have completed their careers in college and completed their degrees and are working now as role models to me. I think if they can do it, I can make it. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

I see [female athletes] succeeding. They have these really great jobs. It made me want to go to college. I see this drive and this focus and they know what they want. I want that for myself. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

The [female] athletes, in terms of academics, are doing better than the male athletes because you always hear about [inept] football . . . and basketball players. I feel like the females are smarter than the males when it comes to the academics. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

One female athlete discussed a difference in the demeanor of her teammates from high school and college. The teammates at her high school were predominately Navajo, while her team at community college mostly comprised of non-Natives. The following are her comments about the differences:

When I first went to college—when I went to [college], I was blown away by my teammates because [of] their take on life, and their take on school, their take on volleyball. . . It was . . . different from my former teammates in high school. I saw a huge difference in the attitude with my [college]

teammates. . . They were really full of energy, and they were more outgoing. (Liz, 1/24/12)

When compared to males, however, most of the respondents felt that the males lacked the motivation to attend college; only attended for a few semesters and never completed their program of study for degrees. They felt that males were more interested in entering the work force to make money or start families.

Examples of responses that discuss the non-success of males include the following:

It's kind of bad that I think you almost expect failure. You hope for the best; you hope they go to practice all the time, get [their] degree in whatever . . . but that has not been the case. They may complete junior college and such, but not go on much further than that. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

I look at the guys I graduated with who were athletes and they're not in college, they're all starting their own families. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

My observation with the few people who are male athletes that went on to college to play college ball . . . it wasn't much of a success for them. A few [male athletes] from here . . . went off to play college basketball out towards the west coast, but I don't think [they] ever finished [their] degrees. . . . [They] are still here (Kayenta) . . . and haven't gone back. Another person graduated a year or two after I did went on to play college football; same thing . . . he came back, no degree, lost his eligibility. . . . The male athletes are not as successful as the female athletes have been. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

What I've seen with the male athletes after high school is their first [priority] was to make money. They just want to make money. . . . A lot of them don't attend college. There's only like [one person] who graduated from our class . . . he's the only person I can think of. There's a few of them that did attend college for like a year but didn't work out and they just ended up working. I think they are less motivated . . . after high school and just don't have the drive to want to do it (school) anymore. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

Females tend to take the first steps of going to college, whereas a lot of males try to [focus] on trades and just go right into work right away. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

A couple of female athletes addressed the non-success of males in higher education as a product of their home environment or the Diné culture and the influence of the male figure, the father, on the success or failure of their sons. The following are examples of their observations:

I have a brother who was here at MVHS as a top student, yet he hasn't graduated. It . . . goes back to the encouragement he gets. Dads within our culture don't really encourage them (sons) and build them (sons) up, yet every failure they make, they're going to tear them down. It comes down to the male figure in the family. If they're encouraging and loving, the males (sons) [are] going to be more success[ful] . . . males will succeed in life. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

In the Navajo culture, the women are usually the ones to take care of them [males] and maybe they're culturally programmed [to think] there is always someone who will take care of them. The women are . . . the sole provider for [the] family. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

One female athlete noticed that females outperform male athletes in college by earning degrees, but felt that this changed when women entered the work force after college. Power roles, dominated by men, were observed, according to her response:

The power role . . . of female and males, there's just a difference. People see males as wanting to dominate things. Just like with intense jobs, you would normally see a male there, rather than a female. You don't normally see a female taking on a role of a male. . . . [It is] not as difficult for [males] to get somewhere. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Female student athletes at the college level also made observations of other fellow male and female athletes at the institutions they attended. Some of their observations were that male athletes typically had more support in terms of more fanfare during athletic events, and males were generally in college to play a sport, therefore not necessarily focused on academics. This was further supported by the fact that female athletes observed that male athletes were not held to as

high a standard as the females were with their academics. Females discussed presence at mandatory study halls and progress reports that tracked female athletes' grades as requisites for playing time. Examples of comments observing discrepancies between male and female student athletes are as follows:

My coach for volleyball was really, really strict on academics. . . . We had progress reports or grade sheets due. We would have study halls scheduled; and if you didn't make it, you couldn't practice or it went as far as not playing in the next game. I hardly ever saw things like that for the guys. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

A majority of the college male athletes . . . are in college to play the sport. They weren't going for school, they were going to play football or whichever sport it was . . . at the college level. (Autumn, 1/24/2012).

A couple of student athletes recognized how women athletics did not receive as much notoriety as men's sports. The non-existence of professional leagues for women was also mentioned. Gender biases were said to be the cause of society's favoritism toward male athletics. The professional leagues that do exist do not receive the respect or accolades that male professional sports teams receive. The following is an example of this observation:

As far as female athletes go, people don't expect [them] to be up there or to really get anywhere [professionally]. Like the NBA and WNBA, I don't care for the WNBA but they're still professional women who play basketball. Like here [MVHS], women's basketball is known. . . . It's the reservation and when it comes to college there's nobody who comes to our games. . . . The crowds are not here, it's nothing. . . . It's sad [because] some girls outplay some guys and people don't recognize it. . . . It could be a huge difference if people paid more attention to women's athletics. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

It's the whole gender thing. I think society favors the male athletes than it does the female athletes because how many professional leagues are there? I can only think of softball and soccer . . . basketball . . . but [they] don't get as much advertisement or as much praise, exposure as the males. . . . All these different sports for professional male athletes but there's hardly anything for women. Females are put on the back burner. . . . That's a

good thing [because] it gives them more of an opportunity to focus on school and their athletics. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

[Males] have more success than females . . . because they're more likely to go on to play professional [sports]. . . . They have more opportunities. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

One female cited that acts of legislation, such as Title IX (1972), implemented equality for female athletics. According to Title IX.info (2012), Title IX is “a law . . . that requires gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding. Her comment is an example:

In college they make it even with [the number] of female athletes and [the number] of male athletes there are . . . so that females can have the same opportunities as male athletes. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

One female athlete answered the question collectively for all athletes, not differentiating by gender. Academic and athletic demands carried by collegiate athletes are substantial, sometimes encouraging female and male student athletes to meet the bare minimum requirements and not reaching their fullest potential.

Example of one such observation is as follows:

From what I've seen, it is really hard to do [school & athletics] all at the same time. So there's a lot of people that would take them for granted and they'll do just enough to get by, just enough to stay eligible to play a sport. So a lot of the time, they don't meet their highest potential. I [saw] that in myself as well. When you're that young, you don't understand that more can be done and you think that you're overwhelmed already, but you can always do better. I see that in my own grades. I did enough to get by. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

Question 5

Question 5 asked, “*What skills do sports teach student athletes that prepare them for college enrollment, postsecondary academic success, and life?*”

When the student athletes were asked what skills they learned from athletics,

several themes emerged. Skills cited by the athletes included time management, task completion or goal orientation, maintaining composure or mental toughness, competence in communication skills, acquisition of coping mechanisms for stress, development of character traits (i.e., persistence, resilience, assertiveness, humility, etc.), establishment of work ethics, becoming a team player, and self-efficacy.

Time Management

There were several athletes that felt that time management was the most important skill acquired through their participation in athletics. Most athletes felt that it was a life skill applied to many aspects of their lives especially during their time during college when it came to prioritizing events or scheduling study time; it was also a skill that carried over into the careers they entered after they earned their degrees. Following are examples of the comments regarding time management:

In Mustang volleyball, it's punctuality. [Coach] would leave you on a bus trip if you are not there on time. It doesn't matter if you leave at 3 in the afternoon or 5 in the morning, if you are not there 10 minutes before she will leave you. That's the [skill] I learned. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Time management was a pretty [important] one . . . because in sports an athlete has to think about school, practice, homework, [and] other chores they probably have to do at home. . . . There's a lot of multitasking . . . and time management. . . . It's helped me in college because I do priority lists. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011).

Sports taught me to be on time to everything. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

You learn so many things from being an athlete. . . . Time management is one of those things. . . . You go to school [from] 8 to 3:30; practice starts immediately after that and ends at 5:30 or 6. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Volleyball taught me [about] being on time . . . that meant a lot. I carried [that skill] with me onto college. . . . I would be on time to class . . . on time to practice. My coach would be like, “you are here so early.” I was used to it and I didn’t want to be yelled at [because] I didn’t know what to expect in college. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Teamwork

Student athletes felt that their participation with athletics taught them about the importance of being part of a team. Because teams have an assortment of personalities and various skill levels, athletes have to constantly work to find the middle ground with fellow teammates. Differences are set aside; focus on attaining the common goal of the team becomes a priority. Playing on a team, a person understands not to worry about himself/herself, but instead should focus on the needs of others. The following are examples of athletes’ observations about being part of a team:

If you can’t work in a team, then you’re either going to get fired or the efficiency of that team is not going to be very good. . . . Sports helps people to learn to work [on a team]. It helped me a lot. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

Playing on team helped a lot because you can’t worry about yourself, you have to worry about the people on your team . . . their feelings, their needs and that is a good skill to have, especially in the workplace. You have to adapt to each and every personality there is. . . . You [learn] to adjust well. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

It teaches you teamwork . . . how to interact with others and build relationships with others. I know that with my college experience, that’s a lot of what I had to do . . . build relationships with my classmates and my professors. There are times when your professor assigns you to group projects and you [have] to know how to handle different personalities and different work ethics, different skills. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

You are always used to having your teammates on your side. . . . I know in college I always get a college study group because that really helps. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Commitment

Most students thought that sports taught them about commitment. A number of athletes also felt that task completion or goal orientation were skills learned from sports. Following are examples of their comments:

Being committed . . . if you want to be good in sports, you are going to have to put in the time to try to improve your skills. You can't do something for a little [while] and then decide . . . to stop. You . . . have to be committed. That helps especially with school. Like say one day you go to school and you [have] a quiz and you don't do very well. . . . You can't just be like, "I don't want to take this class anymore." Try to push for something and stick with it regardless of what happens. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

What I got from [volleyball] was having goals and then fulfilling them . . . [volleyball] prepared me [with] that. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Mustang volleyball taught me about pushing yourself, having goals. I remember when I first entered [MVHS] my freshman year we had to [write] goals. We had to fill out sheets . . . at the beginning of the season, and . . . at the end of the year, our coach [would] bring those papers back out. (Susan, 11/18/2011).

