

SOCIOLOGY SENIOR EXERCISE

"The color of the ball is always the same"

African-American Students' Experiences Through Athletics at Kenyon College

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This study focuses on how the race of African American student-athletes has influenced the social, educational, and athletic college experience on the predominantly white campus of Kenyon College and the ways in which these experiences have changed in the past 20 years.

Through the use of individual semi-structured interviews, 9 current athletes and 4 Kenyon alumni who all graduated between 1984 and 1990 reported on their experiences through athletic at Kenyon. The study found that race affected nearly all of the participants' college experience, but the degree and scope of these effects varied greatly between participants. Current students were found to be more vocal about racial dialogue than alumni, who mainly pointed to the lack of institutional support and low enrollment of African American as creating a racially "unconscious" campus climate during the late 1980s. Ultimately athletics played a prominent, positive, and enjoyable role in the formation of the participants' Kenyon experience and were used as a central mechanism in the academic and social success of these African American student-athletes.

Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio is an institution rich in history and traditions that date back to its founding in 1824. Along with a long tradition of academic excellence, athletics have played a role in campus life since 1859 with the formation of Kenyon's first baseball team (Kenyon Athletic Website 2009). Today, approximately 30% of Kenyon's student body participates in varsity athletics on 22 different varsity teams hosted by the College (Kenyon Athletic Website). It is the goal of Kenyon College that athletics serve to instill values that foster leadership, self-discipline, and teamwork while mirroring the success, quality, and rigor that is found through Kenyon's academic excellence (Kenyon Athletic Mission Statement 2009). Due to Kenyon's relatively small size, the emphasis placed on community throughout campus, and the school's dedication to students' academic success, the term student-athlete is a thoroughly accurate representation of the role of athletics in the lives of the students who choose to play. To participate in athletics at Kenyon means to take on an added set of responsibility, to dedicate a significant portion of one's time, and engage in the mental and physical rigors that come with playing sports, all while balancing the responsibilities that are required of Kenyon students in the classroom. Throughout the years, participation in sports has most likely assisted in creating a unique and valuable college experience (Campbell 2002, Dunn et al. 2001) for many of the student-athletes who have passed through Kenyon.

However, the college experience of the student-athlete is hardly the only unique path traveled by students at Kenyon. Today at Kenyon, the college emphasizes building a community that values tolerance and mutual respect, and a spirit of openness to others that embraces race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality (Kenyon Diversity website 2009). Yet, when one examines the history of this college it is evident that for the majority of Kenyon's existence as an educational institution, it has catered primarily to upper-class white males. While the diversity of the Kenyon student body has increased significantly since the 19th century, even today this legacy of racial homogeneity remains a strong influence on campus culture. The history of African Americans enrolled in the College only dates back a little over half a century and, even today African American students are still significantly underrepresented among Kenyon's student body. Like at many other small private colleges, Kenyon's predominantly white culture can pose obstacles for many minority students. Regardless of these possible challenges, many African American students have made the decision to attend Kenyon College in the past 60 years.

Throughout the history of African Americans at Kenyon College, these students have found a wide variety of ways to become thoroughly successful at Kenyon. Among these students, a significant number have also chosen to represent the Lords and Ladies through their participation in varsity athletics. Beginning with the first African American students at Kenyon, athletic participation has remained a common trend among African American students of the College. Throughout the years, African American students at Kenyon have chosen to participate in sports most often knowing that they would be one of few, if not the only, racial minorities on their team. With the intensive commitment necessary to participate in athletics at Kenyon, these student-athletes spend a significant proportion of their time at Kenyon working with their fellow

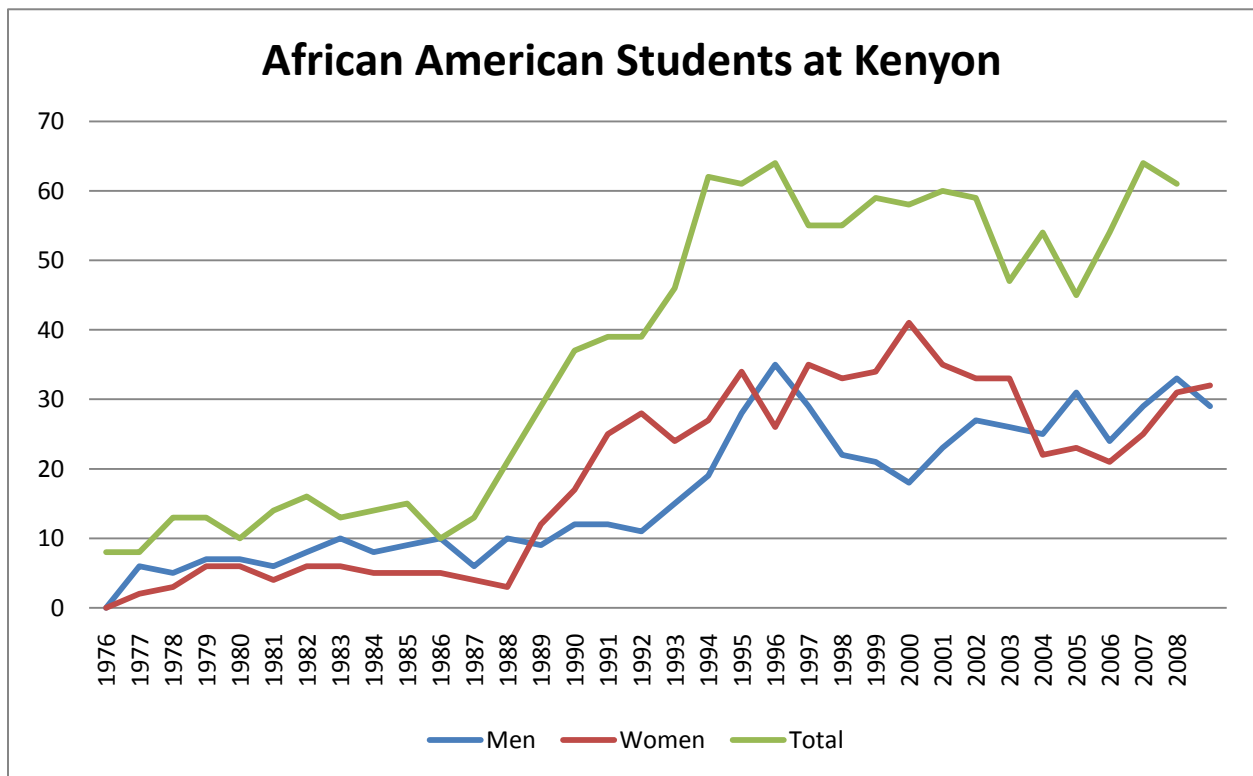
teammates in the pursuit of their sport, adding the uniqueness of athletic participation to their already distinct role as African Americans on a predominantly white campus. While the causes of this underrepresentation are many and complex, this project aims to examine the experiences of some of these African American student-athletes who have attended Kenyon College.

