

Understanding Life Outcomes of Former NCAA Student-Athletes

The Gallup-Purdue Index Report



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INTRODUCTION

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life.

The NCAA membership supports learning through sports by integrating athletics and higher education to enrich the college experience of student-athletes.

One area of research that has been particularly challenging for the NCAA is tracking the long-term effects of participating in intercollegiate athletics on former student-athletes. The NCAA membership is keenly interested in understanding these effects, and the NCAA has conducted several studies of former student-athletes in an effort to increase that understanding. Those studies have proven to be valuable to the NCAA membership in many ways, but they have lacked a comparison to non-student-athletes.

To learn how former NCAA student-athletes compare with their non-student-athlete peers, beyond student-athletes' higher graduation rates (67%) than the general student body (65%)¹, the NCAA is working with Gallup to evaluate the well-being of a representative sample of college graduates, some of whom were student-athletes. Through its national Gallup-Purdue Index survey of four-year college graduates, Gallup was able to interview 1,670 former NCAA student-athletes (ranging in age from 22 to 71, with a median age of 44) about their lives and compare their responses with a cohort of 22,813 non-student-athletes who graduated from the same institutions (ranging in age from 21 to 90, with a median age of 44).

The primary questions the NCAA seeks to answer through this research effort are:

- How do former student-athletes and non-student-athletes compare on various measures of well-being?
- Are there well-being differences between former student-athletes in football and men's basketball compared with former student-athletes who took part in other sports?

To help the NCAA answer these questions, Gallup used the Gallup-Purdue Index to analyze outcomes in three broad categories:

- Great Lives: Well-Being
- Great Jobs: Workplace Engagement
- Great Experiences: Alumni Attachment

Each of these categories includes a set of sub-measures which, when taken as a whole, provide a comprehensive picture of the current lives of these graduates. Additionally, there are measures that examine their educational attainment and key collegiate experiences. Through this combination of metrics, Gallup is able to establish that in terms of well-being, former student-athletes are faring better than their non-student-athlete peers in multiple areas.

¹ NCAA. (2015). Trends in graduation success rates and federal graduation rates at NCAA Division I institutions. [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/graduation-rates>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Former student-athletes who received a bachelor's degree between 1970 and 2014 are leading other college graduates in four out of five elements of well-being that Gallup studied. These former student-athletes are more likely than non-student-athletes to be thriving in purpose, social, community and physical well-being. In the element of financial well-being, former student-athletes are just as likely to be thriving as their non-student-athlete peers.

Despite the time commitment that participating in college sports requires, former student-athletes do not appear to have missed out on key college experiences. In fact, former student-athletes are more likely to agree that they had a key experience: having a professor who cared about them as a person. Former student-athletes also reported actively engaging in their campus communities during college. They participated in clubs and organizations as well as fraternities and sororities at higher rates than their non-student-athlete counterparts.

In terms of campus retention and persistence, former student-athletes transferred colleges at a rate that is 17 percentage points lower than their non-student-athlete counterparts, 22% versus 39%, respectively. Additionally, former student-athletes are just as likely to have completed their degree within the “traditional” four-year time frame.

Eighty-two percent of former student-athletes are employed either full time or part time at their desired level, compared with 78% of non-student-athlete graduates. Additionally, the rates of unemployment are similar for both former student-athletes and their non-student-athlete counterparts (3%). Seventy-one percent of former student-athletes are employed full time (by an employer or for themselves), which is similar to the 68% of non-student-athletes. An additional 11% of former student-athletes and 10% of non-student-athletes are employed part time, and do not desire full-time employment.

**Former student-athletes
are leading other college
graduates in four out of five
elements of well-being.**

WELL-BEING

Well-being is not only about being happy or financially well off, nor is it solely synonymous with physical health. Rather, it is about the interaction and interdependency among many aspects of life such as finding fulfillment in daily work and interactions, having strong social relationships and access to the resources people need, feeling financially secure, being physically healthy and taking part in a true community.