Development of Work Ethic

Several student athletes felt that a work ethic was learned from their participation in sports. Examples of comments about work ethic follow:

You learn to work hard . . . you work hard in practice, you work hard in life . . . not everyone learns that though. . . . Sports . . . help that. You have to always finish what you start. I always have that mindset. If I was taking a class I didn't like, I would think, "okay, this class is going to end," so I just need to finish what I start. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

The simple key to success is pure hard work . . . put the work in. . . . The more you practice at something, the more work you put into whatever you're trying to do, the simpler it becomes. You can't really rely on natural talent, natural abilities . . . you have to be willing to do more than just rely on what you're blessed with. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

Competitiveness

A number of athletes felt that athletic participation taught them skills that deepened their competitive nature. Following are examples of their responses:

You're taught to be competitive. . . . Coming from MVHS we have this reputation that we're great. . . . We have this great record that [shows] we're not going to lose and we're not going to fail. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

Code of Conduct

Others felt that athletic participation taught them skills associated with code of conduct, behaviors associated with how to carry themselves. The following are examples of the comments that discuss skills learned about personal code of conduct:

Handling pressure and battling adversity . . . coming from the [reservation], it's going to be hard for everyone because there aren't too many people who have done it before you. You are always going to be the minority, going to be the one people expect to fail. Overcoming that [is important]. Whether it's getting a serve over for a game point, or turning in a paper on time . . . it's all the same kind of pressure. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Being an athlete, you learn that you have to be tough, you have to build a tough skin because not everyone is going to like you. . . . Tell yourself that you know what you are doing . . . that it's going to be right. That helps you out in college, and life in general. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Respect . . . a lot of respect. I have so much respect for the . . . volleyball coaches I had here (MVHS). In college there were some girls who [acted like] big shots and ran all over the coach. I would never do that to my high school coach. . . . I respected her and I listened to her. . . . She [was] really a good coach. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Question 6

Question 6 asked, *“What advice do you have for Native American youth, especially females, in their quest to attend, persevere, and succeed academically*

in college?” Several themes surfaced when student athletes were asked to give advice for college-bound Native Americans.

Involvement With Community/Volunteerism

One of the themes included the necessity for college-bound students to get involved with their communities and volunteer, or to join as many clubs as possible. Their service as volunteers allows college-bound students to strengthen their resumes used for college and scholarship applications. Other responses advised that Native youth should seek opportunities or activities within their reservation hometowns because a misconception is that the reservation is isolated and void of things to do. An of comments about community service and volunteerism follow:

Get involved in everything you can do because we come from such a small place . . . people tend to think that there’s nothing to do here (reservation). It’s a small town that we have [but] there are a lot of opportunities. Kids on the reservation . . . feel sorry for themselves because they’re stuck there and they [wish] they went to school in Phoenix. There’s a lot more to do . . . in Kayenta . . . you just have to go out there and find it. You can’t be afraid to do it . . . it helps you build confidence when you go to college because you have to go out and not be afraid to do your thing. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

Goal Orientation

Another theme brought forth by the responses was the advisement of becoming goal-oriented, understanding the importance of working toward a goal and measuring your progress. Female athletes felt that this was important especially for the college bound because it had an impact on their program of study or motivation to attend school. According to many of the student athletes attaining goals is also linked to their work habits, their work ethics, and their

motivation or determination to reach their goals. In some cases, failure is faced but a few student athletes felt that perseverance was necessary. Examples of comments about goal orientation, work ethics, motivation, and perseverance are listed below:

You've got to be motivated. You [have] to set your mind to finish school . . . and everything else in life. If you don't do it, no one else will. You have to prove to other people, especially non-Native Americans, that you can do it. [Being] minorities out here, we have to be the ones to prove that we can [earn] college degrees, too. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

I tell my sister that you have to have some sort of goal in line to work for. A lot of people will say that I am going to college and they don't really know what they going to major in and they just pick something randomly just to go to school. That is not what you really want to do [because] you are not going to try hard. Think about what it is you want to do . . . try different things . . . maybe volunteer in [a place] you might be interested in doing. Just so you can figure out whether you like it or not. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

One of my college professors told me one time, "Work hard for four years or work hard for the rest of your life. It's up to you what you want to do." I [understood] that . . . work hard for four years, get a good job, and then you'll know what you are doing. If you don't go to college, you'll be working hard for the rest of your life. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Keep going even if you fail a class, retake it. It's not the end of the world. I failed a class and my mom [told] me to retake it. You are the only one who knows you failed it. Times get tough, that's when you [see] how strong you are. Do it for yourself . . . whatever you want to do . . . [but] it takes time . . . be patient. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Fearlessness

Removing oneself out of comfort zones, leaving familiar social ties behind was another theme that advised Native American youth and Native American females. Two examples of comments that suggest treading new waters are listed below:

Don't be afraid to leave your friends because that can hold you back. A lot of Navajo kids will choose to go to Phoenix because it's comfortable. They know there are other Navajo people there. When you get around the same people you seem to do the same thing. I told [my sister], "Don't be afraid to make new friends because you can learn a lot . . . from new people. It's a good way to learn things and make new friends and force yourself to get out of your comfort zone." (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

Don't be scared. Don't be afraid to do things on your own. I picked a college because I wanted to go somewhere where no one else [had] gone just so it would force me to be independent and to make new friends. In life you have to learn to work with new people because you aren't going to be working with the same people in jobs. Don't be afraid to be Christopher Columbus and set out a new journey. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Attendance/Presence

Few of the female athletes suggested that establishing presence in the classroom was very important, exhibiting good attendance habits in the classroom. Also making their presence known to the professors of the courses they were enrolled in was invaluable. Two examples of comments that discuss presence are listed below:

Looking back on college, it wasn't even hard. All I had to do was show up. Do the reading . . . that you need to do and you'll be fine. Sometimes it does feel like it takes a lot out of you but really when you look back you think, "I could do that again and better. I could have put in more effort into that." It wasn't bad at all . . . wasn't tough. You just [have] to show up . . . you have to be there . . . you have to put in the time and effort. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

Several of the responses from the athletes advised that college-bound students should not be afraid to reach out and ask for help. They felt that establishing a relationship with the professor outside the classroom was an excellent way to do this.

Make Use of Campus Resources for American Indian Students

Others felt that making use of campus resources reserved specifically for American Indians was necessary, especially in easing the transition into college.

Following is one example of a comment about seeking assistance:

Don't be afraid to ask for help. A lot of Native Americans go to college and they don't realize the N.A. programs [the colleges] have, or are available. I wish I had gone through more of our N.A. department, at both my colleges [because] they really help a lot, they have connections . . . they make the transition easier and I wish I sought their help more.
(Autumn, 1/24/2012)

Establishing a Work Ethic in High School

Another theme that surfaced was that success in college reverted to high school. Students should work in high school to produce a solid transcript that would allow the students to contend for scholarship monies available, because transcripts serve as a history of work ethics for high school students; they are used by colleges and university admissions offices to determine entrance into their schools. Many felt that there were many scholarship opportunities for American Indians, so doing research on various sources was very important. Following are examples of comments about college success starting in high school:

It all starts with high school. That's where you get all your scholarships. I tell people to do [well] in high school, get all the good grades, and get as [many] scholarships as you can because you don't have to worry about the financial part of [college]. If the [finances] are covered, you can finish school. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Open-Mindedness

One female student athlete advised in the following comment that students should be open to new experiences, broadening their horizons to the open world:

A person has to be willing to learn new things, be willing to listen, instead of just relying on their own knowledge. One thing that would have to be [done] is sort of emptying yourself and then letting the universe or the world fill you with different types of knowledge. [Doing that] can further your ability to understand yourself. Be open to different ideas, experiences, [and] try not to really close yourself up, or letting fear or anxiety [hinder] you from learning something new. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

Pride

One female athlete advised in the following comment that Native American youth should be proud of where they come from and rely on their heritage while attaining a college education:

Use as much as you can [from] your heritage or [know] where you are coming from. There are so many different scholarships to use if you are Native American. Take advantage of that. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Question 7

Question 7 asked, “*What skills are necessary for college success?*”

Importance of literacy. One female athlete felt that literacy was a very important skill to have in college. Reading and writing are skills used inexhaustibly while in college. It is the main form of assessment used by colleges and professors to measure a student’s proficiency with course content and objectives, so being an effective reader and writer are crucial. Examples of comments about literacy as a necessary skill are included:

Writing is the biggest [skill] . . . I still struggle [with] today. That’s been the hardest thing for me because I can express myself [verbally] and tell you how I feel and everything . . . but once you give me a paper and pen, I can’t do it. I can’t write it down; it doesn’t come out like I want it to. Everything is writing. Texting, e-mails, Facebook you’re writing. I’ve struggled with [writing] since high school and I’m still struggling now in college. . . . That’s the one skill I [encourage] kids to have. . . . You need to write. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

Learn how to read, learn how to write. That's all it is. I didn't make the best grades in college. I just did what I had to do. I just did everything the teachers asked and it wasn't perfect. I still got that degree and never gave up. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

Self-Discipline/Self-Efficacy

A theme that emerged from most student-athlete responses when asked what skills were necessary for college success evolved around self-discipline and self-efficacy. These areas, elaborated on in the following comments, allowed an athlete to apply things like time management and work ethics to different areas of their college experience:

Common sense [practices] like being on time, all the time. Work. Read. Do what your professors ask you to do. Stay on top of your school work. College is a step up from high school and you should just be working that much harder to maintain good grades, a good grade point average, [completing] your classes. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

Finish what you start and don't be afraid to keep going. Take it one day at a time. . . . Real life is harder than college. School is the easy part. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

Go to class every day, do your homework, study, and review your notes everyday just so you are familiar with [the content]. Attend sessions on methods on how to study or what to take notes on. One thing I did was . . . review my notes and then, as scared as I was, talk to my instructor about [concepts]. One-on-one time really helped me to understand the material I needed to learn. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