This research project will examine how participating in Division III athletics at Kenyon affects the athletic and collegiate experience of African-American athletes. Through this research I would like to find out not only a) how current African American students and African American Alumni perceive that their race has influenced their own athletic participation, but also b) if their relationships and experiences formed on campus through athletics have affected other aspects of their academic, social, and cultural experience at Kenyon. Lastly, I will examine c) if the reported opinions on the state of racial diversity, tolerance, and institutional support at Kenyon have changed for African American alumni and current students in the past 20 years.

While many African American student-athletes today are celebrated by the college and the community, rarely are their experiences study and shared. I believe that by examining the ways in which race influences the African American student-athletes' experience at Kenyon, we will be able to see how and if sports has played a role in the development of a positive and successful college experience for the African American students participating in this study. Through this research I hope to uncover and describe the intricate and subtle social interactions that have helped build the Kenyon experience for these student-athletes. I believe that examining this perspective of the Kenyon community will significantly contribute to the dialogue about the African American student experience and possibly help the greater Kenyon community in becoming more aware and supportive of these students' experiences.

A History of African American students at Kenyon

In order to fully understand the relevance and scope of this research project a brief history of African American students at Kenyon is required. In 1949, at the urging of Kenyon faculty, the first two African American students, Allan B. Ballard and Stanley L. Jackson, were matriculated into Kenyon's class of 1952 (Greenwood 2001). Since 1949, African American students have continued, at varying enrollment rates, to pass through and graduate from Kenyon College. By 1982, in the 30 years after the graduation of Ballard and Stanley, Kenyon had graduated only 31 African American students (Greenwood 2001). The following table provides a look at Kenyon enrollment of African American students since 1976.



From 1976 to 1981, enrollment of African American students on campus began to amount to an average of around 9 students during any given year (Kenyon Registrar Statistics). Starting in 1983, there were 16 African American students on campus, a total enrollment count

that would stay relatively consistent until the late 1980s. The freshmen class of the 1988-1989 academic year was the first class to include at least 10 African American students, a trend that continued to increase into the 1990s. In the early half of the 1990s, Kenyon saw a dramatic increase of African American students on campus. One possible cause of this increase in African American students is the correspondence of the college's active multicultural recruiting through admission and the development of the Multicultural Affairs office at Kenyon.

Literature Review

For years, the topic of African American students in higher education has been explored by researchers. Numerous researchers have found that for many African American students' academic achievement and their success of social experiences have often related strongly to the type of "environment" within the institution (Allen 1992, Feagin et al 1996, Chwalisz 2007). Multiple studies have found that predominately white institutions often affect the academic, social, and career experiences of African American students and faculty on those college campuses (Feagin et al 1996, Lee et al 2001, Allison 2008, Guiffrida 2005). These researchers point to cultural differences, alienation, stereotyping, and expectation as leading to the marginalization of some African Americans within these institutions. These experiences of African Americans within predominately white institutions have at times been shown to even directly impose negative psychological and social pressures on African Americans' participation within predominately white institutions (Heppner 2004, Marolla et al 2005).

At Kenyon College, with 81% of the student body and 90% of the faculty being caucasian (Princeton Review 2009), the college can thoroughly be classified as a predominately white environment. In previous studies, African American students have reported not feeling

recognized and feeling marginalized within predominantly white institutions, which often affected students' academic success (Phillips 2005, Feagin et al. 1996). These studies suggest that central to the academic experience of the African American student is the analysis of students' perception of inclusion on campus and their perspectives on current campus environments. These studies point to the relationship between social connections, achievement, and retention of African-American students at predominately white colleges.

In no other country in the world is athletics so embedded within the institutional structure of higher education as in the United States (Bowen et al. 2003). As previously mentioned, at Kenyon athletics have played a role in campus life since 1859 with the formation of Kenyon's first baseball team (Kenyon Athletic Website 2009). According to many studies, participation in college athletics can be a very successful way to enrich a student's experience (Campbell 2002, Dunn e. al. 2001). In this current research project, with the prominent role that athletics play in campus culture and college representation, studying African American student-athletes will present some very unique views of the Kenyon experience that would otherwise be difficult to qualify.

This study will attempt to investigate the ways in which these athletes perceive that their race and their athletic participation have affected their own ideas of identity on campus. Within the institutional setting, identity is important because of its ability to locate individuals within the social space by attaching symbolic representation that can vary across interactions and situations (Howard 2000). These symbolic references can arise from one's own conception of role and place on campus. This representation can then be used by the individuals to construct his or her own idea of his or her place within the social space and serve as a reference for other social actors to interact with and treat the individual (Howard 2000). When applied to the context of

this research, this theory of the formation of identity may be applied in a variety of fashions. Within the institution, many studies point to group membership as assisting in identity formation, by providing a context for others and the individual to classify themselves by. As Burke reinforces, a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group can have a profound impact on the development of social identity (2000). These social groups hold common social identifications and exist only in relation to other contrasting categories (Burke 2000). This membership in turn has profound impacts on the formation, adjustment, and continuance of entity for an individual as according to the appropriate cultural scripts of the environment (Ceruelo 1997). With these ideas of identity through group membership, through this study the role of race and athletic participation (among other factors) should both play a part in the formation of campus identity for African American student-athletes. Each characteristic separates these individuals from the greater population, but also allows for possible particular in-group definition of either being an African American student or being a member of their team. With these options of inclusion into either of these social groups come the social status, benefits, and detriments of each group's membership. Under these conceptions it is then up to the individual to decide the ways in which they would like their identity to encompass the influence of their affiliated social groups.

While this may account for a certain aspect of identity formation, more recent work points to the idea of individuals possessing multiple identities that help them more thoroughly cope with the dynamic nature of their lives. As proposed by Burke, there are at least three kinds of identities that exist: role identities, social identities, and personal identities (2004). When applied to the context of African American college students these three identities represent very distinct aspects of these students' lives. Within the context of a college campus, role identity can

be seen as their identity as a student of the college, social identity can be seen as their identity created by their race, culture, class, and gender, and personal identity can be seen as their interpersonal identity interacting with others individuals on campus (Jaret et al. 2006). Each identity can be used to deal with academic, social, or professional expectations within the average campus lifestyle, but the question still remains of how the added responsibility of athletic participation influences this multifaceted development of identity.

