The Impact of Leadership Training on Collegiate Student Athletes

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THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING ON COLLEGIATE STUDENT ATHLETES

by

Jerry Bergsma

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology Advisor: Sue Poppink, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan April 2011
THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING ON COLLEGIATE STUDENT ATHLETES

Jerry Bergsma, Ed.D.
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This research is an exploratory study of the impact of leadership training on the student-athletes at an NCAA Division III member institution. Leadership education and training for athletics has seen a lack of research that could give insight into identifying attributes and actions that are associated with high-quality leadership training experiences. The purpose of this study is to identify the: (a) quality and outcomes of the Gainey Leadership Retreat training program, and (b) the attributes and impact of the Gainey program using the lens of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality student leadership programs.

The study participants are 60 female student-athletes and 50 male student-athletes who attended the Gainey Leadership Retreat between 2004 and 2009. This study uses Eich’s (2008) grounded theory as a framework for creating Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions in an online survey that ascertain the quality of the retreat experience as well as the willingness/confidence to lead and the overall impression of the retreat as a leadership training tool. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVAs, and multiple regression are used to analyze the data collected.

Analysis of the data indicates that: (a) Gainey Retreat participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the learning community, experiential learning, and program
development components of the retreat, (b) Gainey Retreat participants experienced an immediate impact on confidence to lead and leadership actions in the team setting, (c) Gainey Retreat participants reported a lasting impression on their willingness and confidence to lead, and (d) Gainey Retreat participants reported a highly favorable overall impression of the retreat as it related to value of the athletic experience at Calvin and the building of a strong foundation for future leadership.

Overall, this study supports previous research that team building interventions are tempered by resources, time, cost, and magnitude of change; that degree of long-term impact varies based on the characteristics of team leader, the setting of the intervention, and the intervention's theoretical basis; and, that leadership interventions have an equal impact across gender. The findings from this study further add to the literature by providing support that leadership training in athletics has a positive impact on future leadership willingness and confidence.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Being a leader—either by choice or default—places an individual in a position of great influence and opportunity. Taking on leadership responsibility is often a function of willingness, opportunity, knowledge, and demonstration of leadership skills, traits and characteristics. While it is clear that leadership development is not an exact science, research indicates that there are identifiable traits, environmental factors, and training strategies that increase the likelihood that a leader will make a lasting impact in their organization (Boschert, 2003; Hybels, 2002; Lencioni, 2002; Michie & Gooty, 2005). Leadership training in the form of workshops, in-services, or retreats is common in all organizations. Despite limited evidence to support the claims that leadership training directly leads to success, organizations across the spectrum continue to spend billions of dollars a year on leadership development (Fulmer, 1997). In the business boardroom and athletic locker room, team building initiatives are employed in an attempt to mold effective leaders and to tap into the potential competitive advantage that can push any company or team to the next level.

Leadership training programs in athletics and team building initiatives are frequently used together to positively impact team climate. The process of team building (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997; Carron, 1997; Plummer & Rougeau, 1997; Widmeyer & Ducharme, 1997; Yukelson, 1997) is viewed as a meaningful and beneficial tool to impact team success yet, within the large sphere of research in leadership development, the field of research is relatively small in athletics (Allen, 2005; Dobosz & Beaty, 1999; George, 1988; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Wright & Cote, 2003), and the effects of team
Building on athletic performance have been questioned (Buller, 1986; Salas, Rozell, Mullen, & Driskell, 1999; Woodman & Sherwood, 1980) for task performance, significant impact, and overall effectiveness.

Background

Calvin College, a Christian liberal-arts college in the Midwest, introduced in 2004 an annual leadership training experience for select student-athlete leaders. The Gainey Retreat (named after the benefactor who provides his ranch in Montana) is a five day leadership development training opportunity for student-athlete leaders. Participants are chosen by the coaches of the seventeen varsity teams and three club sport teams currently offered at the college. All teams have at least one representative at the retreat while the larger teams (soccer, volleyball, basketball, swimming, baseball, and softball) may send two representatives.

The retreat leaders are: the College Chaplain, the Dean of Students, the Coordinator for Christian formation, the Women’s Athletic Director, and the Men’s Athletic Director. The student-athlete leaders represent each of the seventeen varsity teams and three club sports at Calvin College for a total of thirty-three athletes who attend the retreat in the middle of August prior to the start of the fall athletic seasons. The stated goals of the retreat are to provide a time and space for student-athletes to focus on knowing God and themselves better, to equip varsity leaders with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to effectively lead their teams, and to create a Christian community among student-athletes that extends beyond individual teams (Calvin College, 2009). Once the participants are selected in April, efforts are made by the planning team (retreat leaders) to begin building a learning community through pre-retreat meetings and social
activities prior to departing in August. The first two days of the retreat are loaded with presentations on significant leadership topics (the art of self-leadership, leadership styles, and the expectations and challenges of a student-athlete leader). Experiential learning is a significant component of the retreat that is interwoven throughout but is highlighted in activities centered around Lencioni’s (2002) team building initiatives of trust, communication, commitment, accountability, and goals. Various small and larger-group interactive approaches are used to encapsulate each team building concept. Additionally, group activities such as hiking, tubing, and recreational games are planned into the day. A four hour wilderness solo experience and a worship service with a commissioning (sending each participant out with encouragement and a pledge of support) focus culminate the week. The total program experience is designed to supplement the individual’s growth as a leader as well as provide practical tools for the leader to bring back for implementation with their respective athletic team and possibly in their leadership experiences outside of athletics.

Statement of the Problem

The study of leadership has been an essential part of building theory and practice for businesses and organizations for decades. Investigating leadership frequently takes an interdisciplinary approach because of its application in fields including business, management, political science, public administration, education, and athletics. “Numerous contemporary authors have crystallized definitions of leadership, identified the need for leadership in modern organizations, documented the positive impact of effective leadership on organizational performance, and proposed leadership models and leadership development strategies” (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008, p. 620).
Leadership is a process, involves influence, occurs within a group context, and involves attainment of a goal (Northouse, 2007). A set of studies identify the key characteristics or traits that leaders in general possess (e.g., Koumives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; Michie & Gooty, 2005; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2005; Yukl, 2005) such as authenticity, collaboration, and efficiency. Another set of studies focus in on the leadership styles of coaches and peer leaders in sport (e.g., Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, & Halpin, 2006; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Glenn & Horn, 1993; Loughhead & Hardy, 2005; Loughhead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006) such as situational, multi-functional, and emergent styles over the course of a season.

We know what leadership is when we encounter it but the vast amount of literature on the topic leads us to believe that we do not have enough of it. The assumption is that leadership is a commodity that can be developed in individuals through the learning process. “Leadership development is a continuous learning process that spans an entire lifetime; where knowledge and experience builds and allows for even more advanced learning and growth” (Brungardt, 1996, p. 83). Studies have sought to identify characteristics of leadership education and training programs that positively impact leadership development (Allio, 2005; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Day, 2001; Hirst, Mann, Bain, Pirola-Merlo, & Richver, 2004; McCauley & VanVelsor, 2005; Olivares, Peterson, & Hess, 2007).

While numerous studies exist that investigate leadership characteristics and the various processes that develop leaders, relatively few studies have focused on leadership education and training in, and through, athletic experiences. Given the lack of research in
leadership development in athletics and the significant role of athletics as a co-curricular opportunity in higher education, this exploratory examination of leadership education and training for student athletes in the college setting is meaningful and useful.

Purpose of the Study

This study contributes to the knowledge base in the field of leadership development by examining the impact of the leadership education and training experience of student-athletes at an NCAA Division III institution. Impact is ascertained by studying the survey responses of past participants who have attended the Gainey Leadership Retreat since its inception in August of 2004. Survey categories help ascertain (a) the participant’s description of the learning community, (b) the participant’s opinion of the experiential learning opportunities, (c) the participant’s description of program development components within the retreat, and (d) a general summary of the participant’s overall impression of the retreat experience and their confidence and willingness to take on future leadership opportunities. Participant’s perceptions of the attributes of the Gainey Retreat are viewed through the lens of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality leadership programs organized in the following three clusters: (a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community, (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences, and (c) research-grounded continuous program development. A thorough exploration and examination of one leadership education program (Gainey Leadership Retreat) is conducted to investigate whether or not the leadership attributes and subsequent actions associated with quality leadership programs are evident as a result of student-athlete participation in the program.
To be more specific, in this study I address the following issues: (a) quality of the Gainey Leadership Retreat training program, and (b) the attributes and impact of the Gainey program using the lens of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory. The study is structured around four major research questions as profiled in the next section.

Research Questions

The study employs a survey research approach to (a) identify the experiences and perceptions of retreat participants who have received annual leadership training for student-athletes, (b) identify the impact of the leadership training experience on the student-athlete in their subsequent athletic season, (c) identify the impact of the leadership training experience on the student-athlete since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College, and (d) identify the relationship that exists, if any, between those who identified their experience as high quality and their subsequent leadership experiences in, and possibly beyond, sport. This line of questioning focuses on the quality of a leadership training experience by determining if students who participated in the Gainey Student Athletes retreats conducted by Calvin College found their experiences to be in alignment with Eich’s classifications of high quality student leadership programs and the impact on their subsequent leadership experiences. The following research questions are the focus of this study.

1. What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) as reported by student-athlete leaders at Calvin College who attended the retreat, specifically:

   (a) how do retreat participants describe the learning community developed through the retreat experience;
(b) how do retreat participants report the value and types of experiential learning presented on the retreat; and
(c) how do retreat participants describe the overall program development and curriculum of the Gainey Retreat experience?

2. What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) on the experiences and perceptions of student-athlete leaders:
   (a) in their subsequent athletic season(s) at Calvin College, and
   (b) since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College?

3. What are the relationships between the leadership curriculum variables presented at the Gainey Leadership Retreat and the participant’s subsequent (1) confidence/willingness to lead, and (2) overall impression of the retreat experience?

4. What are the differences among participants’ ratings of the leadership training retreat experience as broken down by gender, team type, and year of participation?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The terminology used in the field of leadership development and education can sometimes be confusing and contradictory. Key leadership terms are often used interchangeably to describe similar concepts. Three such terms are leadership development, leadership education, and leadership training. In addition, high-quality leadership education programs are comprised of attributes and actions that can be organized into various clusters in a grounded theory. Finally, leadership development theory and a grounded theory of high-quality (student) leadership programs is used as the theoretical lens to frame the design of this study.
Leadership Development Theory

Leadership development refers to the process of growth in an individual that promotes, encourages, and assists in one’s leadership potential (Brungardt, 1996). This continuous process spans a lifetime as the individual garners more experience and knowledge through a variety of means, some of which are based in life and work experience and some of which are derived from planned experiences designed to enhance or specifically develop leadership capacity or performance. As an intentional process for developing leaders and leadership capacity, leadership education gives focus to those learning activities and environments that are intended to enhance and foster leadership abilities (Brungardt). Formal courses or seminars are one component of leadership education to organize and deliver the types of structured educational experiences that are designed to intervene or enhance the development of a leader. Leadership education is one component of a leader’s overall development. Leadership training has a more narrow and immediate focus and refers to the learning activities designed to prepare for a specific leadership role or job (Brungardt). The narrow focus of training experiences can provide opportunity for leaders to encounter new skills or information that will provide the necessary preparation to flourish or be responsive to situation-specific challenges.