In high school I was able to do things last minute, like whip out a paper. I learned you can't do that in college. I tried to do things the last minute. I got a 37 out of 50. . . . I was thinking this [wasn't] good, I need to get my butt in gear, and I need to start doing things on time. Manage your time. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Be able to manage your money. I didn't understand the importance of money when I was living under my parents' roof. But when I got my scholarship money I was fortunate enough to get a tuition waiver and maybe two or three scholarships on top of that. I just lived off that [for the semester]. . . . I [budget] that money over a [specific] time frame and I couldn't blow it in a weekend. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

Humility

Humility was also cited by a few student athletes as well—being able to stay grounded in knowing where teachings came from, understanding and applying the teachings learned from home, and learning the lessons from their participation in sports. Examples of comments about humility follow:

Remember where you come from . . . that's where it all started and [you] wouldn't be where they [are] if it wasn't for where they [came] from. That really helped me throughout my college experience . . . knowing where I come from. That gave me support, encouragement and even if no one said anything they are telling themselves, "I come from this family, I come from this school, [my family] instilled all this knowledge and skills in me and I know I can do it."(Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Just having pride in where you come from and [in] the people you know that have encouraged you . . . have faith that you are going to get [school] done. Use them as your building block to keep you strong and keep you going. Know . . . that they are proud of you. (Shaw1, 1/21/2012)

Question 8

Question 8 asked, "*What do you attribute these skills to?*" When student athletes were asked what they attributed the skills to, most credited their family, coaches, or other mentors, culture, and athletics.

Family

Those citing family felt that teachings from their parents and their grandparents molded their independence, taught them about self-sustenance. Narratives shared with the student athletes were about life lessons. Eight of the participants related they credited their families, coaches, and culture about life's lessons:

My dad shared one time that his dad told him to use all fours. In accomplishing anything or just doing anything in general, you have to use all "fours," meaning you have two arms and two legs, equaling four.

[Meaning that] if you want to do anything, you have to do it yourself. My mom, as a single child, [learned] that if you want something done, [you] have to just do it yourself. My grandma always [said] that if you want to do something, you [had] to do it yourself. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

My mom [gave] me advice. I would also say learning from bad examples. I look at my brother and look at the mistakes he made. I look at my sisters and the mistakes they made. I would say, “okay, I don’t want to do that.” [I] try not to make the same mistakes that people [make] and [I] learn . . . not to do that. My mom always gave me good advice. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

They come from home . . . my coach. They gave [me] these teachings to help [me]. . . . They’re older than [me] and they made the mistakes . . . and they [use] them to refine you . . . make you that better person that they weren’t able to be. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

Sports . . . at all levels . . . high school. I learned a lot . . . even going to a junior college [then on to] a university. You pick up more and more . . . in sports [with] the higher level of competition. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

I have to say my family. My dad, my parents . . . they are a big inspiration for me. I wanted to make them proud. I wanted most of all to make myself proud. I didn’t want to depend on anyone else by myself. That was my whole goal. I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. That was one of my big motivations. . . . I wanted to everyone to be proud of me. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

I can’t think of [any] teachers that really had a . . . big impact on me like my coach was. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

I always says that my grandparents are my backbone. . . . They’re my support system. They’re the ones that [shape] how your body is built . . . [so] your backbone is your main support system. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

[Coach] expects so much of you and [used] volleyball [as] the reward. I wouldn’t have done [well] in school if it wasn’t for volleyball. I had to get the good marks on my grade checks so I could play. I had to be on time or I [didn’t] get to play. Volleyball is my driving force in everything. I eat, breath and play volleyball. . . . I’m a real competitive person [and] I channel that into volleyball and I channel that into academics. My competitive spirit is what is driving me now. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Question 9

Question 9 asked, “*Explain the importance or non-importance of Navajo culture/tradition in your life?*” Females athletes were asked to explain the importance or non-importance of Navajo culture and tradition in their lives. A majority of them felt that Navajo culture and tradition were very important. Some pointed out that even though they were not raised *traditionally*, the Diné culture still had an impact on their lives in some shape or form. The female athletes also understood the value in teachings when they were much older and appreciated them much more as a result. Most of the young women shared values of Diné teaching that have accrued for them thus far. References were made to how prayers and ceremonies provided comfort and were a means of restoring balance or Hozhó in their lives, which included values such as being selfless, possessing a work ethic, maintaining beauty or Hozhó, understanding the system of K’é, and respecting the order of life on earth and in cosmology as a whole. Examples of comments about the importance of Diné culture and tradition are included by nine of the participants:

The livestock we have at home . . . keeps you going because they [represent dependency] in life . . . they provide [sustenance] . . . they provide happiness. To this day my family is going to wake [early] every morning because at this time of the year the sheep are lambing. [You learn] not only to look out for your own life, but [for] the life of others. There are people all around you . . . you [have] to be considerate of. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

I [wasn’t raised] with a lot of traditional [teachings]. As far as being Navajo, it has to do a lot with how you were brought up. But every once in a while something will come up and [I’ll notice] that it’ll be different from the way a [non-Navajo] would do it. I [can] tell that I have those [Navajo] values. Respecting your elders is engrained in the Navajo tradition. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

Navajo culture has always been part of my life even before I was born. It [is] the center and home base of my life. . . . It has influenced me in [becoming] a better person. The Navajo tradition has . . . helped me physically, mentally, emotionally through [the] roller-coaster of life. I can't see myself making it through [life] without tradition in my life. If I ever feel like I'm out of balance, I can go outside and sit down on Mother Earth and talk to her and [ask] her to help me. . . . She is my haven. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

I mostly grew up in a church environment so we didn't get that Navajo traditional upbringing. But going to school, they had Navajo culture classes, or Navajo language, or Navajo Government so I [learned] those things. Even outside the classroom I [saw] that certain aspects [of the Navajo culture] resonate [within] me. . . . I know our culture has this emphasis on beauty and it is important to have a holistic perspective on life. Taking care of yourself physically, spiritually . . . your mind and your body . . . relates to our culture. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

A lot of people never met a Native American . . . so I tell [many] people about my culture [and] where I come from [because people carry] a lot of stereotypes [about Native Americans]. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

I don't think I knew how important [Navajo culture] was to me until I left the reservation. I tell people in college that I'm Native American and people think its cool and ask me so many questions. I guess I'm finally realizing that I am part of a select group. People think typical stereotypes [about Native Americans] . . . and it amazes me how ignorant [they] are. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

Navajo culture is very important to me and I attribute a lot of my success to it. When I was young, I didn't think about this . . . but now I look back and understand more of it. There [were] different ceremonies and prayers . . . done on my behalf . . . as I grew up. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

Navajos are really tight with their families. When you [leave] the reservation, you [ask others], "You don't know all your cousins? You don't know every single one of your aunts?" It's kind of weird to me. I think Navajos have strong family values. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

I grew up in a traditional home, [with a] traditional family . . . the culture, the language, the practices, the ceremonies . . . are always there. We have a large and beautiful culture . . . there's so much [to] learn. [It will] take a life time of learning. Our culture is beautiful, our culture is important and that is what we need to continue to learn it every day. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Question 10

Question 10 asked, “*What people were most influential in your life?*”

When asked what people were most influential in their lives, female athletes, as shown in the responses below, thought that family, coaches, and players from their volleyball teams deemed the most credit:

My family is the main thing that I owe everything to. I come from a single parent home, and my brother and I were [also] raised with the help of my grandparents. A single parent home . . . really [taught] me about drive and determination. My mom . . . could've given up and gone on to different things like alcohol and not [taking] care of her responsibilities, but she chose to take care of my brother and I. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

My mother is a huge part of everything. I really don't know where I'd be if it weren't for her. I was with her when she got her bachelor's [degree]. She had four kids and she was pregnant going to school. If she can do it, I can too. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

It has always been my grandma, my parents, family. . . . I have aunties and uncles who have always supported me. I look . . . to them for their wisdom and for their encouragement. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

My dad is [like] superman to me. . . . He can do everything and I love him for that. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

My grandma on my mom's side, Carolyn Blair. She is really an amazing person. She's filled with so many different stories. She's the one who went off the beaten path [and] came to the reservation to teach. The story that she tells me [about this] is just amazing. It makes me really sad to think [of] how much information I'll lose when she passes. I always think of her here forever, but I . . . realized that she won't be. She's been really influential. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

My grandma . . . was always encouraging us [about going] to school. Even though [she] didn't attend school a day in her life, she knew how important it was so that we [could] be independent . . . successful . . . have things . . . valuables that we [could] call our own [and] not having to rely on our parents to provide those . . . things for us. She would always give us money [when] we came back for the weekend. She would say [in Navajo], “Here's twenty dollars . . . put some gas in or get something to drink.” She helped [me] get where [I am] right now. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

When I was younger I really looked up to my older brother and sister. I thought they were really cool and I saw them mess up and [fail]. It was nice that they did that because I feel like they taught me what not to do. So I want to thank my older brother and sister for being “screw ups.” If they never would have screwed up then I would have been the “screw up.” (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

My grandma . . . she’s getting older and she’s starting to develop some health issues yet she’s not sitting in the corner. She’s demonstrating to us that you [have] to keep moving. You [have] to show people that you’re not lazy . . . you [have] to work hard. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

I have a really strict father [and] I’m thankful for that to this day. He’s helped me through [school]. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

My sister was a big influence to me. She succeeded with school. . . . She [showed] everyone that if you work hard and you’re determined . . . you can do it. There may be obstacles in the way but . . . you can do it. Don’t give up, keep trying. My grandmother [was also] a big influence throughout my life. Everything I do, I think of my grandma. She’s the one that [will] get the most reward out of my [achievements]. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

Question 11

Question 11 asked, “*What impact has athletics had on your life?*” Student athletes were asked what impact athletics had on their lives and several themes were presented. All student athletes felt that athletics had a tremendous impact in many aspects of their lives. Some felt that athletics helped them with obstacles by encouraging them to develop mental toughness. Following are quotes of females who eloquently captured the impact athletics had on their lives:

[Athletics] taught [me] a lot . . . that we had to pick ourselves up. If we were tired or we were sore, we still had to play. We couldn’t just quit, we had to pick ourselves up and try harder. [It] taught me a lot mentally . . . like when things are down . . . you can’t give up, you [have to] keep going. There were times in college that just felt that I could [not] do [it] anymore, things just got too heavy, too much of a burden. There was pressure from everybody, pressure from my family, pressure from knowing that I had to keep scholarships and pressure from my professors because they expected more out of [me]. There [were] some days when I

just wanted to give up. . . . I [did not] want to do [it] anymore. But I had the foundation I [received] here . . . from playing sports. . . . [It] drove me to do what I had to do. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

Athletics [has] definitely been a really big impact . . . I remember seeing my family participate in sports since [I] was a little girl. . . . It instilled a lot of values that I lean [on]. (Liz, 1/24/2011)

[Sports] has had a huge impact on my life. Sports are my life. It got me through college. . . . It got me through my first two years of [college] and I am very thankful for the ability. There [are] a lot of people who don't have an athletic bone in their body and it just amazes me how you can do [well with sports] and it can actually [pay] for school. I have passion for volleyball. . . . It took me further than I expected it to and [now] I see it in my little sister now. I'd coach her and tell her as much as I learned from college and try passing it on to her. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

When I was comparing myself to teammates I have now (in college), I definitely had to play in a different environment they had to. On the reservation . . . and in smaller towns, [they] have a certain pride in their school and people actually care if you win or lose. One of my teammates went to school with like 3,000 people . . . but I don't think her volleyball games even averaged 1,000 people a night. In girls basketball I tell people I've played in front of 22,000 people. They're amazed and that really was an added pressure, but I had to deal with what other people didn't have to. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

It's had an impact on everything. [My] drive, wanting to win. . . . I want to be successful in life. In sports, you always want to win, you don't want to lose, and you're always looking for [another] win. . . . You always want to exercise or play a sport. Being active is a lifestyle. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

I work well with other people because I've always had to be on a team. You learn to tolerate a lot of different personalities. In college, when you're on a team, you have about 20 people [coming] from everyone, not just Arizona or California. We had a lot of people from other states, countries . . . so you get [exposed] to those cultures. It helps you to understand them and not judge anyone and it's a good way to understand to tolerate people, to get along with [them]. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

Athletics really helped me. It helped me with my grades because I wanted to be able to play volleyball. [To do this] you have to have good grades. It's helped me with teamwork because in college you have to be able to form study groups [that] help you to [understand] people and get along with other people. Volleyball help[ed] me with that. It helped me to open up, be more social, and have more friends with the same likes as you. In

sports you play and you have to share. You have a little family right there to help you through [obstacles] out there. They're like other sisters. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Question 12

Questions 12 asked, "*How important are games/sports/physical fitness to Navajo people?*" Subjects were asked how important games, sports, and physical fitness were to the Navajo people. All female respondents felt that sports had a significant impact in a number of ways like allowing the Navajo athletes to showcase their talent, proving naysayers wrong, or providing the younger generation role models. Examples of insightful commentary follows:

Sports [are] very important to the Navajo people. Look at our gymnasiums, the size of our gymnasium . . . it holds 10,000 people. If it's a good rivalry, that place is packed, standing room only. Then you go to other places like down south and their gyms are small [and] maybe hold 2,000 people. It's so funny when we go down there for state playoffs, these non-Native people are always angry . . . because we'll sit there all day at an event just to have a good seat and we'll sit there and get there when the doors open and we'll wait . . . even if our game is at eight o'clock at night, we'll be there at eight o'clock in the morning . . . just to [reserve] a good seat. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

[Sports] are important for the Navajo people because it [supports] wellness and sobriety [for the] communities and [its] players. There are pandemics of health issues [that] reverberate throughout Indian country. [Their] fitness and wellness . . . are important for their life and their livelihood . . . it [affects] the well-being of the person. (Liz, 1/24/2011)

If you ask any athlete, the games are what they look forward to because it's a time to show case what you have, showcase what you've been working for. It's something that Navajos especially look forward to. If you look at Monument Valley's credentials, the girls dominated the 3A forever. It wasn't a matter if you were going to make it [to state]. It's been a matter of if you're going to win the championship or not. I think because many people went through this program, it was always, 'I'm going to go further than my mom did, I'm going to go further than my sister did.' Just that rivalry, that competition within the community [has been] a driving force... (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

I think it is very important considering the occurrences of diabetes, heart disease and all those types of diseases that we have that are prevalent [for] the Navajo people. My coworker . . . was trying to tell patients about [how] important exercise was and she described it as medicine. She said when you go see the doctor, they give you pills. You take those pills and it makes you better. When you come to see us, we give you exercise. Exercise is your medicine. You need to do it every day for you to have any changes in the way you feel and in the way you move. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

Very important. I majored in kinesiology and I'm a P.E. teacher. It's very important to be active throughout life. I look at my grandma and she's 90 years old. That's amazing to live that long. She knows the secret to living long. She knows it takes a healthy lifestyle. She's been active her whole life. Not only does exercise help you with your body physically, it helps you mentally. When I don't feel so great, sports help me [cope]. Like going for a fun, going for a walk, it's just so good for you. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

I think it is very important . . . because of the health problems that [Native Americans] are having, like Diabetes, being overweight. It's really important to start young and hopefully they can keep those habits up when they get older, they can keep that [lifestyle] going. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

One female felt that athletics were especially important for Navajo women. Women in Navajo society are often the primary caretakers in the family and because of that, their health and wellness is often neglected. Her response is captured below:

Women don't really get recognized for anything. I want to be recognized for [athletics]. I want to show people that not only can other races [do well], but Native Americans can, too. [Native Americans] are amazing athletes and amazing students. Native American women have the ability to do it. There are so many strong Native American women that I know who are smart . . . athletic . . . physically fit. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

It is very important [but] I feel [physical fitness] stops for people . . . they should keep going. Maybe not as intense, but just do something to keep active. It's good, it's a stress reducer and it makes you feel good, it makes you feel better. (Zonnie, 1/24/2012)

Question 13

Question 13 asked, “*How much of an impact did former MVHS athletic scholarship winners have on your desire to attend college?*” When asked what impact former MVHS athletic scholarship winners had on former players, all female athletes felt that the impact was enormous. Former athletic scholarship winners served primarily as role models for the women and they paved a way for them, showing them that not only was college a possibility, but that becoming a collegiate athlete was attainable. Even while the female athletes were in college, they still looked to these former scholarship winners as role models professional in the work force. Their comments are included:

[Female athletes] have given the younger girls someone to look up to and someone for them to [see as] role models. When I was in high school, you have little girls coming up to you saying, ‘You played for MV’. I never knew that we had that much of an impact just by playing sports. It [is] amazing to see these people know us . . . [and] know where we come from. That was my main drive . . . [seeing] these [female athletes] who played here, went to school here, going onto college, and being successful [has played] an impact on what I want to do because they built a legacy of successful Monument Valley graduates...I want to be part of that legacy. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

It shows that anybody coming from the reservation . . . that [playing for college] . . . is possible. There is nothing wrong with going to a smaller school, like a junior college [to play] . . . it shows that it can be done. I come from a really small town and a small school and I [was] still able to play college volleyball. (Autumn, 1/24/2012)

I looked up to them (former scholarship winners), what they did . . . they worked hard to achieve and I just wanted to do my part. Do my best with my abilities, to keep playing even while I was in college and to continue to play after that because there [were] some of the former players [that] would come back and help out . . . that’s what I [saw] as really admirable. I just looked up to them [for] their impact on their community, their family and their friends. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

I looked up to a lot of former players . . . and that just made me want to play Mustang volleyball. When I found out they were going to school to play on a scholarship, I want[ed] a scholarship. I really wanted to go to college . . . to play . . . get my degree and [with] a scholarship, I [could] keep playing. A lot of people did that coming from [MV] . . . and it [was] I wanted too because it was a way out of here. [It] was a way to make myself into somebody . . . and I saw it through former players and I really did look up them. (Susan, 11/18/2011)

They're all great athletes . . . I feel like more Navajos should be playing in the college level . . . and it's great they are doing that. I know many people who look up to them. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

You see them be successful and think that is so cool. I want to do that, too. You see people that don't quite make it, and you think, 'I don't want that for myself. I want to be able to take care of my kids, if I have kids. I want to be able to take care of my parents.' Having pride in where you've come from and [knowing] what you can do [is important]. (Sadie, 11/22/2011)

I [saw] a lot of people's failure and you learn not to do that. You see people do well, like Alvina [Clark], and that's amazing. She walked onto the Arizona volleyball team and we watched her play on TV, we went to UA and watched her play. That was so cool, very inspiring. I can also think of others. Sherri Claw [Rooper] played for Yavapai. I remember my mom would hang their schedule with the picture and that was so [influential] to have things like that hanging up. They are really [great] role models. They were humble and they were just nice people. They would come back and do volleyball camp . . . they were [an inspiration] and good role models for everyone. (Dekoda, 1/20/2012)

One student did not understand the extent of her accomplishments until she left for college and a non-Monument Valley resident noticed the feat. She explained the realization poignantly below:

One of my friends doesn't go to school here . . . said, 'you're playing Division I, if I were you, I'd be boasting.' When I signed . . . I didn't see that as a big deal because I feel that was just what people expected. Like my sister signing and other players, it's just what you do here [at MV]. It really is just what's expected. [It] is surprising to me just what a special group of people we are and what is accomplished. (Sadie, 11/22/2011).