While there has been a significant amount of literature published on the subject of African American athletes (Siegel 1994; Sailes 1993), these studies have almost exclusively focused on the perspective of Division I athletes, the college sports industry, and the stereotypes that influence the experience of these athletes. According to one study of African American males participating in big time college football programs, these athletes felt that while they derived certain tangible and intangible benefits from being participants in this football program, the term 'student-athlete' was an inaccurate description of who they were, especially given the expectations and tremendous time demands their participation in football related activities placed on them (Singer 2008). Here at Kenyon, while athletic participation can still be very time-consuming and rigorous, under the rules of Division III athletics, the lack of athletic scholarships and industry surrounding Division I experiences most likely will render this perspective not exactly applicable to the reported experience of Kenyon student-athletes. It is nearly impossible to compare Kenyon College to a large state university. With Kenyon's expressed mission of keeping athletic performance closely intertwined with academic performance, it is hard to equate the experience of a Division I athlete to the intimate setting and close-knit environment provided to Kenyon student-athletes.

Factors of team formation within athletics also undoubtedly act as an influencing factor to these African American students' experience at Kenyon. Previous literature suggests that athletics is a domain in which black and white people can engage in more cooperative, less overtly antagonistic pursuits than in other fields of society (Lapchick 1995). As Brown et al. describes:

Interracial contact on an athletic team may be a setting that satisfies unobtrusively the essential conditions necessary to promote positive racial attitudes. First, athletes often are accorded equal racial status on their teams. Players typically are ranked according to their coaches' perception of their likely contribution to team success... Second, many sports require athletes to work together in order to achieve the goal of team victory. Victory is frequently the measure by which athletes and coaches gauge the achievements of their team. Whether they are on the field at the same time or competing individually, a degree of interdependence with teammates, regardless of their racial background, is required for overall team success. Third, sports often are characterized by cooperation between teammates. While some level of competition is present among individuals on the same team, cooperation is viewed as necessary for success... Fourth, athletes are often reminded frequently that team success is the ultimate goal and that they should do their best to promote and uphold the team harmony considered necessary for that success. (2003).

Through this study, athletic participation also facilitated a generalization of positive racial beliefs between the differing races on the teams studied. This was attributed to the formative experience of working towards a common goal and through constant interaction that allows for black teammates to expose white athletes to stereotype disconfirmation (Brown et al. 2003). Brown et al. go on further to assert that, among athletes playing on integrated, organized sports teams, athletic identity centrality may supersede or be discordant with racial identity centrality (2003). These ideas of the impact of team formation on racial relations will undoubtedly play a central part in this research. However, in this current study, while some of these trends may appear, the actual low numbers of African Americans participating on each particular team may also influence the perceptions of athletes at Kenyon.

This study will attempt to expand on these theories of identity formation, African American athletic and student participation at a small predominately white college, and the role

of team membership on the formation of racial identity on campus, through the reported experiences of current African American student athletes and alumni.

Methods

According to Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996), a thorough, in-depth examination of the context and meaning of African American students' experiences at predominantly white universities requires careful listening to what African American students have to say about their experiences, feelings, thoughts, and actions, and it requires looking at the institution from the African American perspective (1996). In order to examine the intricacies of the experience of African American student-athletes at Kenyon, this study was conducted using the qualitative methods of personal interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to allow each participant to describe, in their own words, their own unique experience. Through my research I first set out to answer my first two research questions: how race has influenced these students' athletic participation, and if their relationships and experiences formed on campus through athletics have affected aspects of their academic, social, and cultural experience for both past and current students.

Currently at Kenyon College there are 61 African American students (Kenyon Registrar Statistics). By researching current rosters it was determined that 14 of the 61 currently are involved in Division III athletics at Kenyon. Of these 14 students, three were seniors, two were juniors, two were sophomores, and seven were first-year students. Of this sample, seven of the athletes were female and seven of the athletes were male and together they represented eight of Kenyon's 22 athletic teams. At the time of this research, due to the presence of first-year winter and spring athletes, of the seven first-year athletes only three had completed a full season of

competition in the fall. This limited my sample of available participants to 10. After making contact, out of the 10 available athletes, nine decided to participate. With each student I conducted a 30 minute face-to-face interview in which I asked questions about the student's past experience with athletics, their decision process to attend and play sports, their perceived role on the team, their perceived relationships with their teammates, their perception of race relations and discourse on campus, and their overall self-reported satisfaction with athletics and Kenyon (For a more in-depth view of the interview questions see Appendix A). While the possibility of lack of athletic experience with first-year participants was considered, the exclusion of athletes who had not completed a season of competition allowed for a more representative account of the current experience of African American athletes at Kenyon. For the first-year participants that were able to participate it was expected that they would rely more heavily on high school experience which still played an important role in my analysis. After each interview was conducted and recorded onto tapes, the recording was transcribed.

Having investigated the experience of current students, I turned to the historical comparison of my study. For this component of research I sought to examine a time period in Kenyon's history before African American students would have begun to become more prominently represented on campus. I choose to focus my research 20 years back and interview graduates between the years of 1986 and 1990. It is important to note that only graduates of this time period were used in this study for my analysis of alumni. This was in order to ensure that every participant would be drawing from experiences during the 1980s and not from after 1990. When examining the 4-year span from 1986-1990, 20 years from the completion of this current academic year, with the help of Kenyon's Office of Multicultural Affairs I generated a list of only 15 African American graduated seniors of that time period.

Worried about the number of athletes I would find within that population, I then expanded my sample two years further to 1984, which added eight more African American possible athletes to my sample. This period of six years as opposed to four years ended up being crucial in maintaining the 20 year separation of my two research groups while expanding my alumni sample of athletes. I was able to compile a list of all 23 graduates of Kenyon College from the classes of 1984 to 1990. Next, with the help of Kenyon's Director of Sports information and Kenyon's archives, through further research, I was able to identify 10 African American students who possibly had participated in athletics during their time here at Kenyon. Of these 10 student athletes two were female and eight were male and together they represented seven of Kenyon's 22 varsity programs.

After the potential interview candidates' contact information was gathered with the help of Kenyon's Alumni Relations office, each was contacted by email about the nature of this research project and their willingness to participate in phone interviews. From these initial emails, four responded and were willing to participate, with each alumnus representing a different sports team at Kenyon. Unfortunately, this sample yielded no variation in gender. However, this was read as an inopportune byproduct of my low sample size to begin with and I had to continue with the project regardless. Through further correspondence interview times were scheduled and carried out. Each alumni interview lasted an average of 30 minutes and used the same semi-structured interview questions and procedures as that of the current student interviews. Each interview was recorded using a portable tape recorder and then each interview was transcribed.

After all of the data was transferred into transcripts, all identifiable information including names, class years, and sports were removed in accordance with the consent form signed by all

participants. After this process the only identifiable information that existed was the participant's status as a lower classmen, upperclassmen, or alumni, and the participant's gender. Each participant was assigned a number attached to their gender (example: Male 1, Female 1, Alumni 1, etc) for identification throughout the rest of the project. Next, I began the analysis of the data by going through each interview and coding for the different themes and valuable information that was present. Excerpts from the data were categorized into 11 (see appendix B) different categories that each represented a different aspect of these student-athletes' college experiences. After each interview was coded, similar and relevant quotes were gathered and placed into separate files for further analysis.