While there is still much to know about the subject of leadership development, Figure 1 illustrates the various components of the leadership development process (Brungardt, 1996). This illustration also sheds light on the connection between leadership development theory and learning leadership theory. Leadership development theory inquires into how leadership is developed throughout the lifespan of the leader while learning leadership theory looks more narrowly at the role that leadership education
Figure 1. Life span of leader development (Brungardt, 1996).

plays in the development process of the leader. Of specific interest in this study is the role that a leadership education intervention (college student-athlete leadership retreat) has on the participants’ learning leadership that ultimately impacts their leadership development.

**Grounded Theory of High-Quality (Student) Leadership Programs**

Successful student leadership training programs have attributes—and actions associated with those attributes—that contribute significantly to student leadership development (Eich, 2008). Eich’s grounded theory of high quality leadership programs (see Figure 2) was developed using a multi-case study design to determine and describe what contributes most to learning and leadership development in undergraduate leadership programs in the United States. High quality was defined as those programs that have a significant positive effect on student learning and leadership development. Three clusters or themes emerged from considering multiple cases of leadership programs. Figure 2 depicts the 16 attributes of high-quality leadership programs in three clusters as defined in Eich’s study of leadership programs.
High-Quality (Student) Leadership Programs

Cluster I: Participants Engaged in Building and Sustaining a Learning Community

Cluster II: Student-Centered Experiential Learning Experiences

Cluster III: Research-Grounded Continuous Program Development

Attributes

1. Diverse Students
2. Experienced Practitioners
3. Modeling Educators
4. Small Groups
5. Supportive Culture
6. One-on-One Relationships
7. Leadership Practice
8. Reflection Activities
9. Application in Meetings
10. Meaningful Discussions
11. Episodes of Difference
12. Civic Service
13. Discovery Retreats
14. Flexible Design
15. Values Content
16. Systems Thinking

Figure 2. Grounded theory of high-quality (student) leadership programs (Eich, 2008).

This grounded theory model illuminates the connection between attributes and specific actions and corresponding student outcomes as defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Leadership Programs (Eich, 2008). These attributes and specific actions were used to develop the Gainey Retreat Survey used in this study. Survey questions were categorized using the three clusters and formulated to match the attributes of high-quality student leadership programs described in Eich’s grounded theory model. The Gainey Retreat Survey questions in section one (A Learning Community), two (Experiential Learning), and three (Program Development) utilize Likert scale questions to gauge whether or not the participant’s experiences and perceptions during the retreat mirror the attributes and actions described in Eich’s model.
Section four of the survey focuses on the implementation of materials after the retreat during the subsequent athletic season and in the time since completing their collegiate athletic experience.

**Leadership Training, Education, and Development**

For any organization to operate efficiently it must rely on effective leaders to help set the course, manage the day-to-day operations, and motivate participants to carry out their respective roles in a way that will benefit everyone. A dysfunctional team is one in which the members mistrust one another, communicate poorly, lack commitment to a goal, avoid accountability, and show no common purpose (Lencioni, 2002). While effective leadership will not solve every dysfunction in a team, all organizations can improve their effectiveness and efficiency when they are led well. Leadership training, education, and development (Brungardt, 1996) are all used by organizations with the desire and expectation to improve function for maximal performance and effect.

While there are vast amounts of financial resources designated towards leadership training, education, and development (Brungardt, 1996; Fulmer 1997), there is no clear consensus on one foolproof approach or methodology to achieve the desired results. A trip to the local bookstore will confirm that multiple approaches to the same problem will be prescribed with the same assurance of success. Research indicates that there are general guidelines, content, and challenges that all leadership training initiatives encounter (Allio, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; McIntyre, 1981). These common elements do not lead to a prescription for organizations to follow but instead point to a general framework of considerations. Each organization still needs to enact appropriate strategies based on specific needs, context, and philosophy. Due to the lack of clear
understanding about the phenomena of leadership (Burns, 1978) a variety of leadership theories (Yukl, 1989) can be applied in similar situations with equal success. While it is reasonable that a variety of approaches can be applied to address problems within organizations, the fact remains that organizations have proven their willingness to invest both financially and in time spent in leadership development.

Organizations that spend billions of dollars on leadership training, education, and development should be able to expect some type of return on that investment. While leadership is simply not a skill that can be acquired in a seminar or retreat; leaders typically emerge only after enduring the harsh lessons of experience. So paradoxically, while leadership cannot be taught, it can be learned (Allio, 2005). The learning that is acquired through systematic training and education can lead to development that impacts an organization positively (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Day, 2001). Whether or not leadership development is a self-fulfilling prophecy is difficult to determine—there is only limited research to directly link training and education to leadership development. In part, this study explores the direct impact of leadership training to specific actions and behaviors viewed through the lens of two (Brungardt, 1996; Eich, 2008) theoretical frameworks (Leadership Development Theory and a Grounded Theory of High Quality Leadership Programs).

Scholars in higher education have been able to identify attributes of high-quality leadership programs (Eich, 2008) rather than rely on assumptions and anecdotes. Programs that enhance student learning and development are founded in leadership theory research and consist of engagement and learning-focused teaching (Eich, 2008). Other significant components in high-quality leadership programs include diverse
participants, interactive teaching and learning, and adequate resources to support learning initiatives. These components are foundational elements of the Gainey Retreat Survey created for this study. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2004) identifies the five clusters of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experience, and a supportive campus environment as desired college student learning and development outcomes. Student engagement in these five clusters of behaviors provides a fertile environment of student learning in which leadership can be developed. This is one example of a leadership development environment (undergraduate college setting) where attributes and practices have been identified that positively affects leaders in training. In general leadership development intervention research, others have identified qualities such as assessment, challenge, support, mentoring, executive coaching, and action learning that comprises an effective leadership development experience (Day, 2001; Van Velsor & McCauley, 2004).

Surprisingly, the leadership development research in athletics is relatively small. There is some research that points to the role that coaches play in leading athletes (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980), but the contribution of athlete leadership in sport is limited in scope. Throughout this study, sport will be used as a collective noun to refer to activities that are a diversion or recreation. Sports and athletics will be used synonymously to refer to athletic contests in the context of a collegiate, co-curricular environment. A general overview of leadership development through sport (Wright & Cote, 2003) responds to some of the anecdotal evidence that is commonly ascribed to the value of athletics in teaching leadership. Other studies pursue specific components of
leadership development such as identifying predictors of leadership behavior (Glenn & Horn, 1993), studying group dynamics (Allen, 2005), or investigating the impact on one gender (George, 1988). Determining whether or not participation in athletics impacts leadership ability (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999) is an additional perspective that has limited research to support or refute organizations’ claims of leadership development in sport. Much like other areas in the field of research in leadership development there is little evidence to support a direct link between training and education to leadership development through athletics.

Success in any venture—be it business, education, or athletics—will warrant imitation as other organizations look to duplicate those favorable results. Successful athletic teams often point to the impact and effectiveness of their leadership as the key reason for their results. Researchers have investigated the role of coach as leader (Dirks, 2000; Loughhead & Hardy, 2005) as well as the athlete (Loughhead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006) on successful performance by athletic teams. In addition to success, researchers have studied the impact of effective leadership on the cohesion and unity within an athletic team (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas, & Halpin, 2006; Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002; Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985). Ultimately, successful leaders in athletic teams can point to training and education that they received that enhanced their development as leaders.

A properly functioning team has the ultimate competitive advantage (Lencioni, 2002). Expert athletic coaches perceive effective leadership to be a necessity for optimal functioning and success (Walsh & Morris, 2002). In the athletic setting one of the products of effective leadership is a highly functioning team. The study and research on
team building (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997) has shed light on the complex dynamic between effective leadership and its impact on followers. Significant research in athletics has dissected the impact of team building on performance (Buller, 1996; Hardy & Crace, 1997; Martin & Davids, 1995; Salas, Rozell, Mullen, & Driskell, 1999). More specifically, team building interventions have been used with the purpose of impacting team dynamics, cohesion, and goal setting (Voigt & Callaghan, 2001; Widmeyer & Ducharme, 1997; Yukelson, 1997). The effective training and education of team leaders can have a positive impact on both team functioning and performance.

Research indicates that there are differences in the expectations of male and female leaders. Research on sex stereotypes (Schein, 2001) indicate an expectation of stereotypical male attributes when thinking about leadership roles. This expectation could unknowingly guide retreat leaders into designing a retreat experience that perpetuates these stereotypes. The impact of gender stereotypes on how men and women respond to leadership interventions is helpful to consider when determining the future direction of a program. “Designing the structure and content of leadership development interventions after taking into consideration existing gender differences could help facilitate the positive impact on leadership development for both men and women” (Avolio, Mhatre, Norman, & Lester, 2009, p. 338).

There is evidence to indicate that there are differences in how male and female leaders lead and perform. Women are less likely to impose their authority (Eagly, Karau, Miner, & Johnson, 1994), and women tend to be more democratic and interpersonally oriented while men are more autocratic and task oriented (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). There is some indication of a higher preference for autocratic leader behavior among male
student-athletes and a higher preference for democratic leader behavior among female student-athletes (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004). This suggests that the leadership behavior (use of authority and involving athletes in decision-making) may vary for peer leaders based on their gender. An additional study (Holmes, McNeil, Adorna, & Procaccino, 2008) indicates that men preferred more autocratic behaviors in their peer leaders than women did.

Finally, leadership as it relates to team cohesion and performance is of interest in this study. There is some indication (Mullen & Cooper, 1994) that task interaction requirement (i.e., team vs. individual sport) does not serve as a moderator variable between cohesion and success. By coaches, players, and many observers greater team cohesiveness is assumed to be related to greater team success. Carron, Bray, and Eys (2002) suggest in their research there is a strong relationship between cohesion and success in naturally forming teams (such as sport teams). The leadership training experience is generally designed to provide athletic team leaders with the tools and strategies to positively impact a team’s cohesiveness. However, research (Patterson, Carron, & Loughhead, 2005) indicates the interrelationship among team cohesion, team norms, and performance is complex and warrants further investigation.

Rationale for the Study

Coaches at all levels of athletics are in a continual search for the ingredients necessary to develop a successful team. Improving leadership effectiveness to increase performance is an emerging phenomenon in the sport domain (Wright & Cote, 2003). The formal leadership position of the coach is often complimented by formal team captains or other informal leadership displayed by other players on a team. Determining
the best skills and dispositions for student-athlete leaders is a complex task, but one
worthy of study. Very few studies exist that look at the influence of student-athlete
leadership development on the team's performance, unity, and cohesion. A high quality
leadership training program in athletics that positively influences the leader's behavior
and practices will be of direct benefit to Calvin College's athletic program as a whole and
more specifically to the student-athletes who participate in the program.