Three of female athletes felt that scholarship winners didn't have a significant impact on their desire to attend college because it came from another source. Their comments were articulated below:

In high school, it didn't seem like there were a whole lot of people who were going to college [with] athletic scholarships. [They] were going on academic scholarships. I already knew that I was going to go to school. It didn't really impact me very much [because] . . . there weren't very many people receiving . . . [athletic] scholarships. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

It was mainly my mom that made me want to go to college. It really wasn't athletics. (Zonnie, 1/4/2012)

Personally, I wasn't really set on going and playing volleyball after high school. Academically, I was pretty much set. I was going to go to U of A . . . I had a Presidential Scholarship, I had my Gates [Millennium] Scholarship. I was pretty much set to go, but my love of volleyball and the opportunity to play again [came] and I jumped at the chance. I wasn't going to regret playing. I wanted to be able to say I played college volleyball, so I played [for Mesa Community College]. It wasn't a big scholarship, but . . . it paid for classes. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

Many of the former athletes felt that the coaching staff, in addition to the scholarship winners had a tremendous impact on their lives. They also were very grateful for having been part of the tradition of success at Monument Valley.

Some of the females had an impassioned description of their coach's impact:

Mrs. Lucinda Nash had so much of an impact not only on the players, but the people she worked with. (Mayzie, 11/21/2011)

Volleyball really made me the person I am today. I learned from Mrs. Nash to remain calm, to keep your head on your shoulders. Keep your head on your shoulders, and you'll know what to do. You get to the point where it's so stressful, she always knew what to say, she knew how to calm us down. She was a really good coach and I was glad to be able to play under her. She was a motivation. (Jeanette, 1/20/2012)

One female felt it very important to comment about her athletic experience at Monument Valley. Her comments below are found to be very profound:

Being a Mustang says a lot about you . . . it tells a person what kind of a person you are. We have a great legacy here [and] my desire is to be a part of that. Former players still play a big impact on me and on other people. [People] who have gone to school, the future graduates of MV, and future players, their legacy is going to live on, people are going to be inspired by what they [will] do . . . it's a legacy for us to build on and for us to continue to pass on. (Vangie, 11/21/2011).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RESULTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of Navajo female participation in volleyball and its impact on success in postsecondary education; the chapter also presents important conclusions drawn from the data presented in Chapter 4. It provides a discussion of the implications for action and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The tradition of athletic success at MVHS has been celebrated by the Kayenta community, proving to be a source of pride for thousands of alumna and the community for the past 50 years. This span of time has allowed MVHS to produce many student athletes, but tracking their postsecondary endeavors has not been done, especially for the female student athletes seeking higher education.

The purpose of the research was to identify, describe, and analyze Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and the impact it has had on their success in higher education. The research was an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, Diné culture, coaching and mentoring of student athletes has on the lives of Navajo female student athletes in their postsecondary success.

The following questions guided the study:

1. Did participation in high school volleyball provide necessary support and increased self-esteem or self-efficacy that contributed to college enrollment, retention, and long-term academic success of Navajo females?
2. What Diné cultural practices, beliefs, and values contributed to Navajo female athletes' postsecondary success?
3. What leadership skills did Navajo female student athletes acquire during participation in volleyball?
4. What were the long-term effects of Navajo females' participation in high school sports (volleyball)?

A qualitative method of research was chosen for the following four reasons: (a) the interviewing process was the most appropriate and culturally sensitive to the Diné; (b) the interviewing process was contributive to oral narratives told by Indigenous people; (c) historiography of Indigenous people, especially the Diné, has typically been shared through the perspectives of non-Natives; and (d) the human element was best captured with the interviewing process.

Population and Sample

The population or data sources for this study consisted of Navajo female student athletes who were alumna of Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona, located on the Navajo Nation, who participated in four years of Mustang volleyball from 2000-2010; who were either attending or had graduated from a postsecondary institution; and, although not a set criterion, played collegiate volleyball.

Yearbooks were used to formulate a database of female student athletes who participated in Mustang volleyball from 2000-2010. A total of ten varsity squads with a total of 85 females were identified. Because this study was about the correlation and impact of volleyball on postsecondary success, the database was reduced to include only females currently in college or had already earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a four-year accredited college or university. Of the 85, 10 had earned their bachelor's degrees, 11 were enrolled in an accredited four-year college or university program of study, and the rest had chosen an alternative plan post-high school (i.e., military, work, etc.). A total of 21 females fit the criteria for the study, but only 11 were available for interviews. All interviews were conducted in Kayenta, Arizona.

Findings Related to the Literature

There have been a number of studies in research that have analyzed the impact athletics has on the lives of adolescents. But research sensitive to minority populations, such as Navajo female student athletes, is quite limited. Traci Nemechek's (1997) *Navajo Hoops & Higher Learning: A Study of Female High School Basketball Players and Their Post-Secondary Academic Success*, a relatively recent analysis of the impact sports has on the lives of young Navajo female athletes, focused on basketball only. Nemechek formulated two main hypotheses: female Navajo participation in high school basketball does contribute to future postsecondary academic success and that the basketball players' support system played a significant role in the student athletes' future academic or athletic success. Because her focus was on the sport of basketball only, the correlation of

other sports and success in postsecondary education has been relatively unknown. The current research, focused on Navajo female participation in volleyball, validated that volleyball plays a cogent semblance in female athletes' success in college. Nemechek also concluded that the support system of basketball players played a significant role in their future academic or athletic success. This current study also substantiated Nemechek's findings about student athletes' support system, but named family, coaches, and culture as specific prominent factors in Navajo female success. Even though this study allowed for elaboration on Nemechek's research with current data in volleyball, it also provided data that answered the above-mentioned research questions.

Results

The following are results of Navajo female student athletes' participation in volleyball while attending Monument Valley High School, Kayenta, Arizona, on the Navajo Nation.:

1. *Participation in high school volleyball provided necessary support, being an overarching influence in increased self-esteem or self-efficacy for Navajo female student athletes; therefore, Navajo female student athletes were led toward college enrollment, maintaining retention and long-term academic success.* Corresponding with Fejgin (1994) who proved with longitudinal data that sport participation has a positive influence in the following areas of an athlete's life: grades, self-concept, locus of control, and educational aspirations. Despite the absence of American Indian female population in Fejgin's study, conclusions drawn from the study can also be extended to include that Navajo female student

athletes' participation in Mustang volleyball also has a positive influence in the above named areas (i.e., grades, self-concept, locus of control, educational aspirations).

The positive effect of athletic participation, especially for females, included enhanced school adjustment and self-esteem. Navajo female student athletes performed better in their coursework, had higher grade point averages, and had more motivation to perform well in all aspects of the school setting. Self-esteem, as defined by Taylor and Turek (2010), is "the evaluation of how one feels about one's self-concept" (p. 317). Therefore, Navajo females who participated in Mustang volleyball generally had higher self-esteem and were especially attentive to preservation of their emotional and physical well-being.

Braddock (1981), too, examined the differences of athletic participation and educational attainment amongst Black and White male adolescents. The study concluded that there was, in fact, a positive association of the male's participation with academic self-esteem and other areas. In spite of the fact that Braddock's focus was on the self-esteem of the male Black and White adolescent population, the same association is also true of the Navajo female student athletes' self-esteem being a positive correlate with participation in Mustang volleyball.

2. Diné teachings of Aszdáá Nádleehé (Changing Woman) through the age old practice of the Kinaalda ceremony for young Navajo pubescent girls marking their transition into womanhood, the practice of K'é, and Sa'ah naaghaái bik'eh hózhóón are all prominent Diné principles that resonated with the Navajo female

student athletes. Females athletes were asked to explain the importance or non-importance of Navajo culture and tradition in their lives. The majority of the female student athletes felt that Navajo culture and tradition was very important.

The female, the life giver, is held in high regard amongst the Diné. Jennifer Nez Denetdale (2001) shared, “Navajo women are central forces in their families and communities. They enjoy a measure of autonomy and authority even though, beginning with the reservation era in 1868, economic and political institutions have favored Navajo men’s participation” (p. 1). This stronghold of the Diné, or the understanding of Navajo female’s authority, is traced back to time immemorial, with narratives about Diné inception.

The status of Diné women is tied to Asdzáá Nádleehé, or Changing Woman, an ancestral figure or deity, and paramount in Diné cosmology. Ruth Roessel (1981) in *Women in Navajo Society* explains that Changing Woman is the most sacred of all deities because of her “regenerative and reproductive powers.” She wrote,

The Navajos believed that there were many Holy People, or spirit beings, and that Changing Woman was the most sacred of all. She helped to create the people of the earth, who were the ancestors of the Navajos . . . Changing Woman taught the people how to live in harmony with all things—the elements, the mountains, the plants, the animals. (p. 17)

The sanctity of Changing Woman is evident by one female student athlete who clearly understood the importance to live in harmony with all things:

The livestock we have at home . . . keeps you going because they [represent dependency] in life . . . they provide [sustenance] . . . they provide happiness. To this day, my family is going to wake [early] every morning because at this time of the year the sheep are lambing. [You learn] not only to look out for your own life, but [for] the life of others.

There are people all around you . . . [have] to be considerate of. (Shawl, 1/21/2012)

When young Diné females cross the threshold of womanhood, or menarche, they must participate in a Kinaaldá, a beauty way ceremony for puberty. Traditional healer, Wilson Aronilth (1991), explained the origin of this revered practice:

As a baby, Changing Woman (Asdzaan Nádleehé) grew up around Mt. Huerfano. She was raised by First Man and First Woman, her foster parents. They furnished her with mist, moisture, plant pollen, the pure freshness of clouds, sunrays and the most powerful elements which are: air, water, fire, and pollens. By being nourished with these sacred elements, she grew up in twelve days and became one of the most beloved of all Holy People (Diyin Dine'e). On the twelfth day, she became a mature young woman; this means she reached her womanhood. When she reached this puberty stage, all the Holy People were notified to perform a Puberty Ceremony (Kinaaldá). The first Kinaaldá was held at the home of First Man and First Woman around Mt. Huerfano. The Dawn Spirit, Talking God (Haashch'éelt'í'i) performed this ceremony. This is where the beginning of the Blessingway Ceremony (Hózhóóji) began. (Aronilth, 1991, p. 94)

Navajo females hear this narrative of Changing Woman throughout their lifetime; they are reminded of her strength, her embodiment of the female role, and think only to match her fortitude. Navajo female student athletes often gravitated to another female as a role model, who was seen as the epitome of an ideal woman, to serve as their role model, much like Navajo women look to Asdzáá Nádleehé (Changing Woman) as the ideal woman. One Navajo female student athlete eloquently explained the role of former student athletes:

I looked up to them (former scholarship winners), what they did . . . they worked hard to achieve and I just wanted to do my part. Do my best with my abilities, to keep playing even while I was in college and to continue to play after that because there [were] some of the former players [that] would come back and help out . . . that's what I [saw] as really admirable.