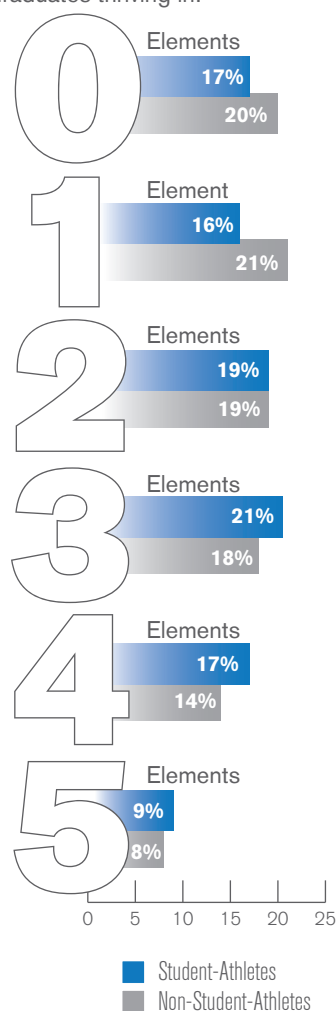
Gallup and Healthways developed the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5 View to measure these important aspects. This survey, based on findings from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index and years of joint research, asks 10 questions that gauge well-being in five elements:

- **Purpose Well-Being:** Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social Well-Being:** Having strong and supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial Well-Being:** Effectively managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- **Community Well-Being:** The sense of engagement you have with the areas where you live, liking where you live and feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical Well-Being:** Having good health and enough energy to get things done on a daily basis

Gallup categorizes people's well-being in each of the elements as "thriving," "struggling" and "suffering," based on their responses. Those who are thriving have well-being that is strong and consistent in a particular element, while those who are struggling have well-being that is moderate or inconsistent in a particular element. Those who are suffering have well-being that is low and inconsistent in a particular element.

NINE PERCENT OF FORMER STUDENT-ATHLETES THRIVING IN ALL FIVE ELEMENTS OF WELL-BEING

Graduates thriving in:

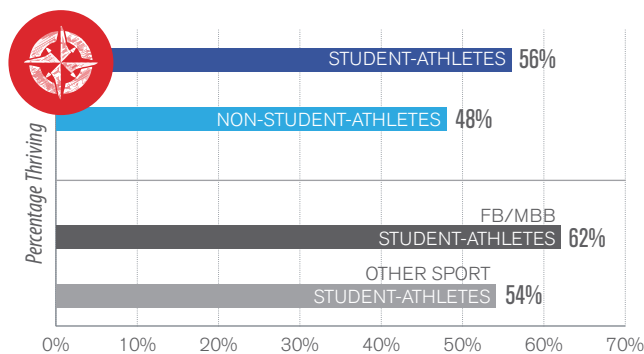


The Gallup study found that former student-athletes are as likely to be thriving in financial well-being as their non-student-athlete peers and are more likely than non-student-athletes to be thriving in:

- Purpose well-being
- Social well-being
- Community well-being
- Physical well-being

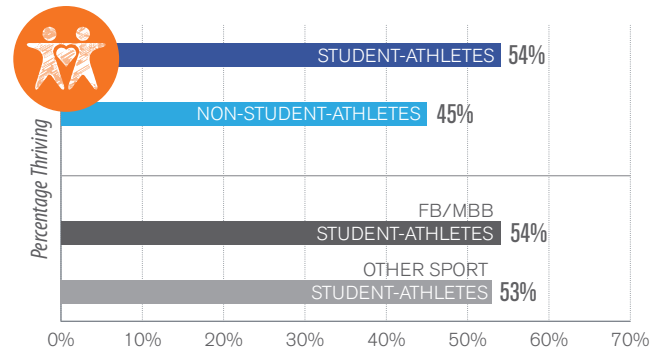
PURPOSE WELL-BEING

Of the five elements of well-being studied, former student-athletes are the most likely to be thriving in purpose well-being. The majority of former student-athletes (56%) are thriving in this element, and an even higher percentage (62%) of those who played football (FB) or men's basketball (MBB) like what they do each day and are motivated to achieve their goals. Both groups do significantly better than their non-student-athlete peers — less than half of whom (48%) are thriving in purpose well-being.