Analysis

While attempting to answer my original questions of the ways that race had influenced these African American students' campus and athletic participation at Kenyon, I quickly found that in order to truly understand each perspective I needed to build a picture of what role race played on campus during each time period. By using the opinions of alumni and current students I was able to construct a picture of the campus that these participants experienced.

State of Racial Dialogue on Campus

When collecting the responses of both participant groups, it seems that there has been much change in the way that race was discussed on campus. The responses from the alumni from 1984-1990 told of little discussion on campus when it came to racial issues:

DM: Do you feel important issues pertaining to race were discussed enough on campus?

Alum1: Enough? No there was very little discussion when I was a student. Amongst ourselves there was. But in a broader sense? A campus wide sense? No none at all, very little. And so yes the answer is there should have been a lot more but it was something that wasn't talked about.

Alum 2: No. In my class there were fewer than 4 African American people so it was a very small portion of the student population. So it wasn't raised in a way where there was concern or frustration or anything like that, it was more that people just got on with it and it was a non issue really.

Alum 3: Yea we had a couple of people who were sort of radicals, and they kind of had their own little issue.

Alum 4: Not really. No...no...No I mean it was definitely a bit of an adjustment for me my freshmen year... We were few and I think there were one or two people who had "issues" or whatever, but I think for everyone else, just kind of it is what it is, I'm here for an education and I'm just going to participate. So it wasn't a factor of them trying to be separate or anything.

From these alumni's prospective, it seemed race was hardly, if ever, discussed by these students or the greater Kenyon community. Many Alumni reported that the lack of discussion was due to low numbers of African Americans. When asked if diversity was celebrated on campus, each alumni participant replied no, citing their previous comments. As Alum 2 reports, "It was a non-issue really," leading me to believe, in conjunction with the other statements, that these students felt that Kenyon's overall view on race held an idea of color blindness, including minority students who did not recognize or dwell on their differences. It also seemed that very few students were vocal about their concerns about racial diversity and when they did were not taken very seriously by some of the other African American students on campus.

When the same questions were posed to current African American students, there was a considerably different focus in the responses of the students. As one male student replied:

DM: Do you feel important issues pertaining to race are discussed enough on campus?

Male 4: I don't think it's discussed enough. I think people need to be more comfortable with the topic and it would... it would just make life easier even if the topic wasn't something negative is happening. It just prevents a lot of things. I think the big problem is when people discuss more it [eliminates] a lot of ignorance. I don't think, I think these days racism is more about ignorance then it is necessarily hate.

Here participants focused more on the question on whether or not there was enough dialogue and spoke to examples of some forms of discussion on campus. This student's comment represented the popular opinion among current students on the role of racial dialogue on campus. Most students acknowledged that racial dialogue does occur at Kenyon; however, they were concerned

about how these discussions often only arose after negative events on campus. Like Male 4's quote, many students expressed hopes for further constructive racial dialogue, and saw communication as a tool to improve race relations on campus. Some students expressed that they felt that there was enough or too much dialogue on campus and that sometimes "the conversation felt old and dead." However, regardless of the differing opinions, all of the current participants alluded to some form of dialogue occurring on campus.

Institutional Support

Using the opinions on racial dialogue assisted in providing a basis for the understanding of some of the ways that race was perceived to have operated within the Kenyon community in 2009 and 1984-1990. Next I wanted to examine how the school as an institution was perceived in supporting these African American students. When interviewing alumni on the issue, their responses organized in fashion with their ideas on racial dialogue:

DM: Do you feel Kenyon did an adequate job supporting minority students?

Alum 1: As a minority student? No. As a student? Yea. I mean I think so but there was essentially no acknowledgement of my "blackness" not as anything that anybody would care about.

Alum 4: I don't think that they did an adequate job of support. Freshmen year you're so young and you're trying to figure out the whole thing. But there really wasn't a whole lot of support or ways to go, I don't even know who I would of talked too. At that point there wasn't any faculty... So I mean definitely there was not anything in place to make one feel [supported] if you ever did have an issue or needed someone to talk to, there was just too few of us.

Alum 3: Uh I don't think I even reached out and looked for any support because I had my support networks on the team and my coaches. So I don't think they did anything out of the ordinary. So ultimately I guess the answer would be no but I didn't need it or ask for it either.

These alumni spoke to a lack of outlets provided by the school to address the experience of African American students. As Alum 4 noted, specifically the lack of African American faculty was seen as a missing resource for students. Alum 3 spoke to using his team as his main form of

support on campus and as a result did not seek out help from the institution, further reinforcing the lack of formal support options provided to these students.

The picture painted by alumni differed greatly from that of the students of 2009. Many of the responses pointed to the efforts of the Multicultural Affairs office, Admission and Financial Aid offices, and the presence of African American faculty:

Female 2: The professors I admire them. I love my advisor [An African American Faculty member], I aspire to be just like her, as corny as that sounds, I really do, I really do, and everything about her is so admirable. And while I'm sure there are other black women who I could aspire to be like at Spellman [College] or whatever, I don't think I would meet another [like my advisor] and I'm glad Kenyon has given me the opportunity to meet people like her.

Male 4: I guess they do at times but there's also a lot of support coming from the minority administrators. But I can't say that there aren't white administrators and faculty that don't reach out to minorities so that would be an accurate statement... So I can't necessarily adequate but I'd say there is support for minority students

Male 5: Yea like with financial aid, I mean there are some people that don't need it but for those who do, it's amazing what they can do for people sometimes

These current students pointed to the multiple sources of support that came from offices and agents of the college. The presence of African American faculty and administrators also seemed to play a large part in their ideas of where this support came from. These students not only reported options but described ways in which the members of the College assisted them in adjusting to life at Kenyon.

Using the comments of the two separate groups of Kenyon students showed that over the course of 20 years, race has come to play a much larger role on campus. This can most likely be attributed to the increases in African Americans among the student body, faculty, and administration, along with the creation of offices directly focused on the support of minority students. Whatever the reasons, when examining the role that athletics plays on campus for African American students, that fact that each group lived among the conditions of these two environments were clearly reflected in their reported experiences.

Athletic Participation

The first and probably most important finding in my study was the amount of variation that came in the responses of all of my participants. My participants came from all different walks of life, backgrounds, and experiences. It soon became obvious that each participant had experienced race and athletics in their own way through their time at Kenyon. While there was much variation in responses, there were two common themes that were expressed among nearly all my participants.