In addition, this study may be of curricular benefit to other educational
institutions that are developing similar leadership development programs in athletics.
Research on student leadership in athletics may be of interest for developing programs
and leadership development initiatives for an organization such as the Council for
Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The CCCU is an international association
of 111 members in North America and 70 affiliates in 24 countries around the world. The
CCCU is committed to research, data collection, and analysis of issues related to faith
and scholarship. The research and study of sport leadership is an area of skill and
character development that would be of benefit to CCCU members and affiliates who
have similar perspective and philosophy as Calvin College's. This study may serve as the
impetus for expanded study and research on student-athlete leadership programs for
CCCU member institutions that are looking to enhance, promote, or develop strong
student-athlete leadership programs on their campuses.
Overview of Methodology

Research in this study is conducted using a survey research approach. “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2003, p. 153). This survey design uses an instrument designed by the researcher to ascertain quality of a leadership program as described by Eich’s (2008) Grounded Theory. Because the Gainey Retreat leadership training program has been in existence for six years, quantitative data can be acquired through survey research that identifies the recollections and perceptions of retreat participants along with how this leadership training experience impacted the implementation of leadership training in the subsequent athletic season and beyond. In this study, a Likert-scale survey was created to ascertain the quality of the retreat experience (using Eich’s grounded theory) and to measure the lasting impressions of significant retreat experiences by the retreat participants. The survey is used for data collection on all past retreat participants since the program began in 2004. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVAs, and multiple regression are used to analyze the data collected.

Strengths and Limitations

This study provides a rich amount of quantitative data to provide evaluation and analysis of a leadership retreat training initiative and the subsequent implementation of the leadership training experience. This two-part approach sheds light on the multiple layers of leadership in athletics that is often very difficult and complex to study. Another strength is that the researcher had access to all past participants in the leadership training initiative being studied. This access provided a cross-section of longitudinal information
reflecting the input of participants since the program’s inception. This helps ensure that any subtle differences in the curriculum of the retreat experience are represented in the responses of the participants in this study.

One limitation of this study is that the student-athletes who attend the retreat are chosen by coaches with little or no clear guidelines for selection. Ultimately retreat participants who were selected to attend may not have been the coaches’ first choice but because of availability were chosen to attend. Another limitation is that the curriculum is delivered to an audience of athletes from a religious institution. One of the stated goals of the retreat is for the athletes to grow in their faith and their relationship with God. It is unclear as to whether or not this goal has any measurable impact on the leadership development of student athletes. In addition, the relationship between the retreat experience and measurable leadership behavior is complex. It is very likely that multiple influences outside of the retreat experience have impacted leadership behavior.

Chapter I Summary

Leadership training in general, and in athletics specifically, is a complex concept worthy of study. Leadership training comes in a variety of forms and versions but the focus of this study is on training presented to student-athletes in a five-day retreat experience. In the next chapter some background information is presented that sheds light on the value and importance of leadership development in and through athletics. In addition, the component of implementation is viewed through the athletic lens of team building as peer leaders look to utilize the skills and strategies they may have developed in their leadership training.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature in this study is designed to look at the two converging paths of leadership development and team building. The review of leadership literature includes: (a) a synthesis of leadership development theory, (b) the paradigm shift of leadership development training models in business, education, and sport, (c) a review of leading others as it relates to the coaches’ perspective, the athletes’ perspective and experience (peer leadership in athletics), and (d) leading self including elements of spiritual and authentic leadership. The review of team building literature includes: (a) team building approaches including Lencioni’s model (2002), (b) coaches’ perceptions of team building, (c) athletes’ perceptions on team building, and (d) the effects of team building on athletic performance and team cohesion.

Leadership Development

Developing leaders in and through athletics is an accepted and heralded hallmark of athletics in our society. Personal-social character development through attributes such as reliability, responsibility, and leadership are often ascribed to athletic participation. The athletic field or arena is viewed as the proving ground of true leadership displays and the venues in which the leaders of the future are developed (van Knippenberg, 2004; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2005). This section looks at a leadership development paradigm and its impact on leadership training, leading others from the coaches’ and athletes’ perspective, and leading self from a spiritual foundation.
Leadership Development Theory

While there is still much to know about the subject of leadership development, Figure 1 (see Chapter One) illustrates the various components of the leadership development process (Brungardt, 1996). This illustration also sheds light on the connection between leadership development theory and learning leadership theory. Leadership development theory inquires into how leadership is developed throughout the lifespan of the leader while learning leadership theory looks more narrowly at the role that leadership education plays in the development process of the leader.

Leadership development refers to the process of growth in an individual that promotes, encourages, and assists in one’s leadership potential (Brungardt, 1996). This continuous process spans a lifetime as the individual garners more experience and knowledge through a variety of means. Early childhood and adolescent experiences form the building blocks on which leadership potential is built. Childhood experimentation coupled with parental support and a safe, positive environment has an important influence on characteristics such as self-confidence, intelligence, and assertiveness (Gardner, 1990). Formal educational experiences provide the proving ground of future leaders and they acquire knowledge and concepts while searching for opportunities to flex their leadership skill, often through trial and error. Cooperation, competition, and other social proficiencies become essential. Observation and emulation of effective adult leaders serve as a powerful influence on the adolescent’s leadership behavior (Clark & Clark, 1994). Continued education into the collegiate ranks provides additional opportunity to learn and practice leadership skills. Research indicates that generally, the higher level of education directly relates to higher levels of managerial positions (Bass,
1990). Once out of formal education, life and work experience provide the day-to-day context to learn and develop leadership skill.

Learning on the job is enhanced by the fact that any workplace generates a certain amount of pressure, and ambitious young people generate inner pressures of their own. Seeking recognition, fearing failure, working against deadlines, experiencing the urgencies of life in the real world, they learn lessons they do not soon forget. (Gardner, 1990). Learning from experience implies that both successes and mistakes will comprise the lessons that leaders take with them into future leadership opportunities. Supervisors that create a supportive environment despite high pressure and challenges can enhance or specifically develop leadership capacity or performance.

As an intentional process for developing leaders and leadership capacity, leadership education gives focus to those learning activities and environments that are intended to enhance and foster leadership abilities (Brungardt, 1996). Formal courses or seminars are one component of leadership education intervention to organize and deliver the types of structured educational experiences that are designed to intervene or enhance the development of a leader. “Leadership educators believe in the basic assumption that much of what makes a leader successful is teachable. Skills and abilities utilized by leaders such as communicating, problem solving, visioning, decision making and so on, are learnable behaviors” (Brungardt, p. 87). Leadership education is one component of a leader’s overall development. Leadership training has a more narrow and immediate focus and refers to the learning activities designed to prepare for a specific leadership role or job (Brungardt). According to Bass (1990), the impact of leadership training is supported by research:
Research indicates, not unexpectedly, that the effectiveness of training depends on the trainee, the trainer, the composition of the training group, follow-up reinforcement and feedback, and particularly whether there is congruence between the training and the organizational environment for which the trainee is being prepared. In all, meta-analyses of available evaluative studies have provided evidence that leadership and management training, education, and development are usually effective. (p. 856)

The narrow focus of training experiences can provide opportunity for leaders to encounter new skills or information that will provide the necessary preparation to flourish or be responsive to situation-specific challenges.

**Leadership Development Paradigm**

Management and leadership training have typically cost businesses billions of dollars per year (Fulmer, 1997). Organizations looking to maximize their investments often create a customized program to improve leadership efficiency and impact. This is the current approach to leadership training programs. Leadership development is an evolving field that must identify guidelines for training programs by addressing past and current issues within an organizational structure, prescribe appropriate content to address the issues, while charting a course to navigate the challenges that may be positioned on the horizon.

Fulmer (1997) observes that in the new paradigm leadership training participants have moved from passive listeners to active learners. Application of learning is the focus over the entertainment value of the presenter. Generally, program design is no longer a one-time event but has been supplanted by corporate universities that provide an ongoing
educational process to a cross-section of workers within an organization. The purpose of
the leadership training is shifting from knowledge acquisition to action learning that can
be practiced in a variety of settings. Fulmer identified a shift in the paradigm of
leadership development identified in Table 1. The period focus is moving from a
reflection on past failures and successes to a future-thinking perspective that attempts to
create a new mental model (Senge, 1990) to mold the future reality of an organization.

Table 1

*The Evolving Paradigm of Leadership Development (Fulmer, 1997)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Listener</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Design</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>Ongoing Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Players</td>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>Generalists</td>
<td>Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Process/Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>University Campus</td>
<td>Corporate Facility</td>
<td>Anywhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key players in leadership development are no longer a few specialists with
limited roles but are now general partners who contribute multiple perspectives and blend
a variety of skills that can enhance an organization. Rost (1993) describes a similar
paradigm shift in leadership development defining leadership as “an influence
relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect
their mutual purposes” (p. 99). In this way leadership is distinguished from management
or governance approach. Presentation of material favors substance over style so that
relevant content can prepare leaders for action that will in turn empower others within an
organization. Finally, whereas traditionally leadership development has taken place in
often exotic locales limited to select individuals, the new approach focuses on the caliber
of ideas discussed and exchanged over the quality of the facility in which the training was held.

Leadership training programs. The path to leadership in many organizations has traditionally been linked to demonstration of knowledge within the respective discipline or longevity in a position (McIntyre, 1981). More recently, organizations have recognized the inherent flaws in this approach to leadership ascendency and have taken a more proactive approach to identify, train, and nurture leaders to take on positions of prominence and influence. Businesses, educational institutions, and athletic teams have all faced problems such as shortage of funding, competitive or shrinking job markets, and internal bureaucracies that make leadership development and training a challenge. A stated purpose of most leadership development projects is “To provide both cognitive and affective experiences in an attempt to improve overall efficiency” (McIntyre, p. 33). A more cynical commentary states that, “Current approaches to leadership development offer no more potential return than many of the other historic panaceas for reversing organizational torpor and decline” (Allio, 2005, p. 1071). McIntyre speaks the same cautionary note when he states, “A leadership development program that is designed only to identify potential, change the personality of group members, or groom people for promotion has been established for the wrong reasons” (p. 34). The notion that leadership development can change behavior, raise consciousness, or transform ordinary people into leaders is wishful thinking at best and deceptive or disingenuous at worst (McIntyre; Allio). For a leadership development program to have any chance for success it must abide by some basic guidelines, use meaningful and relevant content in its curriculum
and address challenges that leaders face in carrying out their specific role in the organization, business, or athletic team.

*Grounded theory of high-quality (student) leadership programs.* Successful student leadership training programs have attributes—and actions associated with those attributes—that contribute significantly to student leadership development (Eich, 2008). Eich constructed a grounded theory on high-quality student leadership programs by inductively developing theory from the ground up through a systematic process of drawing on the perspectives of four successful leadership programs in the United States. This grounded theory model illuminates the connection between attributes and specific actions that correspond to student outcomes as defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Leadership Programs (Eich).

For the purpose of this research, Eich defined high-quality as “those programs that have a significant positive effect on student learning and leadership development” (p. 179). This definition is used because (1) student learning is hallmark mission of higher education, and (2) the learning and development of the individual in the context of the subject matter of the designated program is paramount. The perspectives of participants involved in this research helped identify 16 individual attributes and actions categorized in three clusters. The three clusters are: (a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community, (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences, and (c) research-grounded continuous program development (see Figure 2 in Chapter One of this study). The outcome of Eich’s research provides a model of how program designers can “practice the kind of inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and
process-oriented leadership for positive change that they advocate to their students” (p. 186).