SOCIAL WELL-BEING

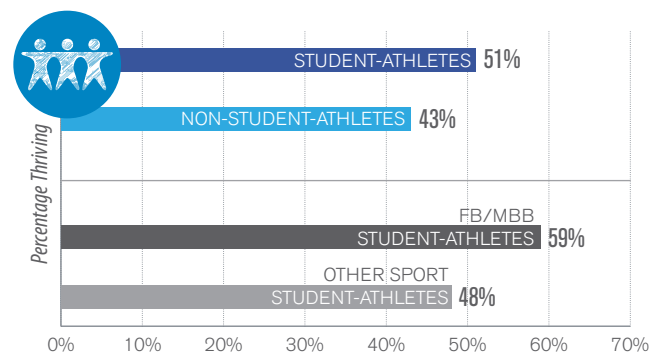
Former student-athletes are also more likely than non-student-athlete graduates to have the support of strong social networks. A majority of former student-athletes (54%) are thriving in social well-being. This is true of former student-athletes across sports. Less than half (45%) of their non-student-athlete peers are thriving in social well-being.



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Half of former student-athletes (51%) are thriving in community well-being, which means they feel that they are true members of the communities in which they live. These former student-athletes are engaged with their communities, like where they live and feel safe and proud to live where they do. Interestingly, former FB/MBB student-athletes (59%) are even more likely to be thriving in this element, which may be related to NCAA research that has found that student-athletes in these sports have a strong sense of responsibility to their communities.² Both former student-athlete groups are substantially more likely to be thriving in this element than non-student-athletes (43%).

This higher level of civic engagement among former student-athletes may at least partly be an extension of their volunteer activities during college. More than 80% of current student-athletes serve as volunteers at least once a year according to the 2010 NCAA GOALS study, and 44% of these students serve at least a few hours a month with a variety of local and national organizations.

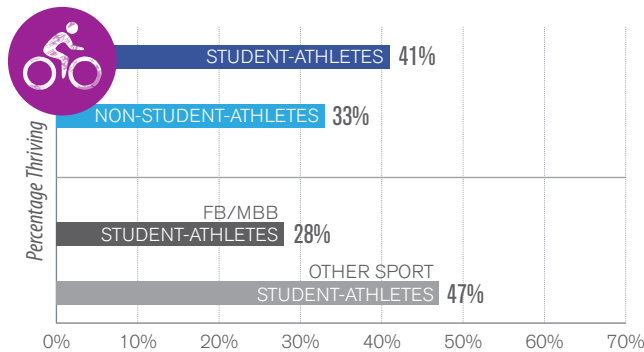


² <http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/playing-it-forward-commitment-service-among-student-athletes>

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

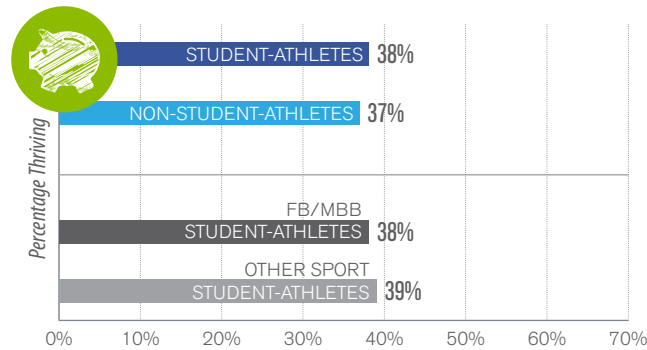
Student-athletes push themselves to physical limits that non-student-athletes typically do not, including changing their eating habits to maximize performance and devoting hours to training, conditioning, practices and games. Additionally, many student-athletes have access to certified strength coaches and athletic trainers, who may impart knowledge about exercise and recovery that student-athletes can draw from during their lifetime.

This hard work and access to well-being resources may pay off in health dividends for some student-athletes. Former student-athletes are more likely than non-student-athletes to be thriving in physical well-being, which is defined as having physical health that is near-perfect and feeling active and productive every day of the week. Forty-one percent of former student-athletes are thriving in this element, compared with 33% of non-student-athletes. However, while former FB/MBB student-athletes are statistically as likely as their non-student-athlete peers to be thriving in physical well-being, these former student-athletes are significantly less likely to be thriving (28%) than other student-athletes (47%).



FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Former student-athletes are thriving in financial well-being at similar rates as their non-student-athlete peers. Thirty-eight percent of former student-athletes are thriving in financial well-being, compared with 37% of non-student-athletes.





OTHER AREAS OF POST-GRADUATE LIFE

In addition to questions regarding well-being, the Gallup-Purdue Index survey includes numerous questions about current employment status and workplace engagement, and had respondents reflect back on college academic and extracurricular experiences, time to degree completion, post-baccalaureate degree attainment and alumni attachment. The following section highlights these findings.