I just looked up to them [for] their impact on their community, their family and their friends. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

A tenet of Navajo philosophy called Sa'ah naaghaái bik'eh hózhóón is comprised of two parts: sa'ah naaghaái (soul, body, flesh) and bik'eh hózhóón (mind and spirit). When joined, is best translated by Navajo poet Rex Lee Jim as “May I be everlasting” and “beautiful living.” Denetdale (2007) stated that the phrase “encapsulates a declaration to live a healthy and wealthy lifestyle and the practice of applying its teachings to life” (p. 10). SNBH is a phrase with many meanings on multiple levels. It is with this teaching, this cultural principle, brought to the Diné by the Diyin Dine'e (Holy People) that “has been the foundation for renewal and survival into the twenty-first century” (p. 10). Even though a couple of the female student athletes pointed out that even though they were not predominately raised traditionally Diné, the Diné philosophical teaching of Sa'ah naaghaái bik'eh hózhóón still had an impact on their lives. This was best captured by Liz who said:

I mostly grew up in a church environment so we didn't get that Navajo traditional upbringing. But going to school, they had Navajo culture classes, or Navajo language, or Navajo Government so I [learned] those things. Even outside the classroom I [saw] that certain aspects [of the Navajo culture] resonate [within] me . . . I know our culture has this emphasis on beauty and it is important to have a holistic perspective on life. Taking care of yourself physically, spiritually . . . your mind and your body . . . relates to our culture. (Liz, 1/24/2012)

The female athletes also understood the value in teachings when they were much older and appreciated them much more as a result. Most of the young women shared values of Diné teachings that have accrued for them thus far.

References were made to how prayers and ceremonies provided comfort and were a means of restoring balance or Hozhó in their lives. One female shared:

Navajo culture is very important to me and I attribute a lot of my success to it. When I was young, I didn't think about this, but now I look back and understand more of it. There [were] different ceremonies and prayers . . . done on my behalf . . . as I grew up. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

Navajo female student athletes possessed Navajo values such as the practice of selflessness, the exhibition of a strong work ethic, the maintenance of Hozhó (beauty), the observance of the Diné system of K'é, and the reverence for the order of life on Nahasdzáán (Mother Earth) and in Navajo cosmology as a whole. Vangie, a female student-athlete epitomized this:

I grew up in a traditional home [with a] traditional family . . . the culture, the language, the practices, the ceremonies . . . are always there. We have a large and beautiful culture. . . . There's so much [to] learn. [It will] take a life time of learning. Our culture is beautiful, our culture is important and that is what we need to continue to learn it every day. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

3. The leadership skills acquired by the Navajo female student athletes occurred based on the modification and adaptation of two cultures of two given societies: mainstream non-Native, Euro-centric society, and Diné society.

Because the acquisition of leadership status for Diné youth is a result of the bicultural lifestyles they live today, this must be discussed. The majority of the student athletes defined leadership using characteristics or traits exhibited by the leader and their personality during athletic situations. Some commonalities of these leadership traits include being selfless, persistent, charismatic, and assertive. Leadership was best demonstrated by the roles and responsibilities student athletes fulfilled such as being an exemplar of model behavior on and off the

court, commanding teammates during game situations, and taking action beneficial to the team and their teammates.

Unfortunately, American Indian leadership, specifically Navajo women in leadership, is still examined through the western cultural mindset that is deeply rooted in patrilineal and patrilocal idealism; thus, proving that a mutual incomprehension exists when a cross-cultural analysis of American Indian and western approaches to leadership is performed. The first difference lies in the positional difference on leadership. Warner and Grint (2006) explained that western leadership holds that “leaders are those who hold leadership positions” while American Indian leadership is “open to anyone who has the skill to persuade others to do something they would not have otherwise done” (p. 226).

Leadership in Diné society embraces the dichotomy of male and female presence, or duality. Wilson Aronilth (1985) explained, “We are divided right in half from the tip of our head down to our feet. One side of our body is male and the other side is female. . . . The left-hand side of the body is considered male while the right-hand side of the body is female. (p. 185). The two types of leadership include Hózhóóji k’ehgo Nanitin, which is leadership characterized by peace, harmony, and order for the female, or the peaceful side of a person; whereas, Naayéé’ eek’ehgo Nanitin, which is leadership characterized by protection for the male, or a person’s warrior nature. These concepts define the foundation for leadership in Diné society. Maureen Trudelle Schwarz (1997) explained that “naayéé k’ehigo, the warrior side, represents the essence of masculinity, whereas, hózhóójiigo, the peaceful side, represents the essence of

femininity in the Navajo world” (p. 97) and can be found and applied to every situation. The concepts of leadership, Naayéé’ek’ehgo Nanitin and Hózhóóji k’ehgo Nanitin, has been executed by the Navajo female student athletes in many facets of their lives, especially in volleyball. Volleyball has even strengthened this cultural foundation as well. The cultural influence of the Diné on leadership is astounding for all of the Navajo women who participated in this study.

4. To understand the long-term effects of Navajo females’ participation in Mustang volleyball, one must fully grasp it from a holistic (right and left brain hemisphere) perspective. *The lifestyle, cultural beliefs, and teachings define the identity of female student athletes, and the essence of their being.* To extract parts from the whole, or to assume that there is a unilateral approach to understanding Navajo female student athletes is a derivative of colonized, western thinking. Long-term effects of participation in Mustang volleyball have strengthened interdependent parts (i.e., mental, physical, and spiritual) of Navajo female student athletes.

Some student athletes felt that athletics helped them with obstacles through the development of mental toughness. Following is an example of females who eloquently captured the impact athletics had on the mental component of her person:

[Athletics] taught [me] a lot . . . that we had to pick ourselves up. If we were tired or we were sore, we still had to play. We couldn’t just quit, we had to pick ourselves up and try harder. [It] taught me a lot mentally . . . like when things are down . . . you can’t give up, you [have to] keep going. There were times in college that just felt that I could [not] do [it] anymore, things just got too heavy, too much of a burden. There was pressure from everybody, pressure from my family, pressure from

knowing that I had to keep scholarships and pressure from my professors because they expected more out of [me]. There [were] some days when I just wanted to give up. . . . I [did not] want to do [it] anymore. But I had the foundation I [received] here . . . from playing sports. . . . [It] drove me to do what I had to do. (Vangie, 11/21/2011)

All female respondents felt that sports had a significant impact on the prioritization of their physical wellness, some even taking the element of sport as the focus in their degrees or as a career choice. One Navajo female, as Doctor of Physical Therapy at a hospital on the Navajo Nation, applied the concept of exercise as medicine for patients:

I think it is very important considering the occurrences of diabetes, heart disease and all those types of diseases that we have that are prevalent [for] the Navajo people. My coworker . . . was trying to tell patients about [how] important exercise was and she described it as medicine. She said when you go see the doctor, they give you pills. You take those pills and it makes you better. When you come to see us, we give you exercise. Exercise is your medicine. You need to do it every day for you to have any changes in the way you feel and in the way you move. (Kathleen, 11/18/2011)

According to Marie Allison (1982), *culture* is a term that has been used particularly by anthropologists to describe the actions and meanings of man in society. She says that the term refers to two aspects of society; the first being objective things such as art, music, language, dress, games, morals, language, knowledge, values, and beliefs; the second referring to the design or deep structure which guides behavior in society. The importance of Allison's study is that it confirms that patterns for behavior are established within the perimeters of a people and that these patterns, over time, can be modified because of the dynamic and changing nature of culture. The Navajo people have had athletics incorporated as part of their culture long before the introduction of the boarding

school system. The nature of athletics for Diné has been reshaped over the past 50 years, even going so far as to replace cultural practices that marked or highlighted athleticism, endurance, and stamina for Diné youth.

One such cultural teaching of the Diné is to greet the new day, Morning Twilight, with a run to the east. Wilson Aronilth (1991) explained that the foundation of a young woman's role in life is based on Hozhó, or beauty. He wrote:

Everything she does is finished in beauty. This is a young woman's responsibility. Her activities are to develop courage, mental strength, hope and love, to live beautifully. A young woman was taught to become aware of her values during the process of her growth. She is told one becomes aware of her immediate discipline, education, teachings, beliefs, culture, her mind and thoughts, by rising early in the morning and running towards the East direction to greet and meet the spirit of Early Dawn. This is where the roots and foundation of good thoughts, thinking and materialistic values are found. (p. 165)

The practice of greeting the Early Dawn has been replaced by activities, such as the sport of volleyball, and other sporting events, to serve as a platform for Navajo youth to display their athleticism, mark their stamina and endurance, and serve as a rite of passage. It has even gone so far as to unite the Diné community. Reyhner and Eder (2004) wrote that "athletics . . . served a valuable purpose in bringing together dispersed Navajo camps and providing recreation for young Navajos" (p. 270). Ingalls et al. (2006) shared that research literature supports the notion that "cultural context has a significant impact on educational outcomes for minority students" (p. 16). Their research further affirms that cultural teachings, such as greeting the Early Dawn in a run to the East, still thrives with families in the 21st century.

Recommendations for Action

Implications for educators and those vested in athletics at the secondary and collegiate level should focus on the following areas: leadership, influence of athletics on postsecondary education, role of coaches and mentors, and key elements of Diné cultural beliefs and tradition.

Leadership

Educators must implement leadership academies for Navajo youth within the infrastructure of their schools. The leadership academies must be aligned with Navajo leadership concepts of Hózhóóji k'ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on peace) and Naayéé'ek'ehgo Nanitin (leadership based on protection).