Enjoyment of Athletic Experience

Not surprisingly, one of the most consistent reported experiences was the love that these current and past students expressed for the sports that they played. As one female participant expressed, “It was a heavy decision on me because obviously this is not a D1 school and I’m not receiving scholarship money to play sports at Kenyon, so playing sports here is out of the pure personal desire that I have to play sports.” This description of a “pure personal desire” and a love for athletics was one that remained consistent through many of my participants' responses:

Female 2: I would have to say that through the lows, I have enjoyed the highs a lot more. I love [my sport], I’ve been playing forever and there’s just something about it that I can’t get enough of. Even if I can’t go to that party that other students are going to, I’m happy because the next day im out [there] and I’m doing my thing. So it pays off.

Male 2: I don’t know, I just love sports.

Male 5: So it was a necessity, sports is basically my life. But without sport I don’t think I could be happy.

For nearly all of these athletes, their participation in athletics was described as an extremely positive experience and one that they enjoyed. For many of the upperclassmen and alumni, their participation in sports was described as a fundamental aspect of their Kenyon experience:

DM: How important [has/was] playing a sport been to you?

Male4: It's been invaluable. It's been priceless.

Alum 1: Absolutely, I love the sport. I love the sport more perhaps than I even did when I was in high school and a lot of that was Kenyon. I wish I could go back and play again. So I'm glad I did it I think it made me more focused.

Alum 2: I loved the sport... I know that the experience at Kenyon on the whole would have been reduced had I not had the opportunity to play.

While it is hardly a surprise, it is important to acknowledge the passion that drove these student-athletes to continue their athletic pursuits regardless of any environmental factors or pressures that some may have found to be problematic.

Value of Time Management

Another consistent response to the role of athletics in these athletes' lives was the acknowledgement of athletics assisting in these athletes' academic pursuits:

DM: Do you think playing sports here helped or hurt your academic performance?

Male 1: There's just a little bit more pressure since you don't have as much time to do your work you learn to use your time more efficiently and get things done. So in that respect it helps because I use my time more efficiently.

Female 4: I honestly think it's helped just because its time management. You know that you have to be at practice and you know that when you're not in practice and you're not in class then you need to work. You don't have that huge chunk of time to slack off like a lot of other students do.

Alum 1: I think it helped I think it always helps, maybe not for everybody, but I think anything that helps you manage your time that gives you discipline and focus is good for your academic career. And being an athlete does that. It says I know I have practice from here to there. You have to know when you're gonna study and when the season was over I definitely had a harder time.

Alum 4: Freshmen year it hurt and that was poor planning on my part, but my remaining years I tended to do better in the spring than I did in the fall, and that had to do with being more focused with my time. So I would have to use my time to study rather than goofing off or wasting time. So I definitely did better in season than out.

For these students, the division of time that was needed during athletics helped them outside of athletics budget their time wisely to keep up with their Kenyon academic pursuits. Through this study, time management consistently was described as a contributing factor of the academic success of these student-athletes.

While there were some similarities that spanned across the variety of experiences of athletic participation, when the effect of race became a more prominent factor in the analysis of these students' experiences there was a much wider range in the reported experiences of African American athletes at Kenyon.

Backgrounds and Exposure to Predominantly White Institutions

One of the most striking variations in the experiences of these different African American student-athletes was their exposure before coming to Kenyon to predominately white institutions (PWIs). This difference in back grounds appeared to be one of the most decisive factors in whether or not a student-athlete expressed concern about the lack of racial diversity.

For African American students that came from predominately black or diverse backgrounds, arriving at Kenyon presented a stark contrast to the environment they knew at home:

Male 1: Especially being from [a place] where even though there might not always be a lot of black people, there's still always a lot of minorities. Like you're always surrounded by minorities...I felt alone in the fact that at home even though there wasn't always a lot of black people, there was always a lot of Hispanic, Caribbean, whatever you want to say. So there was always another group of minorities of that I could relate to, or at least another group that I could relate to.

Male 3: When I first got [here], like my high school was predominantly black so all I knew was black people, not to say that I was racist or anything , but all I knew was black people, I had a few white friends [back home].

Alum 1: So in truth I was the only native born African American guy, and that resonated, I was like wow this is a different scene. Cause I had come from a public high school and urban school so I'd come from an entirely different environment.

For most of the current and alumni participants who described their background as being from a predominately black or diverse environment, their arrival to Kenyon was usually described as a tough adjustment period due to the shock and some discomfort they felt from being in the

significant minority. This experience played a significant role in the effect that race played on these students' college experience, which will be more thoroughly covered later in this analysis.

A significant portion of participants reported either attending PWI's or growing up in a predominately white environment. For these students the lack of racial diversity at Kenyon and on their sports teams was nothing new:

Male 5: Especially in my experience growing up I was the only black person in my grade all through school. And there was only a few in the entire school.

Female 1: I mean it's weird but it's been going on since... forever so you kind of just get used to being the minority.

Female 3: To be honest I never really thought about it. I've always been like... it's not...I don't think I've ever played with anyone else.

Alum 3: Yea that was expected and like I said in high school I was already from a rural area in Ohio, and there wasn't a lot of African Americans anyway so I was sort of used to that scenario so it wasn't surprising or shocking.

Alum 2: No I didn't because of my background...I was adopted into a white family so I was always accustomed to being in a more white environment.

Alum 4: I mean I went to a private school in Baltimore that was predominantly white so I was kind of used to that situation.

These students had thoroughly experienced being one of the few minorities in a predominately white environment. As Alum 4 and others highlight, a common perspective among how these students' background influenced their arrival and participation in athletics at Kenyon was that they were "use to it". These students reported becoming accustomed to being minorities among white populations and as a result sometimes did not consider race when analyzing their own position at Kenyon.

Ultimately through my research, I found that while prior exposure to PWIs did help some students in adjusting to life at Kenyon, students of all backgrounds expressed that their experience with athletics was a key in their improved experience as a Kenyon student athlete.

Personal Relationships

Among some students, social isolation was a common reported experience when students arrived at Kenyon. As Male 1 explains:

Male 1: In my first two years I felt very... very alone and kinda overwhelmed with everything and nothing really seemed to be going right so that made things obviously tough...

DM: Why do you think that was?

Male 1: I know for sure my freshman year I hated it because I didn't know anybody and I didn't really care to know a lot of people. That was when race was a big issue for me. I was like, its kinda bad to say, but I was like tired of all these white people.

For this student, the lack of connection that he felt to other students developed into a negative experience, expressed as frustration with the lack of people that he felt he could relate to. But as this student participated in athletics, he saw his experience drastically changed:

DM: You said these past two year have been different...

Male 1: The past two years have been different. One because I know more people and I kinda got the flow of Kenyon... I'd say I spend almost all my time with my teammates. Everybody I live with is a teammate; some of my neighbors are teammates... I think it's helped me to be more social, because you kinda go into every year already knowing a few people, not necessarily having to meet new people. Yea I definitely consider them close friends

The theme of using athletics as a tool to build up networks and friendship at Kenyon, as expressed by the experience of this student, was one that was consistent with nearly all of the participants in this study. This seemed increasingly important for students that were not used to PWI's, as it worked as a mechanism to build up relationships through group experience rather than background or other aspects of campus life. These relationships often helped these students develop connections with students outside of their team through their teammates, and feel more at ease at Kenyon, as explained in these exchanges with two male students:

DM: How do you feel being part of a team at Kenyon has influenced your social life in particular?