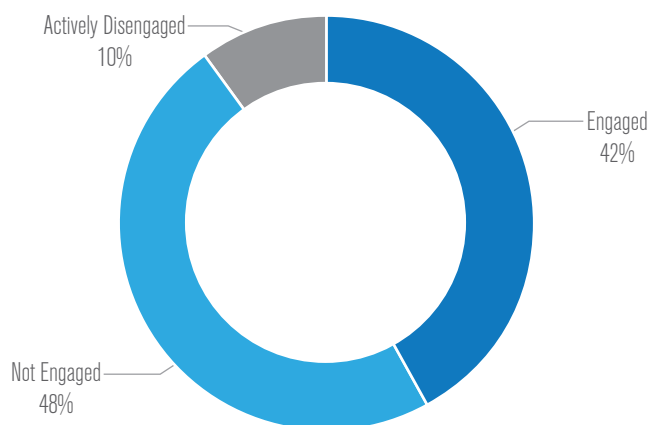
CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS

The majority of former student-athletes are employed full time for an employer — and at rates similar to their non-student-athlete counterparts. Nearly two in three NCAA alumni (65%) surveyed for the 2014 study are employed full time for an employer, and another 6% are working full time for themselves. An additional 11% of former student-athletes are currently employed part time, but are not seeking full-time employment. Three percent are unemployed and 5% are working part time but would prefer to be working full time. These rates are similar to their non-student-athlete counterparts.

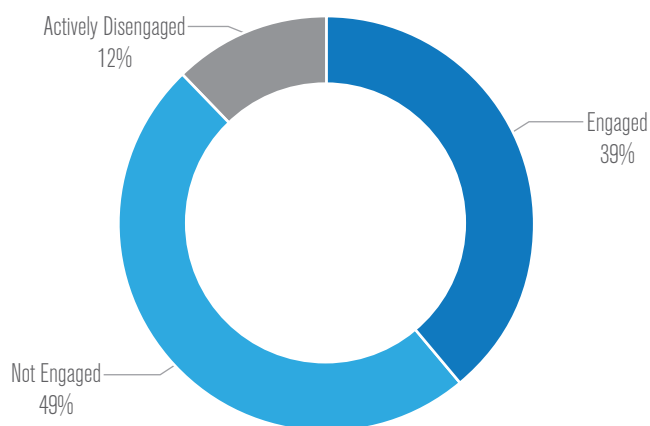
The employment gap between NCAA men and women (67% of male graduates vs. 62% of female graduates) is narrower than the gap among non-student-athletes (71% vs. 56%), but in general, each of these gaps largely reflect women's higher likelihood to work part time and not desire full-time work or to not be a part of the workforce. It should be noted that a higher percentage of female non-student-athletes (17%) are not part of the workforce compared with 9% of female former student-athletes.

		EMPLOYED FULL TIME (EMPLOYER)	EMPLOYED FULL TIME (SELF)	EMPLOYED PART TIME, DO NOT WANT FULL TIME	UNEMPLOYED	EMPLOYED PART TIME, WANT FULL TIME	NOT IN WORK- FORCE
Males	Non-Student-Athletes	71%	6%	6%	3%	5%	9%
	Student-Athletes	67%	8%	6%	3%	5%	11%
Females	Non-Student-Athletes	56%	4%	14%	3%	6%	17%
	Student-Athletes	62%	5%	17%	3%	4%	9%
Overall	Non-Student-Athletes	63%	5%	10%	3%	5%	13%
	Student-Athletes	65%	6%	11%	3%	5%	10%
Younger Than Age 65	Non-Student-Athletes	66%	5%	9%	3%	6%	12%
	Student-Athletes	66%	6%	11%	3%	5%	10%

FORMER STUDENT-ATHLETES



FORMER NON-STUDENT-ATHLETES



WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT

While the high employment rates for former student-athletes are indicators of success, they provide an incomplete picture of these graduates' lives. Employment figures say nothing about whether these graduates feel intellectually and emotionally connected to their work — or feel completely detached and unhappy. However, if these graduates are engaged at work, Gallup studies show they are not only more likely to be loyal and productive, but also by working in an engaging workplace, their odds of having higher well-being increase, regardless of policy or incentive.