Postsecondary Success

- College preparation courses must be offered to all students in high school. Navajo student athletes recommended that college preparation (i.e., admissions, research on possible schools, scholarship search, resume building, etc.) should be begin as early as possible in high school.
- High schools should continuously challenge the student body and encourage enrollment in rigorous coursework (i.e., Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses) as a way to prepare for the demands of college rigor.
- High school teachers, club sponsors, coaches, and school counselors should encourage high school students to participate in extra-curricular activities to promote the importance of volunteerism. Volunteerism is often a requisite for college and scholarship applications.

Role of Coaches and Mentors

- Educators, especially those with direct involvement in extracurricular activities (e.g., athletics), should be aware that the role of coaches and other mentors are a direct influence in the lives of Navajo student athletes.
- Educators, namely administrators, should include professional development for coaching staff, paying particular attention to goal setting, character development, and leadership development of Navajo student athletes.

Key Elements of Diné Cultural Beliefs

- Educators must understand that a holistic education is more culturally sensitive for Navajo students. Holistic education “is a balanced educational system [that] addresses the child’s total mind, body and spiritual (self-esteem, not religious) needs” (Fitzpatrick, 1985, p. 1).

Implications for further research fall within the following categories:

leadership, influence of athletics on postsecondary education, role of coaches and mentors, and key elements of Diné cultural beliefs and tradition.

Leadership

- Indicators used to describe leadership such as aspiration, academic performance, character traits, and future planning are all applied to Indigenous leadership. This practice of research perpetuates the Euro-centric mindset and should be revisited and reexamined so that an Indigenous paradigm exists, forcing a redirection of research on American Indian leadership.

Volleyball and Postsecondary Success

- A longitudinal study is necessary to track Navajo female student athletes from the beginning of their high school academic and athletic careers at Monument Valley High School and other high schools on the Navajo Nation to cross-examine the effectiveness of volleyball and academic programs of these different high schools.
- Data from this study has concluded that Navajo female student athletes are more likely to complete college than their Navajo male counterparts. Additional research needs to be done to further study this discrepancy.

Role of Coaches and Mentors

- Navajo female student athletes spoke vehemently as to the role coaches played in their lives. Further research must be done to study the effectiveness of coaches in schools across the Navajo Nation.
- The role of Navajo female student athletes as role models is a necessary area of study that is neglected or hardly touched.

Key Elements of Diné Beliefs

- Navajo Nation listed Navajo Language and Navajo Government courses that were required to receive Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship Funding, but further research should be done to study the effectiveness of this requirement and its relationship to success in higher education.

Concluding Remarks

Grandma Sadie, an aunt to my father and sister to my Nalí (paternal grandmother), Irene Wilson Yellowhair, never received a formal western

education, nor was she ever uprooted from the home of her parents Tom and Zonnie Wilson at Tselchíbito (Red Rock Springs), Arizona to acculturate to mainstream society. I am thankful for this because her mind, her thinking, has remained untouched by the Euro-centric ideals that plague many Indigenous people today.

My great-grandfather, Tom Wilson, chose Grandma Sadie as Tó Aszdáán (Morning Water Woman) for the Azeé Bee Nahagha of Diné Nation (ABNDN) ceremonies he conducted when Grandma Sadie was only 12 years old. She has always been sought as the spiritual advisor amongst her siblings, children, and grandchildren since.

The role of Tó Aszdáán (Morning Water Woman) is a revered one in Native American church ceremonies because the woman chosen is often the epitome of the ideal woman, much like the Asdzáá Nádleehé or White Shell Woman is for all Navajo females. My grandfather, Tom Wilson, taught Grandma Sadie that she was representation of the female aspect of the ceremony and was the individual who brings in the morning water during the ABNDN ceremony. There is a time in the ceremony, right before the coming of Morning Twilight, when Tó Aszdáán is asked to bring in Morning Water and offer a prayer to the Diyin Dine'e using ceremonial tobacco.

Grandma Sadie through this ceremony was made well aware of how the western society would educate and immerse the Navajo in the teachings and value system of mainstream society. As Morning Water Woman she became aware of

how many Diné were fulfilling the role of being educated in two worlds, becoming bilingual and bicultural. This fascinated her.

So as Tó Aszdáán (Morning Water Woman), Grandma Sadie sat before the sacred alter, the fireplace, and offered prayers to the fireplace hoping that someday her own children and grandchildren, those born to Tom and Zonnie Wilson, would prosper with the knowledge established for them through the Hózhóóji (Beauty Way Chants) and the ABNDN ceremonies. These ceremonies are the foundation of all generations to come.

During the offerings of prayer, while sitting before the sacred alter (fireplace) of these ceremonies, visions came to her. She saw her grandchildren, through positive attitudes and much diligence, meeting their educational goals, thriving with biculturalism. Even though she regrets not going to school, she understands that serving as spiritual advisor for the family was essential in carrying on the traditional ways of her father.

Today, my father, Thomas J. Yellowhair, understands how her prayers have been brought to fruition, and how her prayers have had a lasting impact on the generations of the Tom and Zonnie Wilson, Sadie Wilson, and James and Irene Wilson Yellowhair. Grandma Sadie always knew that it was important to set a goal, strive for these goals earnestly, and work diligently toward the attainment of these goals with enthusiasm. Most importantly, she understood that one must have spiritual guidance, endurance, and determination. Since the time my great grandfather, Tom Wilson, chose Grandma Sadie as Tó Aszdáán, 73 years have passed; she will be 85 in April of 2012. Today, James and Irene Wilson

Yellowhair and Sadie Wilson families have produced 33 college degrees amongst their children and grandchildren; and two doctoral degrees will be added the spring of 2012.

Grandma Sadie was chosen by her father to carry out the role of Tó Aszdáán (Morning Water Woman) just like my father chose me as a warrior, and named me Áhozho' Yildeezbáá, which means “She who seeks blessings of happiness and beauty on a warrior’s path.” Following the example set by Grandma Sadie, this role bestowed upon me will, too, be fulfilled with the utmost efficient and careful way possible.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define 'leader'?
2. How did you view yourself in high school . . . were you a leader? Why or why not?
3. Now that you're out of high school and working/going to college, what positive experiences at MVHS prepared you for college success? And what recommendations would you make to better prepare ALL students for college success?
4. What is your general observation of female athletes' college enrollment and postsecondary academic success? How does that compare to male athletes?
5. What skills do sports teach student athletes that prepare them for college enrollment, postsecondary academic success, and life?
6. What advice would you give/have for American Indian youth, especially females, in their quest to attend, persevere, and succeed academically in college?
7. What skills are necessary for college success?
8. What do you attribute these skills to (i.e. home, school, sports, culture, teachers, coaches, family, friends)?
9. Explain the importance or non-importance of Navajo tradition and culture in your life?
10. What people were most influential in your life (i.e. childhood, high school, college)?
11. What impact has athletics had on your life?
12. How important are games/sports/physical fitness to Navajo people? Specifically women?
13. How much of an impact did former MVHS athletic scholarship winners have on your desire to attend college (+/-)?

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM KAYENTA TOWNSHIP COMMISSION



Navajo Nation Kayenta Chapter
 Post Office Box 1088
 Kayenta Chapter, Navajo Nation, AZ 86033
 Chapter Resolution



Resolution No: KT10-008-11

KAYENTA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP HEREBY SUPPORTS TREVA C. GILMORE IN WRITING A DISSERTATION WITH RESEARCH DATA INVOLVING THE TOWN OF KAYENTA, KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #27, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS,

1. Kayenta Chapter is a Local Governance Act (LGA) certified Chapter pursuant to 26 NNC; and,
2. Kayenta Chapter is authorized by the Navajo Nation and the Kayenta Chapter membership to hear, support, and recommend resolutions regarding local matters as allowed by the laws of the Navajo Nation and US Federal Government; and,
3. Ms. Treva Gilmore is a registered voter and community member in good standings with Kayenta Chapter; and
4. Ms. Gilmore is in the process of writing a dissertation which requires that the researcher seek support from the communities that will be a source of data for any research topic; and,
5. The research will give Ms. Gilmore the opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, Dine Culture, coaching/mentoring of student-athletes, and the community has on the lives of Navajo female student-athletes in their post-secondary success.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

KAYENTA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP HEREBY SUPPORTS TREVA C. GILMORE IN WRITING A DISSERTATION WITH RESEARCH DATA INVOLVING THE TOWN OF KAYENTA, KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #27, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

CERTIFICATION

WE hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Kayenta Chapter, Kayenta, Navajo Nation, Arizona, at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 46 in favor, 0 opposed, and 6 abstaining, this 17th day of November, 2010.

Motioned By: Roy Laughter Seconded By: Anita Singer

Stanley Clitso
 Stanley Clitso, Kayenta Chapter President

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Navajo Nation Kayenta Chapter
 Post Office Box 1088
 Kayenta Chapter, Navajo Nation, AZ 86033
 Chapter Resolution



Resolution No: KT10-008-11

KAYENTA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP HEREBY SUPPORTS TREVA C. GILMORE IN WRITING A DISSERTATION WITH RESEARCH DATA INVOLVING THE TOWN OF KAYENTA, KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #27, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS,

1. Kayenta Chapter is a Local Governance Act (LGA) certified Chapter pursuant to 26 NNC; and,
2. Kayenta Chapter is authorized by the Navajo Nation and the Kayenta Chapter membership to hear, support, and recommend resolutions regarding local matters as allowed by the laws of the Navajo Nation and US Federal Government; and,
3. Ms. Treva Gilmore is a registered voter and community member in good standings with Kayenta Chapter; and
4. Ms. Gilmore is in the process of writing a dissertation which requires that the researcher seek support from the communities that will be a source of data for any research topic; and,
5. The research will give Ms. Gilmore the opportunity to gain in-depth understanding of the impact athletics, Dine Culture, coaching/mentoring of student-athletes, and the community has on the lives of Navajo female student-athletes in their post-secondary success.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

KAYENTA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP HEREBY SUPPORTS TREVA C. GILMORE IN WRITING A DISSERTATION WITH RESEARCH DATA INVOLVING THE TOWN OF KAYENTA, KAYENTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #27, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

CERTIFICATION

WE hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Kayenta Chapter, Kayenta, Navajo Nation, Arizona, at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 46 in favor, 0 opposed, and 6 abstaining, this 17th day of November, 2010.

