

Organizational Culture in a Division I NCAA Athletic Department

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Joe Frontiera

Along with employee behavior (Kilman, Saxton & Serpa, 1985), cohesion (Gagliardi, 1986), employee turnover (Sheridan, 1992), job satisfaction (Lok & Crawford, 2003) and self-esteem (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994), organizational culture has been shown to impact work performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Balthazard et al, 2006; Smerek & Denison, 2007). However, the construct has yet to be explored in the field of sport psychology. This qualitative study explores organizational culture within an NCAA Division I athletic department. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with four senior athletic directors at a Mid-atlantic university. Data analysis revealed multiple elements of the culture working against one another. Four competing value sets emerged: *Education/student centeredness vs. Self-Sufficient Business; Financially Responsible/Self Sustainable vs. Keeping up with Peers; Increased Investment vs. "Not a Win at All Costs" Program; and Explicit Communication vs. Implicit Hopes*. These values are discussed in depth and a tangible model representing the department's multi-layered culture was developed, explicitly outlining the surface values of the organization and the underlying assumptions that are arguably more relevant. Finally, an argument is presented encouraging sport psychology consultants to become more familiar with organizational culture.