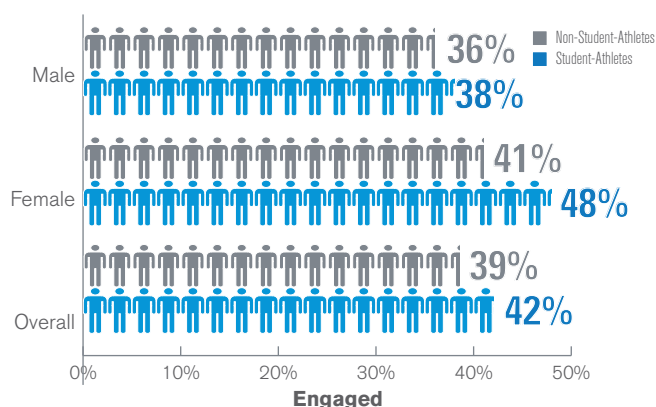
Gallup's expertise on engagement in the workplace is rooted in more than 30 years of research on the 12 elements that best predict employee and workgroup performance. Based on responses to questions that measure the 12 elements,

Gallup categorizes workers as engaged, not engaged or actively disengaged. People who are engaged at work are more involved in and enthusiastic about their work. They are loyal and productive. Those who are not engaged may be productive and satisfied with their workplaces, but they are not intellectually and emotionally connected to them. Workers who are actively disengaged are physically present but intellectually and emotionally disconnected. They are unhappy with their work, share their unhappiness with their colleagues and are likely to jeopardize the performance of their teams.

Former student-athletes are as likely as non-student-athletes to be engaged at work. Forty-two percent of former student-athletes who are employed full time for an employer (excluding the self-employed) are engaged in the workplace, compared with 39% of non-student-athletes. An additional 48% of employed former student-athletes are not engaged, and 10% are actively disengaged — which is similar to the percentages among non-student-athletes.

Female former student-athletes are more likely to be engaged at work (48%) than their male counterparts (38%). This is in line with the general finding that women are more likely to be engaged at work than men. Among non-student-athletes, employed female graduates (41%) are more likely to be engaged at work than employed male graduates (36%).

ENGAGEMENT COMPARISON



ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

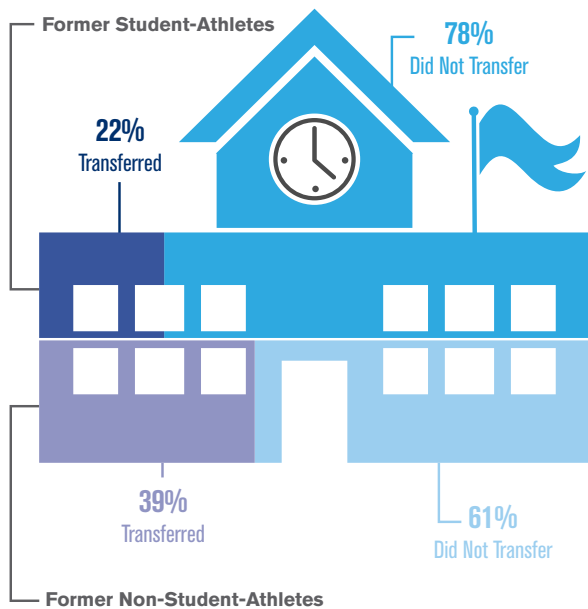
DEGREE ATTAINMENT

Despite the substantial time commitment that their sports require, former student-athlete graduates are just as likely to have earned their degree within four years (68%) as non-student-athletes (66%). For some student-athletes, the NCAA's course load requirement for athletic eligibility, which strategically ushers student-athletes toward graduation, may contribute to these positive outcomes.

Former student-athletes (33%) are also as likely to continue their education and pursue graduate coursework or degrees as their non-student-athlete peers (31%).

TRANSFER PATTERNS

In addition to graduating on time, former student-athletes report staying at one university at a higher rate than their non-student-athlete counterparts. Twenty-two percent of former student-athletes say they transferred universities, compared with 39% of non-student-athletes.



ACADEMIC AND CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

The support that graduates recall getting in college and the type of learning experiences they had relate to their well-being after college. If former student-athlete graduates say they felt supported in college — because they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams, a professor who made them excited about learning and a professor who cared about them as a person — their

odds of thriving in all elements of well-being more than doubled. Also, if former student-athlete graduates say they engaged in experiential and deep learning — by taking part in internships, being active in extracurricular activities and with organizations and completing a long-term project — their odds of thriving in all elements of well-being nearly doubled.