In summary, Eich concludes that high-quality leadership programs are fertile training ground for student leaders to learn content and apply concepts.

In creating a space for this to happen, leadership programs that integrate and enact attributes of this theory demonstrate not only that leadership can be taught and learned but that leadership development can be fostered and accelerated as a result of a program educational intervention rather than leaving leadership development to chance through life experiences. (Eich, p. 186)

**Guidelines for leadership training programs.** Leadership training programs come in a variety of approaches and designs. Allio (2005) suggests that there are certain guidelines that effective leadership training programs put into practice. A key, first step in any leadership training program is identifying prospective candidates for enrolment in the process. While there may be some benefit to making programs available to everyone within the organization (McIntyre, 1985), a more realistic approach would be for incumbent leaders to choose candidates based on pre-determined criteria. One such set of guidelines or tell-tale traits would be: (a) strong motivation, (b) positive attitude, (c) morality, and (d) potential for growth (Allio). Allio’s suggestions draw from the practice dating back the fifth century BC when Plato advocated the training of selected young men as philosopher-kings. These hand-picked men served an apprenticeship as a way to learn the requisite skills for leadership.

A second guideline is to ensure that training includes opportunity to apprentice the skills and decisions necessary to lead others. A hallmark of any leadership training
program should be intentional experiences that test and transform potential leaders (Allio, 2005; Armstrong 2001; Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Burns, 1978). Much like prospective physicians use the methodology of seeing, doing, teaching in their training and development as expert surgeons, leaders must observe, do and pass on their legacy to the leaders of the future. A leadership apprentice must learn the requisite skills to perform their job effectively but must also purposely observe and study various leaders who model leadership traits and behaviors, good and bad.

A third guideline to teaching leadership is the implementation of mentoring and sage advice from the experts in each leader’s field. Having a sage counselor through the ups and downs of fledgling leadership experiences can provide immeasurable insight and enlightenment (Boschert, 2003; Day, 2001; Wright & Coté, 2003). On-the-job training is an aspect of leadership development that can take advantage of the seasoned leaders within an organization. Allio (2005) writes, “Leadership is simply not a craft that schools can teach; men and women become leaders only after tempering in the harsh crucible of organizational experience. So paradoxically, while leadership cannot be taught, it can be learned” (p. 1072). Many business and educational organizations implement the use of mentors, whose purpose and function may include teaching specifics skills, educating about the culture of an organization, or even to demonstrate leadership by their own example.

Leadership training content. The information presented in any leadership training program must be tailored to suit the needs of the organization, business, or team. Most topical content can fit into the following five classifications: (a) factual content, (b) approaches and techniques for problem solving and decision making, (c) attitudes, (d)
interpersonal skills, and (e) self knowledge (McIntyre, 1981). Factual content includes an organization’s policies, available resources, and constraints that may be the cause of inefficient activity or hold the key to possible solutions. Approaches and techniques for problem solving and decision making is the content of creative problem solving that uses a variety of models or approaches. A third typical area of content reflects the attitudes of democratic leadership—understanding the principles and procedures of drawing out the ideas and contributions of colleagues within your organization. The next area of content, interpersonal skills, includes the written and oral communication skills that leaders develop to understand others, communicate information and ideas, and motivate others into action. A final area of content is self-knowledge—the ability to recognize one’s own strengths and weaknesses in order to be positioned for efficiency and effectiveness. Clearly, the content presented must be shown to have relevance and traction for future use within an organization rather than to simply entertain or energize. Experiential learning that mirrors specific on-the-job scenarios and challenges will test prospective leaders before they encounter such challenges in real life.

Leadership training challenges. While an argument can be made that a key guideline for leadership training is identifying the right candidates, it can also be one of the greatest challenges. Fulmer’s (1997) assertion that training leaders should include a cross-section of people within an organization is a lofty goal but somewhat impractical. Selecting potential philosopher-kings (Allio, 2005) presents the challenge of finding leadership candidates that have the prerequisite motivation, positive attitude, morality, and potential for growth. Embarking on the path to leadership is not for everyone—identifying and nurturing leadership traits in potential leaders is a big challenge.
A second challenge for leadership training program is selecting and developing leadership skills. Allio (2005) notes, “The best leadership programs will focus on building skills” (p. 1076). The challenge then becomes identifying and building contextual skills that specifically suit an organization yet are generic enough to build critical thinking and communication skills. A person that acquires skills that cannot be used to positively impact their organization has wasted precious time and energy that could be used in a more productive way.

Leading Others

In the athletic setting, leadership qualities are typically demonstrated by coaches in formal leadership positions, athletes in a formal position such as team captain, or other individuals of influence who do not have a formal title or position. Character development and leadership style preference are two additional elements that inform the discussion surrounding the qualities necessary to lead others.

Coaches’ perspective. Leadership in athletics is traditionally studied in the context of the coach-athlete relationship (Armstrong, 2001; Beam, Serwatka & Wilson, 2004; Kelly, 1975; Kenow & Williams, 1999; Wright & Cote, 2003). The coach as a leader has been well researched and has provided insight into some key characteristics that evolve out of this relationship. For example, the leadership of the coach can (a) contribute to the overall competitive experience of the athlete, (b) aid in the accomplishment of performance goals, (c) enable the opportunity for others (assistant coaches, athletes) to develop leadership skills, and (d) raise group performance, often beyond what is expected (Armstrong). When viewed in these terms, coaching behavior can be viewed as transformational (Armstrong) because of its focus on group needs rather
than a transaction of services. In much the same way that Burns (1978) writes of transactional and transformational leadership, Armstrong sees “transformational” coaches being able to articulate a clear vision for the future of the team, lead the team in the accomplishment of performance-related goals; but maybe most importantly a transformational coach will elevate the moral reasoning and ethical decision making of the team. This type of approach to leading others serves as a powerful means of motivating the team to group performance that is often beyond what was ever expected in the first place. Armstrong also points out that when a coach is working under this guiding principle of being transformational, he or she becomes an “enabler providing opportunities for individuals to develop leadership skills of their own” (p. 44). This perspective would then indicate that leading others is a dynamic enterprise that requires the coach to learn a set of skills that can be adapted to different groups of athletes in different situations.

From a coach’s perspective, the athletic venue can also be a proving ground of leadership education. Little research has been conducted that isolates the views of expert coaches on effective leadership and the coaching process. However, studies do indicate (Kenow & Williams, 1999, Loughead & Hardy, 2005, Walsh & Morris, 2002) that expert coaches have a unique and valuable insight regarding the perception and interpretation of valued components in the leadership development process. These valued components include compatibility within teams, social support provided by the team structure, the use of various types of feedback (positive, corrective, and negative), and the implementation of democratic versus autocratic behavior. Walsh and Morris (2002) identify a number of areas in which leadership education in sport takes place including: leadership history and
its influence on coaching, knowledge of sport, pedagogical skills, coaches’ personal qualities, coach-athlete relationships, coaches’ evaluation of the athlete, outcomes, and enjoyment of the coaching process. In-depth interviews with elite, junior athletes and twenty successful coaches investigated aspects of coaching such as history and influences, effective coaching behaviors, and coaching training and accreditation. This research indicates that effective leadership in sport is a learned behavior that is dependent on gleaning the expertise of veteran coaches and identifying the coach’s impact on athlete satisfaction, performance, and self-efficacy.

Building character. It is a commonly held assumption that participation in athletics will build character and leadership skills. One such example comes from Jack Roberts, the director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) who writes, “One of the most important benefits of athletic competition is the building of character in individuals, either as participants, coaches or spectators” (MHSAA website). This perspective is supported by data from a study of suburban male and female high school students in Chicago, IL indicating that “Athletes demonstrated significantly greater leadership ability than did non-athletes” (Dobosz & Beaty, 1999, p. 219). While the Dobosz and Beaty study was quite general in scope, an analysis of leadership development in sport (Wright & Cote, 2003) implemented a study to examine the leadership development of a small group of athletes. Their research indicated that leadership development in sport focused on the development of skill, work ethic, sport knowledge, and rapport with people. In addition, athlete leaders engage in a variety of activities and interact with peers, coaches, and parents to formulate additional socially influential skills such as: receiving feedback, acknowledgement, support, cognitive
engagement, mature conversations with adults, and physical encounters with older peers (Wright & Cote). While a cause and effect relationship may be difficult to establish, it is clear that athletic participation provides the athlete with an opportunity to develop and display leadership qualities and characteristics.

Leadership preference. Acknowledging that athletics is a venue in which leadership behaviors are exhibited, it is also significant that participating athletes have varying preference and satisfaction with the leadership that is being displayed in their respective situations. Gender, competition level, task dependence, and task variability can have an impact on the preferred leadership in the athletic arena (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004). For example, male student-athletes showed significantly greater preferences for autocratic and social support behaviors while female student-athletes showed significantly greater preferences for situational consideration and training and instruction behaviors (Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, p. 12). This is just one small indication that leadership preference is often situation-specific based on gender, task dependence, and task variability.

The impact of gender stereotypes on how men and women respond to leadership interventions is helpful to consider when determining the future direction of a program. A current study found that the effect size for the impact of leadership interventions for an all-male group was almost equal to that of the all-female group indicating that “leadership interventions have an equal and positive impact across gender” (Avolio, Mhatre, Norman, & Lester, 2009, p. 336). This study goes on to qualify that “The degree of impact varied depending on the nature of the intervention, focus of the intervention impact, leadership theory, sample characteristics, and study setting” (p. 336). An
implication of this study is that more studies are needed that isolate gender as a variable for studying impact of leadership interventions.

Knowing some of these situation-specific variables can provide a leader with sufficient information to position themselves to lead effectively—matching athlete preference to the leadership style. Previous research by Riemer and Chelladurai (1995), also indicate that task variability (i.e., offensive and defensive players in football) can impact the preferred leadership behaviors. In this study, defensive players preferred and perceived “greater amounts of democratic and autocratic behavior, and social support than did offensive players” (Riemer & Chelladurai, p. 286). Here again, preference and satisfaction with leadership was grounded in effective training and instruction along with the presentation of positive feedback. The specific needs (in this case by position on the athletic field) were met by a cognizant leader. A third study in this area (Schliesman, 1987) investigated established models of leadership in athletics (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) to concur that satisfaction and preference with leadership behavior is related to training and instruction, social support, and positive feedback. The significance of this line of research acknowledges that the athlete’s perceptions and preferences (needs) can significantly impact the leadership style of the coach.