Male 3: My high school was predominantly black so all I knew was black people, not to say that I was racist or anything, but all I knew was black people, I had a few white friends. But being on the team, I've got closer to the guys on the team, they've become like brothers, so that kinda influenced me to open up. As school started when I was a freshman, I really didn't know anybody but the player on the team so they helped me to like get to know other people and be comfortable around this kind of environment.

DM: How do you feel being part of a team at Kenyon has influenced your social life in particular?

Male 4: I think it's a positive for me, cause typically, I mean I guess, you know you're more likely to encounter whites who've been around black people [if they] played sports, cause we're more integrated in sports then we are in other circles. They kind of are my social link. I mean I don't really interact with that many other people.

(Cont'd): Are you happy that you chose to play sports here?

Male 4: Yes, yes I am. I could never replace the guys that I've played with these years. The bond...The fact that we've come from different places I wouldn't switch the bond that I've formed with those guys, I wouldn't switch that out for anything or any other school.

Through athletics these student not only forged bonds which they labeled as "irreplaceable" and with people they referred to as "brothers", but also were able to expand their social networks to include students outside of their team.

But the strength of these social connections were not only limited to African American students who were unfamiliar with PWI's. These student-athletes who had experience with PWIs also expressed close personal connections with their teammates:

Female 1: Yes. I'm happy because I can say that I'm on a team of a bunch of girls that I do consider my sisters and they do try their hardest to understand where I'm coming from and are sensitive to the issue that sometimes I may be having some issues with the fact that I mean I go to an all white school. But those are my sister.

Female 4: [On leaving for a year] I don't really play, so it's not so much that as it is that culture and the people that I play sports with, and everything that would be missed and I don't know if I could replace that if I [left].

Male 5: Oh it's a huge impact on my social life even before school started I already had a friend base. I had a huge friend base from my class and my teams. I can go to almost any party and know almost everybody everywhere. If I wasn't an athlete I wouldn't be comfortable with all these people I didn't know.

Alum 2: [My team] was made up of different types and different personalities. And for that reason I was able to diversify my social networks and make some good friends outside of the frat. But it was more of a situation of really enjoying the company of people that had that diverse of a back ground and social activity and I still do now.

Alum 3: For me it was huge. Like I said the bond that I formed that I still have today I don't think it could have been formed any other way except through athletics. And with Kenyon being so small we had a reputation that if you saw one basketball player you saw three or four of us. But so yea it was huge.

While these student-athletes may have not needed these friendships in the same manner in order to relate to other students, the relationships that they formed clearly were a defining part of their experiences. And in the case of both of the alumni quoted, these relationships have carried over into life after Kenyon.

Athletic Identity

While athletic participation helped build strong friendships with teammates and connections to other members of campus, for some student-athletes it also helped individuals define their own place on campus. As one female student explains:

Female 2: I would have to say that if you come from a diverse background its gonna be different, because there are so few black athletes at Kenyon, but it's not always about the color of your teammates, if you love your sport then the [ball's always the same color], that doesn't change.

For this student-athlete, she found that race no was not of concern when she was focused on game. She continues:

Female 2: You know, in [my sport] we have to make a certain amount of [shots] in a certain amount of time, and if you consistently missing then we have to run as a result of your missing, so your teammates aren't going to like you very much. Now that doesn't have anything to do with my race, that has to do with my performance. And that just in any sport that you do if you're good then you earn that respect in that way.

This student sees her relationship to her teammates as what she can bring to the team as a member. As a result her connection comes not from, her identity as a team member and as an athlete. Athletic identity was a common theme among current students as how they described history and perceived role at Kenyon:

Female 3: I don't know. [My sport] always been a part of my life, I don't know what it will be like when it's not.

Male 3: It's real important. Cause I've grown up playing sports I've always been kind of a sports guy always been active so I think it's of great importance. It's like a life style.

Male 1: I think it's kinda opened up different social avenues, some people like the fact that you're a football player some people don't. So its kinda helped meet certain people and kinda adjust to life at Kenyon.

Male 5: I've never not played sports so I can't even see myself not playing, cause if I didn't play a sport I wouldn't be here.

For some of these student-athletes their identities as athletes not only help construct their own ideas of their place on campus but also allow others to define them as members of their team.

Also these definitions have also contributed to these students' comfort at Kenyon and have heavily influenced their social lives.

The alumni were much more hesitant to define themselves as strictly athletes on campus. The alumni often described their involvement in other organizations such as fraternities and musical groups as also having a strong influence on who they were socially on campus. As one alumnus describes:

Alum 4: The thing about Kenyon is you can be on a sports team and they don't really care, so it not like "ohh here comes this [athlete]" or anything like that. I mean I think that one of the things that I learned from Kenyon was that it afforded you a lot of opportunities to do a lot of different things if you wanted to because the schools so small. And playing sports is one of them and a lot of times if I had when I look back at it if I had gone to a bigger school I would have been able to do a lot of other things.

These differing responses provided further interesting insight to the role that athletics played for these alumni of 1984-1990.

Expectations and Stereotypes

While the majority of the student-athletes who participated reported thoroughly enjoying their athletic participation at Kenyon, many also reported that the experience of being one of few, if not the only, African American players on a predominately white team still sometimes added specific pressures and expectations. This manifested itself in two ways: external pressure coming from teammates, coaches, or opponents and internal pressures to live up to athletic ability.

Most often student athletes reported that external pressures came from coaches and opponents in competition. As explained by this student-athlete in this exchange:

DM: Do you feel that you've ever had any added pressure to perform athletically because of being a black athlete?

Female 1: Oh, of course! I mean because I'm black. I'm the black girl on the team. I should play [cooler], I should be the fastest on the team, I should have the best [skills]. "Your black, that's what you do you play sports"... Sorry I didn't start playing [my sport] till seventh grade, so no I'm not as good as some of these girls who have been playing forever.

DM: Where does that come from?

Female 1: I think it comes more from the opponents and coach. My teammates know that I'm gonna only do what I can do. But my coach has it in her mind that this black girl, who comes from a black family of dominant athletes, better be a dominant player on my team. And I'm like "No sorry" (laughs) sorry.

This player explains how she consistently feels that her coach expects more out of her because of her race. While this player was rather jovial in her description of the pressures that came from her coach, when describing the internal pressure that she sometimes feels with athletics she took on a much more serious tone:

Female 1: I feel like there is a lot more pressure. Not even just from my coaches thinking that because I'm black I'm supposed to be an athlete, but myself and I guess how I've kinda been brought up is that you know you are a black individual. You have to work twice as hard as those white girls on the court because people don't think... like they think that your only an athlete so you have to do better in school, you have to perform better than them on the court, so it's an added pressure like "I'm not gonna get beat by this all white team."

