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Uncovering Best Practices in Freshmen Student-Athlete Development Programming:

An Integrated Research Review of the First-Year Experience in Higher Education

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Abstract

This integrative research review looks critically at a body of literature discussing trends and best practices in first-year experience programming throughout higher education. Critical student development theories of Chickering and Maslow are addressed and set the foundation for this research review. Research focuses on a collection of twenty-seven articles which specifically address how the student-athlete experience differs from that of the regular student during the first-year and as a result how student-athlete development programming can best meet these unique needs. By looking at how the freshmen student-athlete experience differs from that of the regular student body charted throughout the literature, the overarching goal of this integrated analysis of the literature is to uncover best practices intercollegiate athletic administrators can implement to create efficient and effective first-year development programs for student-athletes.