*Peer leadership in athletics.* Coaches have recognized that in order to maximize their team’s performance, they must tap into the resource of athlete leadership within the team (Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Petlichkoff, 1987). In addition, Glenn and Horn (1993) pointed to the practice of coaches picking out athletes, usually captains, who can provide motivation and possibly direction to their teammates. Interestingly, research indicates that coaches and athletes do not necessarily pick their leaders for the same reasons.
Leadership status, as rated by peers, is tied to performance, seniority, and locus of control of the team environment (Yukelson, Weinberg, Richardson, & Jackson, 1983). Loughead and Hardy’s (2005) research indicate that coaches and peer leaders serve differing leadership functions within a team: “Coaches were perceived as exhibiting training and instruction and autocratic behaviors to a greater extent than peer leaders. Conversely, peer leaders exhibited more social support, positive feedback, and democratic behaviors than coaches” (Loughead & Hardy, p. 310). Loughead, Hardy, and Eys (2006) took this line of research even further to make the distinction between the two types of athlete leadership—team leaders (captains) and peer leaders (non-captains). Their argument for analyzing this distinction in leadership is that leadership in an athletic setting is multi-functional, necessitating more than one type of leader. This study also utilized a design which examined leadership at two times in the season to observe emerging leadership (development) over the course of a season. In the athletic setting, effective leadership is comprised of both formal leadership (coaches and coach appointed captains) and informal leadership (team selected leaders and influential peers). Leadership development programs must acknowledge the influence of both sources (formal and informal) when designing and implementing curriculum.

**Leading Self First**

The effectiveness and efficiency of a leader is influenced by the ability to identify strengths and manage weaknesses (Buckingham, 2007). Discovering your own gifts and recognizing how you can influence others is the commission of anyone in a leadership position. Consistency between spiritual values and practices and effective leadership
Self-leadership. Because leading others is a complex challenge it is extremely valuable for both coaches and athletes to investigate the relative importance of self-leadership. Hybels (2001) writes about the “leader’s challenge of leading self first” (p. 86). Being aware of the various influences in and around an organization or team forces the effective leader to carefully scrutinize the impact of these forces and choose a leadership strategy appropriately. Hybels (2002) describes a 360-degree leader as:

360-degree leaders don’t just direct their gift of leadership south, to the people under their care. They also learn to lead north by influencing those with authority over them, and lead east and west by impacting their peers. But, most importantly, they learn to keep the compass needle centered by leading themselves (the one in the middle) – by keeping their own lives in tune so they can provide maximum direction for others. (p. 181)

Keeping our own lives in tune includes leading with confidence and a desire to transform those around us. Manz (1991) identified self-leadership as the influence that people exert over themselves to achieve the self-motivation and self-direction needed to behave in desirable ways. Strategies to achieve this include implementing behavioral changes, the use of “natural rewards,” and changing thought patterns. While self-motivation and self-direction may be difficult to quantify, research indicates (Dolbier, Soderstrom, & Steinhardt, 2001) that there is a correlation between self-leadership and enhanced psychological, health, and work outcomes. In other words, a leader who is well-ordered
in leading themselves can have a direct positive impact on the effectiveness of those being lead.

Extended research in this field is investigating the dynamic relationship that is created between leaders and followers and therefore impacts the effectiveness of the leader and performance outcomes of the followers. The effectiveness of the leader (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2005) is determined by the influence on attitudes, behaviors, and performance of the followers. The leader’s influence on the self-esteem (sense of self-worth) of the followers helps stimulate faith in the leader and build identification with the collective. A leader’s identity is in part leader-centric, but must also embrace the concept of leadership as “a collaborative, relational process” (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005, p. 599). In respect to performance outcomes, self-leadership strategies (Prussia, Anderson, & Manz, 1998) had a significant impact on self-efficacy evaluations of followers, and self-efficacy (beliefs about one's ability to organize and execute courses of action necessary for attainment of a goal) directly affected performance.

_Spiritual leadership theory._ Hybel’s (2002) conviction that individuals should “deploy the spiritual gift of leadership” (p. 5) implies that a leader’s moral compass is significant in determining direction for an organization. Reave’s (2005) review of over 150 studies shows that:

There is a clear consistency between the values (in the sense of established ideals) and practices of leaders who are able to motivate followers, create positive ethical climate, inspire trust, promote positive work relationships, and achieve organizational goals. These spiritual values and practices also allow leaders to
achieve organizational goals such as increased productivity, lowered rates of
turnover, greater sustainability, and improved employee health. (p. 656)

Spirituality in this context differs from religion in that it is more generic and in fact, may
include more than just one specific religious approach. In this sense, spirituality expresses
itself in spiritual values such as integrity and in spiritual behavior such as expressing
concern and care for others (Reave). Values and practices that have been traditionally
associated with, and emphasized in spiritual teachings have also been found to be
essential in developing leadership effectiveness. These skills include: showing respect for
others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing care and concern, listening responsively,
recognizing the contributions of others, and engaging in reflective practice (Manz, 1991;
Reave). These skills seem to contradict conventional wisdom that effective leaders must
demonstrate a tough exterior to find success in a leadership setting. “Many experts expect
strategy, intelligence, even ruthlessness to be marks of a successful leader, but a review
of literature shows that these are not the defining elements. Instead, spiritual values such
as integrity, honesty, and humility have been repeatedly found to be key elements of
leadership success (Reave, p. 657).

Spiritual leadership as an observable phenomenon is furthered by Fry’s (2003)
Spiritual Leadership Theory. Fry (2003) defines spiritual leadership as “the values,
attitudes, and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that
they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (pp. 694-695).
Therefore a leader looks at their position as a calling to help derive purpose and meaning
combined with a collective purpose of genuine care, concern, and appreciation for others
(Fry). A leader then treats others in a way that is consistent with their inner convictions.
Authentic leadership. Another term used to reflect similar sentiments to spiritual leadership, authentic leadership, is marked by leadership characteristics that exhibit "self-transcendent values and positive other-directed emotions" (Michie & Gooty, 2005, p. 445). Authentic leadership is marked by actions in agreement with the true self and expression consistent with inner thoughts and feelings (Michie & Gooty; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Harter, 2002). An authentic leader is transparent about their intentions and demonstrates ethical behavior that mirrors their spoken values, actions, and behaviors. This line of research focuses on the positive, other-directed emotions of the leader as a means of motivation for the leader "to act on their other-regarding values" (Michie & Gooty, p. 448). Hybels (2002) furthers this concept by underscoring how the leader's motivation must be continually monitored to ensure that purpose and action are consistent and authentic. An effective leader must be able to identify key elements in their "life-story" (Shamir & Eilam, 2005) to find meaning (self-concept expressed through behavior) and thus develop as authentic leaders. Sparrowe (2005) enhances the discussion on authentic leadership by encouraging the authentic leader to find meaning through the narrative exercise of "seeing oneself as another" (p. 435). This assures that the leader does not view themselves in a vacuum but rather in the context and lens of the followers.

Leadership Development Summary

Leadership development programs are an effective way to help leaders develop the skills and strategies needed to lead others. Leadership is often viewed by organizations as the ultimate competitive advantage (Lencioni, 2002; Hirst, Mann, Bain, Pirola-Merlo, & Richver, 2004) but how and when do leaders learn the skills of their trade? What is best way to learn leadership? Learning leadership in the classroom setting
is only partially effective at best (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996). Some research exists to determine the amount and type of information that leaders learn from their experiences in the workplace (Day, 2001, Yukl, 2002). The implication of this line of research (Hirst, Mann, Bain, Pirola-Merlo, & Richver, 2004) is that "organizations should place greater emphasis on experiential learning so as to foster sustained behavioral and practice changes" (p. 324). My study adds to the leadership development literature by examining these questions: What impact does a leadership training retreat for student-athletes have on the participant's leadership attributes and actions? What are the attributes of leadership training retreat experience that can classify it as a high-quality leadership program?

Team Building

Effective leadership development requires some type of mechanism to deliver the content and experiential learning needed to foster growth in the individual. Maximizing the human capital within any organization or team is the challenge of every leader. Lencioni (2002) writes about the functional team being the ultimate competitive advantage. Woodcock and Francis (1994) identified six benefits from team building: (a) the production of coherent, visionary, acceptable leadership; (b) the acceptance of roles and responsibilities by team members; (c) the dedication of member efforts toward collective achievement; (d) the development of positive and energetic environment; (e) efficient group meetings and practices; and (f) the reduction or elimination of negative team influences. Hundreds of books can be found in the business section of any bookstore that provide the reader with motivational strategies to get the most out of your organization or team. The world of athletics is no different—there are plenty of authors
that make a good living selling the latest “answer” to your team’s many dysfunctions. This section investigates team building approaches, coaches’ perceptions of team building, athletes’ perceptions of team building, and the effects of team building on athletic performance and cohesion.

**Team Building—Approaches**

Team building, as an approach or practice to improving performance is an expected strategy in both the business and athletic worlds (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997). Goal setting, interpersonal relations, problem solving, and role clarification are the four current models of team building (Salas, Rozell, Mullen, & Driskell, 1999). Goal setting uses intervention is designed to set objectives and develop individual and team goals. Interpersonal relations intervention is designed to increase team work skills such and communication and sharing to develop trust and confidence in the team members. Problem solving intervention seeks to identify and evaluate for the purpose of addressing organizational crises. Role clarification intervention considers the respective roles and duties within an organization (Salas et al., 1999).

In sport, a common approach implements a process that first identifies team strengths, then acknowledges challenges that this particular team faces, then finally establishes team goals under which individual goals can be created (McCann, 2007). Sample course outlines (Hallam & Center for Creative Leadership, 1996; Toupence, 2006) or curriculum models (Lencioni, 2002; Hardy & Crace, 1997; Turk, McFadden, Stoss, & Dreiling, 2001) provide the interested person with templates, problem solving activities, and interactive games to help individuals, organizations, or teams become better competitors and valued team members. Team building approaches in sport are
“Placed in a hierarchy from short-term, task-specific, coach-facilitated to long-term, multi-aspect, consultant-facilitated, and along a continuum ranging from youth sport to high performance sport” (Brawley & Paskevich, 1997, p. 29). The implication here is that team building interventions in sport are tempered by the resources available, the cost involved, and the magnitude of changes desired and expected at the relative level of participation.

A standard approach in any team building curriculum has an element of goal setting included. Whether it is individual goal setting strategies or collective team goal setting the common purpose is to connect goal setting with performance (Dawson, Bray, & Widemeyer, 2002; Widemeyer & Ducharme, 1997). In this context, goal setting can be used for individual and group motivation and to build a collective experience. An alternative source to build teams can be a personal-disclosure, mutual-sharing activity that encourages participants to bring out emotionally, intense life experiences that can include “enhanced understanding (of self and others), increased cohesion (closeness and playing for each other), and improved confidence (confidence in teammates and feelings of invincibility)” (Dunn & Holt, 2004, p. 366). This approach depends heavily on the emotional connection between team members that may or may not be present in the team’s culture.

A games approach (Fisher, 2005) that focuses on collaboration, communication, and cohesiveness can help facilitate positive, open communication, trust, and teamwork within groups. This approach uses simple, “ice-breaker” games to isolate a particular theme, such as trust, collaborative thinking, or creativity, to accomplish various tasks. A skeptical business executive who is spending time and energy might inquire as to how a
simple game of Twister could provide a return (team development and leadership) on their investment. Similarly, outdoor experiential training (OET) advocates using the outdoors to facilitate change in managers and leaders. Businesses that are spending hundreds of millions of dollars (Weaver, 1999) on outdoor education are looking for return on that investment in leadership and team development. Williams, Graham and Baker (2003) have done return on investment (ROI) calculations treating leadership and team training as expenditures. They created a model by which ROI and OET can be calculated to determine cost effectiveness.