This player describes how knowing that she stands out on her team feeds into some of the expectations that she holds of herself to perform as a black athlete and that these expectations play an important role in her participation. This notion of standing out on the team was a recurrent theme among current athletes when speaking of added pressure:

Male 1: I feel like not a lot of people really expect you to like do well enough in school to compete but then also a lot of people expect oh you know just cause he's black he has to be better than everybody else. And when you playing for and against teams that are predominately white you know obviously you stand out on and off the field. So I definitely think that there was some pressure for me to be... not necessarily be better than everybody else but to perform at a high level all the time and be pretty good.

Male 2: I mean there's always the fact that you stick out more, like you can always see me in film doing something as opposed to [my white teammates]. And they kind of expect more out of you I think, I mean

they'll never say that and I don't think they do it consciously but unconsciously I think they expect a little more out of you.

Male 5: Yea especially when I was younger. Just cause there's always the myth of the extra muscle and stuff. "That's when black people are faster" (laughs) and I've always been the fastest. Even when I got to a higher level, I was still one of the most athletic people. And I feel like there's a lot of pressure. Because I'm black people stereotype me so I kinda have to show up. Cause it's bad to be the only brother who is garbage. When people expect you to be good at your sport there's added pressure because you don't wanna be "that guy"

Alum 1: Uh yea absolutely. But the funny thing was that it wasn't on the field, that's the thing about being a black student at Kenyon is that also people have an assumption about you as an athlete and as a black man. That the assumption is, first that you are an athlete and two, that you play basketball. Those are the two assumptions. So the pressure was "Why aren't you playing basketball?" I don't play basketball. I play [my sport] so you know yea I got a lot of pressure but not necessarily play more [of my sport], it was like something else, "be the typical black man for me", but it's not about you.

Each of these respondents expressed in their own words the different ways in which their race influenced their athletic experience and also their academic performance. While none of these expectations were reported as distinctly harmful, they still presented an interesting link with the presence of internal pressures that were reported. Together these experiences represent a very unique aspect of African American athletes' experience at Kenyon. It is also important to note that some other participants reported no feelings of added pressure, especially among the other alumni.

Differential Treatment with in Athletics

While some students experienced added pressures and expectations of play within a PWI, other students shared how the close relationships formed with their teammates and coaches have produced funny, awkward, and sometimes marginalizing moments for some of these African American student-athletes.

One current student-athlete cited her coach's politically correct use of language around her as producing some funny but strange moments for her:

Female 1: Um I can say that my coach tends to watch her language around me more than she does the other players, I mean, well definitely because... like for instance there's a drill monkey in the middle. If someone says monkey in the middle I'm not necessarily thinking like "Oh my god she's making a racial slur!" But she said it a couple times and she'll look at me and be like "I didn't mean it in that way. My bad." And I'm like "Coach. I'm actually not like (laughs) my mind right now is not even on (laughs) race." So like it's not that big of a deal. So I do know that she tries to watch her language around me a lot. And like using African American or black when she's discussing other teams, and I'm always like "I don't care". She's like "I'm sorry African American." I'm like "It's black. I'm a black person. She's black. You don't have to worry about it."

This player found that even though her coach was well intentioned, her extra lengths to not offend her were completely unnecessary in that situation. The same player also found it difficult dealing with teammates at times:

Female1: There was one girl who was black and played on the team but quit. And I just remember talking to her and being like "I don't like always having to be on a...like be the main person that everyone asks: why does your hair do this or like why don't you have to wash your hair, why do you like this music, or why do you do this?" Why do I always have to answer so many questions? Why can't you just accept it? I just accept the fact that you have to wash your hair every day. I don't ask you why. You know I always feel like your put on this pedestal of "I wanna know all this about you because you're so different!" Just let me be an athlete like I like [my sport], I don't care that I'm not washing my hair today.

This player found that at times she felt that her identity as an African American student interfered with her athletic identity. For her the difference in the race of her teammates sometimes got in the way of her pursuit as an athlete and created a frustrating dynamic on the team for this player at times. Other students reported forming relationships with students who are not used to being around African Americans:

Male 4: And I think regardless of race you will connect with a lot of the guy that you play with, because some of the people you meet on these teams are a lot different, they're a lot more open and if they're not open they usually learn to be open.

Female 4: Um I think a lot of its really misunderstood. I think that most of my teammates are from... I wouldn't even call it the suburbs, I would say like honestly rural areas. So most of them have no exposure to any diversity what so ever, and because of that... what they perceive to be African American culture and it just completely on them but it's like totally what they get from the media. And so like they see something on television or in a rap song and then they're like, "Well your black, so like you know" they make that automatic equation and then I guess I don't really live up to that stereotype (laughs) all the time. So it's like, they're never like rude about it, it's just sometimes it's kinda like "No that's not the way things are."

With the nature of Kenyon many different types of people come together to gain an education and in these cases these African American student-athletes found it necessary to employ

strategies of patience and communication in order to allow some of their teammates to understand them better. In many cases current student-athletes described "being patient", "having an open mind", and "explaining your situation" as some of the best ways for an African American to make their way through Kenyon.

The alumni interviewed described their experiences in different ways, while one alumnus felt that "people just got on with [being the minority] and it was a non issue really", another expressed his opinion that, "We were here out of courage and stuck it out because we could, because we were that courageous basically, and you just dealt with it". One interesting development in the responses of the alumni was the report that some found class-status to be a stronger differentiating factor than race:

Alum 1: The bigger issue at least for me was class and granted I come from a solid middle class family, both parents college graduated, a legacy and all that stuff. A lot of the guys on the team were coming from East coast prep school. And I remember one of the most frustrating times trying to connect was one day when the coach or captains of something had decided to make the practice "Your Team day", basically all the guys who had gear that they had purchased for their favorite professional team. And they were decked out I mean jersey, shorts, socks, the whole bit. And at that point I didn't have any access to that stuff. And everybody was wearing that stuff and you were kind of judged on how much stuff you had. So you know for a guy from this urban public school I was already feeling marginalized because I was one of a handful of black guys but I also had to walk into this practice where everybody's decked out and I got on my gym shorts, the stuff I was wearing in practice that morning and that's it. So I didn't feel connected to the team at that moment. And any moment that was like that, that put you in a position where you were in or out, were really tricky.

Alum 3: The biggest transition I think more so than race was... economic change in background cause I came from basically a trailer park like atmosphere, cause at Kenyon there wasn't really an average, either you were really poor and getting the aid or rich and paying, there wasn't a lot of 'tweeners.