ALUMNI EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

	STUDENT-ATHLETES	NON-STUDENT-ATHLETES
My college was the perfect school for people like me.	68%	67%
I can't imagine a world without my college.	47%	44%

Percentages denote combined responses of “agree” and “strongly agree”

Former student-athletes are just as likely as non-student-athletes to recall having a professor who made them excited about learning (90% vs. 87%) or having a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams (46% vs. 45%). In terms of experiential learning, former student-athletes are just as likely as non-student-athletes to have participated in a long-term project (54% vs. 53%). This last result may be somewhat surprising given the time demands that being a student-athlete places on these individuals.

In only one metric are former student-athletes trailing behind non-student-athletes. Former student-athletes are less likely to say they participated in internships or jobs where they were able to apply their classroom learning (46% vs. 50%).

Even though many former student-athletes have experiences as undergraduates that are unique to their participation in college sports, the data reveal that these graduates are significantly more likely than their non-student-athlete counterparts to have had a key campus experience: having a professor who cared about them as a person. Former student-athletes also have higher participation rates than their non-student-athlete counterparts in student clubs or organizations (66% vs. 55%) and in a fraternity or sorority (22% vs. 14%).

While former student-athletes are more likely than their non-student-athlete peers to recall being involved in activities outside of the classroom, they are also more likely to recall feeling cared about inside the classroom. Nearly two in three former student-athletes (65%) agree that they

had a professor who cared about them as a person, compared with 59% of non-student-athletes. The advantage that former student-athletes have in these two areas is important, as it has been shown to be related to overall well-being in the years following college.

46% I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.

54% I worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete.

90% I had at least one professor at my university who made me excited about learning.

46% I had an internship or job that allowed me to apply what I was learning in the classroom.

65% My professors at my university cared about me as a person.

Percentages denote combined responses of “agree” and “strongly agree”

FINAL THOUGHTS

As the debate continues about the value of a college degree, so has the discussion about the value of collegiate sports to a well-rounded college education. Gallup's study finds that overall, the college experience, viewed through the lenses of emotional support and experiential learning, looks quite similar for former student-athletes and their non-student-athlete peers. However, the picture of the well-being of these two groups is somewhat different. Former student-athletes are significantly more likely to be thriving in four out of five areas, which is important because it demonstrates that former student-athletes are excelling in multiple areas of well-being.



METHODOLOGY

Results for the Gallup-Purdue Index, which the study used for comparison purposes, are based on Web surveys conducted Feb. 4-March 7, 2014, with a random sample of 29,560 respondents with a bachelor's degree, aged 18 and older, with Internet access, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. These respondents included 1,670 former NCAA student-athletes.

The Gallup-Purdue Index sample was compiled from two sources: the Gallup Panel and the Gallup Daily tracking survey. The Gallup Panel is a proprietary, probability-based longitudinal panel of U.S. adults who are selected using random-digit-dial (RDD) and address-based sampling methods. The Gallup Panel is not an opt-in panel. The Gallup Panel includes 60,000 individuals. Panel members can be surveyed by phone, mail or Web. Gallup Panel members with a college degree and with access to the Internet were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online. The Gallup Daily tracking survey sample includes national adults with a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using RDD methods. Landline respondents are chosen at random within each household on the basis of which member had the most recent birthday. Gallup Daily tracking respondents with a college degree, who agreed to future contact, were invited to take the Gallup-Purdue Index survey online.

Gallup-Purdue Index interviews are conducted via the Web, in English only. Samples are weighted to correct for unequal selection probability and nonresponse. The data are weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education and region. Demographic weighting targets are based on the most

recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. bachelor's degree population.

All reported margins of sampling error for the Gallup-Purdue Index of all college graduates include the computed design effects for weighting.

For results based on the total sample of those with a bachelor's degree who graduated in 1970 or after, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For results based on employee engagement of those with a bachelor's degree who graduated in 1970 or after, the margin of sampling error is ± 1.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

GENERALIZED LINEAR MODEL

Gallup constructed a Generalized Linear Model (GLM) to study the differences between the college experiences of former student-athletes and non-student-athletes. To account for differences in the demographic characteristics of the two groups, the GLM accounted for age, gender, race and the education level of both parents of the graduate. Graduates were generally compared based on their combined responses of "agree" and "strongly agree" the two highest points available on a 5-point Likert scale.

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