A team building intervention approach (Yukelson, 1997) identifies the core components to consider when building a successful team. These components include having "a shared vision and unity of purpose, collaborative and synergistic teamwork, individual and mutual accountability, an identity as a team, a positive team culture and cohesive group atmosphere, open and honest communication processes, peer helping an social support, and trust at all levels" (Yukelson, 1997, p. 73). Successful intervention includes the prerequisites of assessment, awareness, and confidentiality. Interventions either before a season begins or at a mid-point in the season, can be effective in helping individual and team performance, as well as enhance the team’s sense of unity (Voight & Callaghan, 2001). Voight and Callaghan used components of shared vision, role clarity-acceptance, strong leadership, individual/team accountability, team identity, and open/honest communication to field test Yukelson’s (1997) intervention approach. Teams participating in the study demonstrated on-field success, gave positive evaluations on the Consultant Evaluation Form (CEF), and gave positive open-ended responses from athletes and coaches involved in the study.
Recognizing that athletics does not “corner the market” on team building approaches, there is a sense that the venue of athletic participation is a unique laboratory for implementing and experimenting with various strategies (Wolf-Wendel, Toma, & Morphew, 2001). These researchers argue that the lessons learned (team members share a common goal; engage in intense, frequent interaction; share adversity; have a common enemy; and recognize that each individual has something important to contribute) can serve other disciplines, such as the educational community very well. What remains consistent in any approach (Carron, 1997; Plummer & Rougeau, 1997) to team building is that all of the participants (coaches and athletes) must be ready and willing to contribute to the process for success to occur.

**Lencioni’s Model**

One such team building model (Lencioni, 2002) and the one that forms the foundation for the curriculum developed for the Gainey retreat is based on the following assumptions, dysfunctions, and cohesive characteristics outlined by Lencioni’s (2002) book as describing the functioning of teams.

**Assumptions.** Lencioni’s team building model is based on the following assumptions and observations about teamwork and how team’s function: (a) teamwork is the ultimate competitive advantage; it is so powerful and so rare, (b) building a strong team is theoretically uncomplicated but painfully difficult to put into practice day-to-day, (c) teams are made up of imperfect humans that are inherently dysfunctional, and (d) overcoming dysfunction will allow a team to do more than any collection of individuals.

**Dysfunctions of a team.** Based on Lencioni’s observations and evaluation of how teams operate, he identifies the following five dysfunctions: (a) absence of trust, (b) fear
of conflict, (c) lack of commitment, (d) avoidance of accountability, and (e) inattention to results. Restated positively, Lencioni observed and stated that truly cohesive teams behave in the following ways: (a) trust one another, (b) engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas, (c) commit to decisions and plans of action, (d) hold one another accountable for plans, and (e) focus on the achievement of collective results.

Team improvement tools. Lencioni’s model provides the user with a number of tools that can be implemented to improve team function including: (a) the Team Assessment Questionnaire, (b) characteristics of teams that display each dysfunction, (c) characteristics of teams that have overcome each dysfunction, (d) suggestions (including exercises) for overcoming each dysfunction, and (e) the role of the leader in overcoming each dysfunction. These tools can easily be adapted to work for teams in the business, academic, or athletic settings.

The Lencioni model is the foundation for the curriculum that has been developed for the Gainey Retreat for student-athletes at Calvin College. Information is provided (lecture format) and students engage in experiential activities during days three and four of the five-day retreat based on the Lencioni principles of trust, communication, commitment, accountability, and attention to results.

Team Building—Coaches’ Perceptions

The role of a coach in any team building approach is significant. The coach’s techniques can have a significant impact on the cohesion within a team. Turman’s research (2003) contends:

If the research is correct and team success is a predictor of high cohesion, one could also conclude that cohesion could be a predictor of success. If a coach is
aware of the importance cohesion can play for small group sports one would assume that a significant amount of a coach’s communication and interaction with the team would involve strategies to promote and develop unity and cohesion among athletes. (p. 89)

For any group, success is dependent on people working together and remaining united as they pursue their objectives in the face of various obstacles. “If cohesion is the desired final outcome, then team building is the process to facilitate its development” (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003, p. 129). While there may be initial skepticism from coaches about the value of team building, research on team building programs indicated that coaches overwhelmingly endorsed these programs as a positive experience (Newin, Bloom, & Loughead, 2008). In addition, Newin et al. (2008) reported that coaches found that their own motivational and communication skills improved as a result of implementing team building activities throughout a season. More specifically, coaches reported: (a) an improved ability to break down complex tasks and explain instructions more succinctly, (b) improved quality of feedback given to athletes, (c) an elevated degree of bonding and ability to work together, (d) more athlete involvement and perseverance, and (e) improved athlete reflection on potential solutions and problem solving skills. These results support other research (Bloom et al.; Voight & Callaghan, 2001; Yukelson, 1997) that examined the beneficial effects of team building. Much of the team building research has focused on the combination of cohesion and performance (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002; Yukelson, 1997).

The coach has a pivotal role in implementing any team building approach. According to Yukelson (1997) the coach can impact team functioning by: (a) getting to
know athletes as unique individuals, (b) developing pride in group membership and a sense of team identity, (c) developing a comprehensive team goal setting program, (d) providing for goal evaluations, (e) clarifying role expectations, (f) setting aside time for team meetings, and (g) establishing a player counsel. Ideally, team building would initiate with the coach’s organizational ideas then carry over into the day-to-day practice sessions with the ultimate goal of positively impacting performance in competition.

Another implication in the research (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Lencioni, 2002) is that a higher level of trust in leaders results in higher team performance. Dirks’ (2000) research explored the assumption that a team’s trust in its leader has a significant effect on the team’s performance. Also examined was the impact of past team performance and the prediction of future team performance based on the complex and dynamic trust relationship between leader and team. Results indicate that trust in leadership is both a product and a determinant of team performance (Dirks).

Bloom, Stevens, and Wickwire (2003) identified the coaches’ role and characteristics in the team building process. Their investigation found that “developing team cohesion could be classified as an organizational skill” (p. 140). In other words, coaches that were successful in implementing team building activities were meticulous planners who had a clear vision and plan for an entire athletic season. It is worth noting that not all team building interventions are met with success. Poor weather for outdoor activities, ineffective communication, and first-year player initiations gone wrong are examples of well-intentioned team building activities that didn’t work out as coaches hoped they would (Bloom et al, 2003). In general, coaches are slow to give up any power or authority. It has become more common and accepted for coaches to bring in
consultants for teams that face challenges because of a history of conflict between two or more team members or if the coach lacks confidence as a ‘team builder’ (McCann, 2007).

*Team Building—Athletes’ Perceptions*

The majority of the research in team building that looks at improved team function has assessed the athlete’s perceptions of team or group dynamics in the areas of social cohesion and/or task cohesion. Much of the research in sport has used one of two questionnaires (Sport Cohesive Questionnaire – Martens, Landers, & Loy, 1972; Group Environment Questionnaire – Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985) to gather data on the athlete’s perception of cohesion. Gauging the cohesiveness of a group is particularly difficult because cohesion is a concept that exists in the minds of the individuals who comprise the group. Bloom, Loughhead, and Newin (2008) reported that teams who participated in season-long team building programs and higher perceptions of cohesion than teams that did not. Not only were the perceptions of cohesion significantly higher, the activities resulted in improved coach-athlete and athlete-athlete relationships. Not surprisingly, athletes on successful teams perceived the team to be more cohesive, while athletes on unsuccessful teams perceived the team to be less cohesive (Turman, 2003).

Team success must be defined operationally because success can be defined in terms of win-loss percentage, improved interpersonal relationships, or individual adherence to the group’s norms. It is also suggested, based on reflective interviews from participants, that team building interventions pay close attention to the overall team context, the communication practices during the season, and the way in which the material is delivered (Holt & Dunn, 2006). The relationship between cohesion, performance, and group norms is complicated by additional factors such as team size,
task type, and point of the season in which cohesion is measured (Patterson, Carron, & Loughead, 2005; Tziner, Nicola, & Rizac, 2003).

**Effects of Team Building on Athletic Performance**

Recognizing that team building strategies are currently being used by athletic teams the next logical question becomes, “Does it make any difference?” A team’s ability to succeed is rarely determined solely by the physical attributes and technical skills of its players or the knowledge and leadership of its coaches—a team’s environment or atmosphere can play a significant role (Bloom, Loughhead, & Newin, 2008). Results of the qualitative portion of the study (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003) revealed “improved team harmony and closeness and improved coach-athlete athlete and athlete-athlete relationships” (p. 56). Also reported was having team members occupy a specific position in a team and developing collective expectations would contribute to a stronger sense of being part of a team (Carron & Spink, 1993). Studies have indicated that team building enhances social skills and peer relationships (Socha, Potter, & Downey, 2003) along with group cohesion and mental well-being (Martin & Davids, 1995). Team building work will be more focused and effective if used to help performance, not because you want everyone to be happy (McCann, 2007).

Generally, coaches agree that both talent and cohesion make important contributions to performance but are unsure as to which has the greatest effect (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003). There is some support for a significant moderate to large relationship between cohesion and performance (Carron, Colman, Wheeler, & Stevens, 2002). This meta-analysis identified 46 studies that used the Group Environment Questionnaire (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985). Some general themes that surfaced
were that a larger cohesion-performance effect was found in refereed publications and for female teams. Generalizations were made that team-building programs should focus both on task and social orientation of the group and have benefits for both individual and team sport target groups.

An additional study (Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002) suggest that there is a strong relationship between cohesion and success in naturally forming sport teams. The study examined the relationship between task cohesiveness and team success in elite teams using composite team estimates of cohesion. The results provide evidence of a “very strong relationship between cohesion and success in sport teams” (p. 124). This study focused on task cohesion only whereas other studies have used both task and social cohesion. Their suggestion is that coaches and sport psychologists could benefit from effective team building strategies in an attempt to positively influence cohesiveness. This line of research is in support of earlier claims (Mullen & Cooper, 1994) that the connection between cohesion and performance has a significant effect on in the real world among real groups such as sport teams.

In contrast, a second meta-analysis of the research reported that overall there is no significant effect of team building on performance (Salas, Rozell, Mullen, & Driskell, 1999). What is noted, however, is that the operational definition of performance becomes significant when considering objective or subjective measures of performance. Objective performance measures include direct measure of countable items such as more wins in a season, fewer instances of negative comments about teammates, or increased number of hours spent together off the court. Subjective performance measures include anecdotal records of player satisfaction, or effectiveness rankings for a specific team intervention.
Salas et al. contend that objective performance indicators rendered functionally no effect of team building on performance, whereas subjective performance indicators rendered a significant, albeit still weak, effect of team building on performance (p. 323). The team building interventions that “focus on role clarification were more likely to increase performance, whereas interventions that emphasized goal setting, problem solving, or interpersonal relations were no more likely to render an increase or decrease in performance” (Salas et al., p. 323). In addition, with regard to the effects of team building as a function of team size, they state, “Optimal benefit from a team-building intervention seems most likely to be obtained with relatively small teams” (Salas et al., p. 324). While this analysis is potentially damaging to the exuberant claims and testimonials of team building enthusiasts, there is no doubt that the significance and effect of team building on performance should be met with caution and vigilant examination.