Both alumni found that these stark variations in class were a significant damper on their efforts to identify or fit in at Kenyon. The most interesting aspect of these responses was that these two comments were the only mentioning of African American students having problems with class. No current students made similar statements even though many commented about the significant financial aid that they received from the College, which was a result that I found puzzling.

Discussion & Conclusions

As previously stated, the most important finding that came from this research was that there is no one single defining factor in the way that African American student-athletes experience race at Kenyon College. Every participant reported a unique and dynamic total experience of Kenyon. Despite the lack of a central defining characteristic for all of my participants' experiences, this study found many common trends among these student-athletes' experiences at Kenyon.

This study found that comparatively, Kenyon College is today an institution that is much better equipped to assist and support African Americans on campus. Additionally, the College seems to foster today a much more receptive environment to racial dialogue, while there still is much room for improvement. Participants' backgrounds also played a pivotal role in each individual's opinions on and experiences with race on campus and through athletics. Participants with less exposure to PWIs found their transition to Kenyon, particularly in their experiences with fitting in socially, to be much more difficult than participants who had experience with PWIs. However, in accordance with Lapchick's theories of race and team formation, many of the respondents spoke to how their participation in athletics helped them form close personal relationships with their teammates, regardless of race. In turn, many of these student-athletes used the formation of relationships with their teammate to expand their social networks on Kenyon's campus and form relationships with other students. Many current students found that their athletic participation helped define who they were and how other people on campus received them, while most alumni participants replied that their athletic participation did not solely define them on campus when they were students.

Many participants also reported that their experiences as African American athletes on predominately white teams did present some unique experiences. Some respondents spoke of added pressures to perform athletically and academically because of their race. These pressures manifested in the form of external pressures coming from coaches and players around them and also internal pressures stemming from the athletes themselves. Some current players also described awkward moments of interactions with their teammates and coaches when race became a topic of conversation. These students reported using patience, communication, and comedy as mechanisms to inform those around them and move on from these incidents, while alumni focused on awkward moments stemming from class differences rather than race.

When analyzing my findings in accordance with research question, I found that race played a role in the experiences of African American student-athletes at Kenyon in a variety of different ways. For some it was a major source of hardship and for others it posed few problems. However, for many of the student athletes interviewed the relationships that were formed on campus through athletics proved most often to be highly prized and a defining factor in the college experiences of these student-athletes. These personal relationships also played a large role in the comfort and adjustments to campus life for African American students who had little exposure to PWIs before Kenyon. Lastly, I found that Kenyon as an institution has made some significant gains in its abilities to recruit, sustain, and support African American students in the past 20 years and while these developments have been appreciated, many current students felt that there is still room for improving racial understanding on campus.

While this research did provide results relevant to the posed research questions it is important to note the limitations of this study. First due to the nature of this research no vast conclusion can be drawn. However, the reported experiences of the participants do provide

valuable insight into their view of their time here at Kenyon. Next among the alumni participants, the lack of female athletes severely limited the variation in response and left out some very valuable and unquestionably unique experiences in this study. Lastly, it is possible that the 20 year gap between my alumni participants' experience and their reports today may leave room for some discrepancies between their reported accounts and their actual experience. However, this researcher felt that these risks were necessary due to the fact that while these firsthand accounts could be distorted, these reports would undoubtedly be the most accurate that I would possibly be able to find through research.

I think this study holds ample room to be extended through further research. First, this study could become significantly more representative if the sample of participants were increased and also if participants before and after 1984-1990 were included in the research. It would also be interesting to design a study that compared these experiences of African American student-athletes with the experiences of other African American non-athletes to determine if athletic participation was really a factor in African American students' comfort at Kenyon. Lastly it would be interesting to compare these basic experiences of Kenyon African American student-athletes with African American student athletes of similar small PWIs.

In conclusion, while this study showed that every African American student-athlete experiences race in different ways at Kenyon, the role of athletics played a prominent part in the formation of these students' Kenyon experience. Examining these students' personal stories and experiences provides valuable insight into how being an African American individual at Kenyon affects a student's college experience. With studies like these and further communication between all of Kenyon's community, with time we should one day be able to fully embrace the important aspects of diversity that Kenyon as an institution strives for.

Appendix A:

Interview Questions

Decision process

Can you tell me how you decided to come to Kenyon?

Why did you choose to participate in sports at Kenyon? Were you recruited to play sports at Kenyon? If so, could you describe your recruiting process?

Were you one of few African Americans on your high school team?

During your recruiting/decision process did you foresee being one of the few African-Americans on your team?

Before attending Kenyon, did you ever expect being one of the few African Americans on your team to negatively affect your college experience? Has this opinion changed in any way?

How did your family or friends back home influence your decision to play sports at Kenyon? Was the lack of racial diversity ever a concern for them?

Athletic Experience

Can you describe the racial diversity on your team? Are there any other African Americans on your team? Has their presence influenced you experience?

Has being one of the few African Americans on your team ever specifically posed any problems for you with any of your teammates or coaches?

Do you feel that you are well respected on your team?

Do you feel that your teammates respect your culture?

Do you or have you ever felt any added pressure to perform athletically because of your race?

Do you feel that your athletic experience is any different from your white teammates because of your race? If so, in what way?

Are there any ways in which you feel being an African American athlete makes playing a sport at Kenyon more difficult?

College Experience

How do you feel being a part of a team at Kenyon has influenced your social life?

Are you a member of any cultural groups on campus? If so, how involved do you say you are?

Appendix A (Cont'd) How often do you spend time with your teammates outside of athletics (practice, games, film sessions, workouts, etc)? How do you most often spend this time?

Do you consider some of your teammates as close friends? If so, how many?

Do you think playing sports at Kenyon has helped or hurt your academic performance? Why?

State of Race on Campus

Do you feel that important issues pertaining to race are discussed enough on campus?

Do you feel that diversity is celebrated on campus?

Do you feel a connection with other African American students on campus?

Do you feel that Kenyon's does an adequate job supporting their minority students?

Overall

Are you happy that you chose to play sports at Kenyon? Why or why not?

Are you happy with your overall experience with Kenyon College so far? Why or why not?

How important has playing a sport at Kenyon been to you?

If a prospective African-American student asked you about what it is like to play sports at Kenyon College, how would you describe the experience? What advice would you give incoming athletes about the experience?

Appendix B:

Developed Data Categories

- Backgrounds
 - Experience w/ PWI
 - No experience w/ PWI
- Love of sport
- Specific events
 - Isolation
 - Awkward moments
 - Anecdotes
- Personal relationships
- Expectations and stereotypes
- Athletic identity
- Academic time management
- Institutional support
 - Current
 - 20 years ago
- Racial dialogue
 - Current
 - 20 years ago
- Commitment to Diversity
 - Current
 - 20 years ago
- Adjustments
 - Through athletics
 - On campus
 - Patience
 - Communication

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