Motioned By: Roy Laughter Seconded By: Anita Singer

Stanley Clitso
 Stanley Clitso, Kayenta Chapter President

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM NAVAJO NATION KAYENTA CHAPTER



Office of the Superintendent of Schools

November 17, 2010

Treva Gilmore
Monument Valley High School
Kayenta, AZ 86033

Dear Ms. Gilmore:

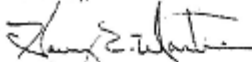
At our regularly scheduled School Board meeting of November 10, 2010 the Board voted 4-0 in favor of supporting your research project that will be used in your dissertation. As superintendent, I also approve of the research project and look forward to your results after you have identified, described, and analyzed Navajo female participation in high school volleyball and the impact/correlation it has on their success in higher education.

This letter is written as an approving resolution from the Board and me as part of your fulfillment of Phase I (Community Partnership) in the twelve phase review and approval process of the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board (NNHRRB) and also as approval for Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

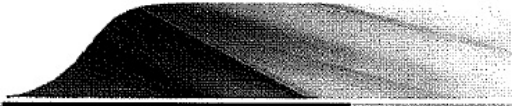
Just as a reminder to you I am also enclosing our School Board Policy **GCS Professional Research and Publishing** which states that the Board has proprietary rights to publications and if the District is mentioned in any published materials that they will first be submitted to the Superintendent prior to release for publication.

We wish you well in your efforts.

Sincerely,


Harry E. Martin
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX E
ASU IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Dee Spencer
Trevia C. Gilmore

fb **From:** Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 01/19/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 01/19/2011

IRB Protocol #: 1101005857

Study Title: Navajo Female Participation in High School Volleyball and Its Correlation/Impact on
Post-secondary Success

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

Arizona State University
Office of Research Integrity and
Assurance
P.O. Box 871103
Tempe, AZ 85287-1103
Phone: 480-965-6788
Fax: (480) 965-7772



For Office Use Only:
Date Received:
HS Number:

1101005857

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH**

PROTOCOL TITLE: Navajo Female Participation in High School Volleyball and Its Correlation/Impact on Post-secondary Success		DATE OF REQUEST: 11/29/2010
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dee Ann Spencer, Ph.D.	DEPARTMENT/CENTER: Education Leadership and Innovation	UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify. ("Other" categories may require prior approval. Students can not serve as the Principal Investigator) Senior Research Professional
CAMPUS ADDRESS: (include campus mail code) Education Leadership and Innovation Tempe 85287-1811	PHONE: 480-759-4633 E-MAIL: dspencer@asu.edu	
<small>List all co-investigators. (Attach an extra sheet, if necessary.) A co-investigator is anyone who has responsibility for the project's design, implementation, data collection, data analysis, or who has contact with study participants.</small>		
CO-INVESTIGATOR: Treva C. Gilmore	DEPARTMENT/CENTER: Education Leadership and Innovation	UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION: <input type="checkbox"/> Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify. Doctoral student
CAMPUS ADDRESS: (include campus mail code) P.O. Box 2779 Kayenta, AZ 86033	PHONE: (928)221-9202 EMAIL: trevacy@asu.edu	
CO-INVESTIGATOR: Nicholas Appleton, Ph.D.	DEPARTMENT/CENTER: Education Leadership and Innovation	UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify.
CAMPUS ADDRESS: (include campus mail code) Education Leadership and Innovation Tempe 85287-1811	PHONE: EMAIL: Nicholas.appleton@asu.edu	

APPENDIX F

NAVAJO NATION HISTORICAL PRESERVATION PERMIT



**THE
NAVAJO
NATION**

2/11

**BEN SHELLY
PRESIDENT**

**REX LEE JIM
VICE-PRESIDENT**

**NAVAJO NATION
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION PERMIT**

PERMIT NUMBER C1105-E

Pursuant to the authority of Section 302 of the Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Protection Act (CMY-19-88), permission is hereby granted to TREVA C. GILMORE, P.O. BOX 2779, KAYENTA, ARIZONA 86033 to conduct RESEARCH STUDY WILL IDENTIFY, DESCRIBE, AND ANALYZE NAVAJO FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL AND THE IMPACT /CORRELATION IT HAS ON THE ENDEAVERS/SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION, KAYENTA, NAVAJO COUNTY, ARIZONA

1. Name and Title of Person in:
 - A. General Charge: TREVA C. GILMORE
 - B. Direct Charge: TREVA C. GILMORE
 - C. Project Members: AS ABOVE

2. On Lands Described as Follows: KAYENTA CHAPTER, WESTERN AGENCY, ARIZONA

3. Permission is Granted for a Period of: ELEVEN MONTHS BEGINNING FEBRUARY 01, 2011 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011

4. Standard Stipulations: This permit is granted subject to the Permittee adhering to the following stipulations. Failure to conform strictly to these conditions may result in suspension or revocation of this Permit and may affect the Permittee's ability to obtain similar Permits from the Navajo Nation in the future.
 - A. The Permittee will provide five days advance written notice to the Historic Preservation Officer prior to initiation of any of the activities authorized under this Permit. The Permitted will also provide written notice to the Historic Preservation Officer upon the completion of field work authorized under this permit. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**

- B. A copy of this Permit must be in the possession of field workers at all times when they are conducting field work under the authority of this Permit.


- C. The Permittee will exclusively employ Navajos for all positions to the extent that qualified Navajos are available.

- D. This Permit is not a grant of authority.
 - 1. Prior to initiating field work, the permittee must notify Chapter Officials (President, Vice President, Secretary, or Manger) to familiarize them with the proposed field work and the provisions of the Permit.

 - 2. The Permittee must inform any potential interviewee that he/she is not required to consent to interviews or to cooperate otherwise with the Permittee.
 - (a) If the interviewee does consent to be interviewed, the researcher must get the signed consent of the interviewee for publication and other use of the information, use of their name, and how they are to be given credit for providing information. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**

 - (b) Reports and publications will follow conditions set by the interviewees on publication of information, use of their names, and how they are to be credited. **THIS IS NECESSARY ONLY FOR NON-SECTION 106 CLASS C ETHNOGRAPHIC PERMITS**

PERMIT GRANTED,


Alan S. Downer
Historic Preservation Officer

APPENDIX G

NAVAJO NATION INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



**THE
NAVAJO
NATION**
P.O. BOX 9000 – WINDOW ROCK, ARIZONA 86515

BEN SHELLY
PRESIDENT

REX LEE JIM
VICE PRESIDENT

March 10, 2011

Ms. Treva C. Gilmore
Arizona State University
PO Box 2779
Kayenta, AZ 86033

Dear Ms. Gilmore:

This is to advise you that **Study #NNR-11.93T "Navajo Female Participation in High School Volleyball and its Correlation/Impact on Post-secondary Success"** was presented to Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board on February 15, 2011 and your initial research protocol was considered. The Board approved your research study with the following conditions:

- Page 12 – Consent Form needs Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board (NNHRRB) as the first contact;
- Submit the Consent Form to NNHRRB to be stamped and signed by the Board Chairperson;
- Need ASU IRB approval letter
- Sent letter to IHS Director on HIPPA and confidentiality issue; and
- Need for you to submit Historic Preservation Permit.
- The Board approved the research protocol effective from **February 15, 2011 to February 15, 2012**, and
- We have assigned a permanent **ID# NNR-10.300** to reference all documents pertinent to the research study.

Additional contingencies are:

The Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has added a very important additional contingency regarding failure to comply with NNHRRB rules, regulations, and submittal of reports which could result in sanctions being placed against your project. This could also affect your funding source and the principal investigator. **Under Part Five: Certification**, please note paragraph five wherein it states: *"I agree not to proceed in the research until the problems have been resolved or the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board has reviewed and approved the changes."* Therefore, it is very important to submit quarterly and annual reports on time and if continuation is warranted submit a letter of request sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date.

The following are requirements that apply to all research studies:

1. The Navajo Nation retains ownership of all data obtained within its territorial boundaries. The Principal Investigator shall submit to the NNHRRB a plan and timeline on how and when the data/statistics will be turned over to the Navajo Nation;
2. Only the approved informed consent document(s) will be used in the study;
3. Any proposed future changes to the protocol or the consent form(s) must again be submitted to the Board for review and approval prior to implementation of the proposed change;

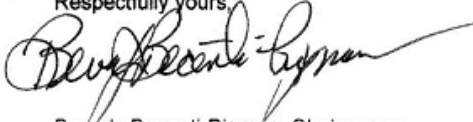
4. If the results of the study will be published or used for oral presentations at professional conferences, the proposed publication, abstract and/or presentation materials must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board review and prior approval;
5. Upon Board approval, three (3) copies of the final publication must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program;
6. All manuscripts must be submitted to the Navajo Research Program for Board Review and prior approval;
7. The Principal Investigator must submit a dissemination plan on how the results of the study and how these results will be reported back to the Navajo Nation. The Principal Investigator must share specifically how these results will generally benefit or improve the health of the Navajo people. This can be completed by:
 - a. Conducting an educational in-service for the community people and health care providers on the Navajo Nation and present the findings. Provide documentation of these in-services presented.
 - b. Developing educational materials for use by the health care providers and the community people and providing the training on how to use the materials; and
 - c. Presenting and sharing the results of the study at a research conference sponsored by the Navajo Nation for its health care providers and the Navajo people.
8. The Principal Investigator is expected to submit documentation on 7a, b, & c.
9. The Principal Investigator must submit quarterly and annual reports as scheduled.

This approval will automatically expire on **February 15, 2012** unless sooner suspended, revoked or terminated by action of the Board. A continuation of the research project may be requested by submitting a written request at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date to the:

Navajo Division of Health – Research Program
 Post Office Box 1390
 Window Rock, Arizona 86515

If you have any questions, please call the Navajo Research Program at (928) 871– 6650 or 6929.

Respectfully yours,



Beverly Becenti-Pigman, Chairperson
 Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board

Cc: Beverly Becenti-Pigman
 NNR-11.300
 Chrono