Chapter II Summary

Businesses spend millions of dollars a year on team building, coaches use it to set direction for a season, athletes are asked to buy into it to improve cohesion—the fact is that team building is a strategy used by organizations to get more out of their employees or athletes. Team building approaches and interventions are used by leaders to move closer to achieving a productive environment or certain expected behaviors. Athletes are generally receptive to team building initiatives because of the expected connection between the initiatives and improved performance. My study adds to the team building literature by investigating the outcomes of a leadership training retreat on the experiences and perceptions of student-athlete leaders in their subsequent athletic season and beyond.
My study also adds to the literature in leadership development in athletics by exploring how a leadership training program for student-athletes impacts the experiences and perceptions of student-athlete leaders and how that program influences the leadership behavior of the participants. The lens of high quality student leadership (Eich, 2008) coupled with the lens of leadership practice (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) provides a multi-layered picture of the impact and effectiveness of leadership training in sport. The amount of research in leadership development in sport is relatively thin and is especially sparse in the Christian, liberal-arts college setting in which my research takes place. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) provides a research audience and a potential laboratory in which leadership program development is valued and ongoing study is needed.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Overview

This study was conducted with participants who were student-athletes at Calvin College (an NCAA Division III member institution) between 2004 and 2009. A quantitative design utilizing survey research (Creswell, 2003) was used to ascertain perceptions and recollections of student athletes who attended a leadership training retreat. A survey, focusing primarily on the content of the retreat and significant retreat experiences, was administered to all past participants of the leadership training program to receive quantitative data. The survey included questions that asked participants to evaluate the impact of curriculum materials provided during the retreat. In addition the participants were asked questions that asked them to reflect on the impact of the leadership training experience on their subsequent athletic season, along with the impact on them since completing their college athletic experience. The survey participants were student-athletes of both varsity and club sports who attended the Gainey Leadership Retreat at some point from the inception year (August 2004) to the most recent year (August, 2009). I am a coach and faculty member at Calvin College, and the key investigator for research design, data collection, analysis, and findings.

The study identified the impact, as reported by the student-athlete participants, and measured by items in Gainey Leadership Retreat Survey of a five day leadership training retreat held each August since 2004. The study focused on what leadership skills were reported as being retained by participants, the perceived impact of the student athlete’s leadership on team cohesion and team dynamics, and the perceived lasting
impact of the training on future leadership readiness and participation as viewed through
the lens of current leadership development theory. Each year approximately 33 student-
athletes representing all of the varsity and club sports currently offered at Calvin College
(17 varsity sports and three club sports) attend the Gainey Retreat. Some of the larger
teams have two student-athletes represented. All retreat participants are selected by their
respective coaches in the spring before the mid-August retreat. At this point (April)
participants are given a basic orientation to the retreat that provides the general
expectations, the timeline of events leading up to and including the retreat, and a list of
responsibilities that must be carried out before the retreat begins. Participants must
complete personality testing (Myers-Briggs) and attend a meeting with the members of
the small-group and small group leader that they will work with at the retreat.
Participants are assigned reading, and reflections on “The Way of the Shepherd” (Leman
& Pentak, 2004) to be completed over the summer. Reflection questions are sent weekly
via email to these upcoming participants over the summer, leading them through the
chapters of the book.

The selection process for who gets to attend the retreat is placed in the hands of
the coaches. Most coaches select team captains to go to the retreat while other coaches
base their selections on perceived future leadership ability and opportunities, availability,
or other criterion. While the Gainey Leadership Retreat Planning Team has left selection
decisions to each coach, it provides some guidelines and suggestions for selection.
Coaches are asked to provide an explanation to the planning team of why they selected
each participant and what they (the coach) hopes the participant will gain from attending
the retreat. Coaches are strongly encouraged, but not required, to share this rationale
directly with the student-athlete as well. Funding for all transportation and lodging is secured by the college so that participants have no out-of-pocket costs.

Research Design

Considerations used to determine the design of a study include the research problem, the personal experience of the researcher, and the audience for the study (Creswell, 2003). Some parts of the research questions addressed in this study have previously been examined from both a qualitative (e.g., Allen, 2005; Baring, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Martin & Davids, 1995; Turman, 2003), and a quantitative (e.g., Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003; Loughhead & Hardy, 2005; Salas, Rozell, Mullins, & Driskell, 1999) perspective. The quantitative approach, in part, provided additional information to validate the components of high-quality student leadership programs identified in Eich’s (2008) research while also providing quantitative information about the implementation of leadership training for student-athletes in their athletic venue and post-college. Additionally, of interest was the prediction (multiple regression analysis) of the student-athlete’s confidence and willingness to use leadership skills while considering factors such as gender, team type (individual sport or team sport leader), and the dimensions of high-quality leadership programs as described in Eich’s research.

I have been trained in quantitative analysis through dissertation coursework and have practical experience in measurement and evaluation in the field of physical education. The primary audience for my study is leadership training curriculum planners who currently implement or who are planning to design leadership development curriculum for their own athletic teams. Identifying the perceptions of participants from
one established leadership training program (Gainey Retreat) and the impact the training program has had on leadership practices and dispositions was especially valuable. The numerical analysis of responses in a quantitative design and the exploration of the student-athlete’s perceptions and experiences through survey research gave significant insight into the impact of this specific leadership training approach on leadership development.

Study Site

The site of this study was Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Calvin College is a private, liberal-arts, four-year college that is a NCAA Division III member institution. NCAA Division III institutions may only grant financial aid based on academic performance and need-based applications—no athletic scholarships in any form are awarded to student-athletes at Calvin College. The student body of approximately 4,200 is served by 320 faculty members. Calvin’s 17 varsity athletic teams compete in the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) and its three club sport teams compete in leagues comprised of colleges and universities with various athletic affiliations. The site of the leadership retreat is the Gainey Ranch in Glen, Montana. The Gainey Leadership Retreat was first implemented in August, 2004 for a selection of 34 student-athletes representing all varsity athletic and club sport teams. Each year since its inception, 33-35 student-athletes representing all varsity athletic and club sport team have attended the five-day leadership training retreat.

Researcher Bias

As the key investigator, who also holds a leadership position as coach and faculty member at the institution where the data is being collected, I minimized and accounted
for my biases wherever possible. The invitation to participate (Appendix A) in the online survey was framed in such a way that the respondents were informed of the key purpose of the survey; to provide meaningful feedback to the Gainey Retreat planning group as well as provide the results for use in my dissertation project. While I have a vested interest in the results, the greater good of providing information for better, future retreats outweighed my interests. Using an impersonal online survey also distanced me from the data collection process thus minimizing bias. The Calvin Center for Social Research (CSR) was used to administer the survey and control all communication with participants so as to minimize potential bias or coercion in requesting participation in the study. A small grant was requested and received from CSR in order to cover the costs to administer the survey and receive limited technical support in SPSS. In the summer of 2007 I attended the retreat as an observer and used some of my observations to help frame questions for the survey. My current leadership position at the institution may have in fact served as a positive influence in obtaining a high percentage of returned surveys.

Data Collection

Participants

A population of 195 student-athletes comprised the participant pool in this research project. Participants were all present or former student-athletes who were enrolled at Calvin College when they attended the Gainey Leadership Retreat 2004-2009 in Glen, Montana. Survey research was conducted to retrieve quantitative information about the significant retreat experiences through closed-response and multiple-response items.
To secure participants in this portion of this study, an email communication (Appendix A) was sent to past retreat participants directly to request their involvement in the study. A list of all past participants was requested by the researcher from the Coordinator of Christian Formation for Athletics/Team Development who is on the Gainey Retreat planning committee. Email addresses were accessed through the Calvin Center for Social Research’s database. My position as a coach and faculty member at the institution may have increased the probability of receiving favorable responses to participate in the study. All participants were informed of their rights and had to accept the terms of the consent form (Appendix B) before they could continue in the survey. The consent form informed them of their right to remove themselves from participation at any time, their right to not answer any question, and their right to a copy of the study results. Participants were also assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses.

Study Variables

Variables specific to this study for the population of student-athletes attending the retreat included: (a) reflections on the learning community developed through the retreat experience, (b) their perceptions of the value and impact of the experiential learning presented on the retreat, (c) the participant’s description of program development components within the retreat, and (d) a general summary of the participant’s overall impression of the retreat experience. Table 2 shows the variables examined in this study retrieved through survey responses. The variables identified in this section of the study are developed around the three clusters (see Figure 2) of 16 individual attributes of high-quality leadership programs (Eich, 2008). The closed-response and multiple-response
questions were designed to provide in-depth responses from Gainey Retreat participants in each of the areas of Eich's (2008) grounded theory model of high-quality student leadership programs.

Table 2

Description of Variables from Online Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Description of Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>Series of closed-response and multiple-response questions that identify the participants’ reflections regarding the building of a learning community during the retreat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>Series of closed-response and multiple-response questions that identify the participants’ perceptions of the experiential learning opportunities from the retreat and their ability to implement the materials into the subsequent athletic season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>Series of closed-response questions that identify the participants’ perceptions of the overall value and design of the Gainey Retreat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also of interest in this study was the independent variable of team type. For the purpose of this study team type was categorized into individual sport and team sport. Of the student-athletes who have attended the Gainey Retreat, the ones who have represented golf, cross-country, swimming & diving, tennis, and track & field were classified as individual sport leaders. The ones who have represented baseball, basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball, lacrosse, and hockey were classified as team sport leaders.

Dependent variables created for measuring lasting impression on the student athlete were willingness/confidence and overall impression. These variables were created by using survey responses of multiple questions in the Lasting Impression section of the
survey to create a scale used for comparison in the data analysis. Before any data analysis was initiated a Cronbach’s alpha test for internal consistency of the group of questions was run in SPSS. A high value for alpha provides some level of evidence that the items measure willingness/confidence to lead and overall impression of the retreat experience.

**Instrumentation**

Data collection for this quantitative study was conducted through survey research of all past participants of Gainey Retreats from 2004-2009. Closed-response questions with the Likert scale of 1-7 (1-strongly disagree, 2-moderately disagree, 3-slightly disagree, 4-slightly agree, 5-moderately agree, 6-strongly agree, 7-do not remember) provided descriptive information about each of the study variables. In addition, open-ended response questions identified the perceptions and reflections of significant ways that the Gainey Retreat impacted the participants. The open-ended questions popped-up in the survey if a participant chose strongly or moderately disagree, or strongly or moderately agree to a previous question in that section. The instrument was arranged in six sections with the first three sections containing questions that address the study variables identified in Table 2. The remaining three sections contained questions of implementation, team development, and leadership experiences since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College. The survey instrument used in this study is included in this study as Appendix C.

**Human Subjects Institutional Review Board**

Prior to contacting past Gainey Retreat participants to request their participation in this study, application to conduct survey research was submitted to the Institutional
Review Boards at Western Michigan University (Appendix D) and Calvin College (Appendix E) and approved.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study provided valuable information of student-athlete responses on their retreat experience viewed through the lens of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory on high-quality (student) leadership programs. In addition, the survey data offer insight into the implementation of these retreat experiences for subsequent team development, personal development, and leadership confidence and willingness since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College. Descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and multiple regression analysis were conducted using SPSS.

The data collected from the Likert scale closed-response questions in the survey in this phase of the study provided descriptive information on the three clusters of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality student leadership programs. Means and standard deviations for the survey items (see Study Variables-Table 2) in each of the three clusters provided a basis for analysis of retreat quality and the impact on the student-athletes who have attended the retreat since its inception in 2004. Gender and team type (individual sport vs. team sport) were used as predictor variables in the multiple regression models to analyze willingness and confidence to take on future leadership opportunities. The survey questions related to willingness/confidence and overall impression were tested for internal reliability as measured by the Cronbach alpha coefficient.

The open-ended response information from the survey was organized and categorized to ascertain the trends, themes, and patterns in the responses. Lofland (1995)
identified patterns to be discovered include: (a) frequencies, (b) magnitudes, (c) structures, (d) processes, (e) causes, and (f) consequences. Variable-oriented analysis was used “to consider specific variables to give an overall explanation of orientations and actions” (Babbie, 2004, p. 369). Open coding of the data was used to identify objective, transparent representations of fact (Seidel & Kelle, 1995) and to classify and organize the data (Babbie, 2004). Analysis included sorting the open-ended response reactions into categories to summarize and synthesize for comprehension that was used for comparison and contrast to data identified in other phases of the study. These survey responses were used to further understand the perceptions and attitudes of the student-athletes as they looked to implement the materials learned during the retreat. The analyses allowed the researcher to collect, notice, and think about (Seidel & Kelle, 1995) the significant experiences of retreat participants and interpret the quality of those experiences (Eich, 2008). Overall, I looked to identify observations that add to the body of knowledge in leadership development as well as shed new light on the impact of leadership training on leadership practices.

To address the specific research questions in this study, data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics. The following discussion presents the analysis of the impact of a leadership training retreat on student-athletes. The analyses focused on the impact of the retreat experience on individual leaders and subsequently as the leaders seek to implement what they have learned on their respective teams.

Research Question 1

What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) as reported by student-athlete leaders at Calvin
College who attended the retreat, specifically: (a) how do retreat participants describe the learning community developed through the retreat experience; (b) how do retreat participants report the value and impact of the experiential learning presented on the retreat; and (c) how do retreat participants describe the overall program development and effectiveness of the Gainey Retreat experience?

The first research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis focused on the impact of the retreat experience on the participants who have attended the retreat since its inception in 2004. Measures of central tendency and variability for questions in each of the first three sections (Learning Community, Experiential Learning, and Program Development) of the survey described the quality of the leadership retreat as viewed through the lens of Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality student leadership programs. The descriptive statistics provided an overall representation of the quality of the retreat experience as described by the retreat participants. This approach attempted to validate Eich’s grounded theory research in a new setting as it is applied specifically in an athletic leadership program.

Research Question 2

What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) on the experiences and perceptions of student-athlete leaders: (a) in their subsequent athletic season(s) at Calvin College; and (b) since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College?

The second research question was primarily analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis was initially focused on the impact of the retreat experience on the participants as they have sought to implement skills and strategies learned on the retreat in their
subsequent athletic season and beyond. Measures of central tendency and variability for
questions in each of the sections (Implementation, Team Development, and Since
Completing Your Calvin Athletic Experience) depicted the experiences and perceptions
of the retreat participants. The descriptive statistics provided an overall representation of
the ways in which the retreat participants were able to apply their retreat experience to
the subsequent athletic season and beyond. In addition, there were narrative responses to
the open-ended questions that were categorized and evaluated for trends, themes, and
patterns. These open-ended questions only popped-up in the survey when a respondent
answered strongly or moderately disagree, or strongly or moderately agree with a
previous question in that section.

Research Question 3

What are the relationships between the leadership curriculum variables presented
at the Gainey Leadership Retreat and the participant’s subsequent (1)
confidence/willingness to lead, and (2) overall impression of the retreat experience?

The third research question investigated the relationships between the curriculum
that was presented and (1) the student-athlete’s reported confidence and willingness to
put into practice the things that they’ve learned on the retreat and (2) their overall
impression of the retreat experience. The retreat curriculum components (Learning
Community, Experiential Learning, and Program Development) and demographics
(gender, team type) were the independent variables investigated in this study. For the
purposes of analysis, each of the three curriculum categories were combined using
Cronbach’s alpha to measure the newly created scale’s internal consistency. A returned
value of .6 is considered acceptable when interpreting the internal consistency. Gender
and team type were additional predictor variables of interest in this study. The dependent variables used in this analysis were (1) confidence/willingness to lead, and (2) overall impression. For the purpose of analysis, each of these dependent variables was created by developing a scale from the combination of questions from the Gainey Retreat survey. Cronbach’s alpha measured the newly created scale’s internal consistency. A returned value of .6 is considered acceptable when interpreting the internal consistency.

The relationship between several independent or predictor variables (Learning Community, Experiential Learning, and Program development) and a dependent or criterion variable (reported confidence and willingness to lead, overall impression) was of interest to determine the impact of the curriculum. This multiple regression analysis shed light on the degree to which the curriculum presented impacted leadership willingness and confidence to lead in the student-athlete’s future. The demographic variables of gender and team type (individual or team sport leader) were also of significant interest. Although this relationship was not causal it provided some inference to the value of the various curriculum components presented at the Gainey Retreat.

Research Question 4

What are the differences among participants’ ratings of the leadership training retreat experience as broken down by gender, team type, and year of participation?

The final research question investigated the differences between the selected demographic variables of gender, team type, and year of participation and the dependent (outcome) variables created in the previous research question. The outcome variables of confidence/willingness to lead and overall impression of the retreat experience were created by combining questions from the Gainey Retreat Survey. A Cronbach’s alpha test
was run to confirm the internal consistency of the newly created scales. T-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) allowed interpretation of group differences in the outcome variable as broken down by gender, team type, and year of participation. Identifying these differences, or lack thereof, will be of value when considering changes or additions to future retreats. The analysis of participant responses (outcome variables of confidence/willingness to lead and overall impression) helped me describe the impact of the retreat as measured by key demographic variables.

Chapter III Summary

The survey research method used in this study provided valuable information to ascertain the impact of leadership training on student-athlete leaders who have participated in a leadership training retreat. The survey design allowed me to acquire participant responses to the overall quality of the retreat experience (viewed through the lens of Eich's grounded theory) and, in addition, identify the degree to which the participants were able to implement what they learned into subsequent athletic leadership experiences and leadership experiences outside of athletics. In the following chapters the results of the survey research will be presented along with discussion of conclusions and implications of the potential impact of leadership training on student-athletes.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents findings from the Gainey Retreat Survey completed by student-athletes who had attended the leadership training experience between 2004 and 2009. A variety of statistical measures are used to present the results of this exploratory research. First, demographic data on the respondents are presented along with information about response rate. Second, data considerations are provided to outline how the surveys were analyzed and how new variables were created for the purpose of explaining the findings. Finally, each of the research questions in the study is addressed by the researcher.

Demographic Data

The online survey was administered to the population of past Gainey Retreat participants who attended the retreat between 2004 and 2009. An email request with a link to the survey was sent to 195 past participants: 96 men and 99 women. The overall response rate after three email request attempts was 56.4% (N=111).

Response by females to participate in the study was higher (54.5% of respondents) than for males (45.5% of overall respondents). Further breakdown of this demographic characteristic reveals that of all potential female respondents 60.6% completed the survey while of all potential male respondents 52.1% completed the survey. The distribution of responses represented all of the 17 varsity teams and three club sports. Track and Field (15.5%), Soccer (13.6%), Cross Country (12.7%), and Swimming and Diving (12.7%) were the most represented while Hockey (1.8%) and Volleyball (3.6%) were the least represented. One of the reasons for the higher
representation from the sports listed above is that the potential respondents from these teams (and all other large teams) is two athletes per year. It is not surprising that Track and Field, Soccer, Cross Country, and Swimming and Diving had a large representation. It was rather surprising that Volleyball (3.6%), Softball (4.5%), and Baseball (6.4%) did not make up a more significant representation as they also sent two athletes per year.

All six Gainey Retreats (2004-2009) were represented in the respondent group. The largest number of respondents (22.7%) came from the 2008 retreat group while the lowest number of respondents (9.1%) came from the 2005 retreat participants.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics of Gender, Sport Represented, Year Attended*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Represented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming and Diving</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track and Field</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacrosse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Attended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There does not appear to be any pattern to this distribution. While I expected fewer responses from participants who were further removed from the experience (2005), a high return of 18.2% was obtained from the first year of the retreat (2004). Table 3 displays the frequencies and percentages of the key demographic variables.

Data Considerations

The list of potential respondents used for this survey was acquired by the researcher from the Coordinator of Spiritual Formation at Calvin College who has been on the Gainey Retreat planning committee since its inception. This list was reviewed for accuracy and submitted to the Calvin Center for Social Research for their use in administering the survey using their Inquisite software program. After the initial email request was sent out, seven invitations were bounced back as having undeliverable email addresses. Of these seven, three email addresses were found and an invitation was sent out in the second wave, while the remaining four invalid participant email addresses were removed from consideration.

New Variables

To facilitate analysis, a number of new variables were computed in SPSS. A new variable of team type was created that separated the respondents into individual sport (golf, cross-country, swimming & diving, tennis, and track & field) leader and team sport (baseball, basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball, lacrosse, and hockey) leader.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Sport</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Sport</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This new variable was created from the dataset in order to present findings for one of the research questions in the study. See Table 4 for the distribution of respondents by team type.

A second new variable, confidence/willingness to lead was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete’s confidence and willingness to engage in future leadership actions. Selected survey questions were combined to collapse outcome variables into one scale. The survey questions used were: (a) The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates (Implementation section), (b) The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my willingness to take on leadership roles (Since completing your Calvin athletic experience section), and (c) The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my confidence to take on leadership roles (Since completing your Calvin athletic experience section). A Cronbach’s alpha test for internal consistency was conducted in SPSS and yielded a value of .827. Cronbach’s alpha values range from 0 to 1 with scores closer to 1 indicating a higher degree of consistency among the items being considered. For the purposes of research in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology at Western Michigan University an alpha value of .60 is considered acceptable.

A third new variable, overall impression was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete’s overall impression of the leadership training experience. Selected survey questions were combined to collapse outcome variables into one scale. The survey questions used were: (a) The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my athletic development, (b) The Gainey Retreat experience had a
lasting impression on my academic development, (c) The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my spiritual development, (d) Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin College, and (e) Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience helped build a strong foundation to encounter leadership experiences after college. All of these questions were in the “Since completing your Calvin athletic experience section” of the Gainey Retreat Survey. A Cronbach’s alpha test for internal consistency was conducted in SPSS and yielded a value of .871.

Finally, to facilitate ease of analysis regarding the Gainey Retreat curriculum I condensed the responses in each section (Learning Community, Experiential Learning, and Program Development) to create an overarching summary variable for each of the three curriculum variables. The three categories are modeled after Eich’s grounded theory previously described in this study. Learning Community consists of questions that identify the participants’ reflections regarding the building of a learning community during the retreat. Experiential Learning consists of questions that identify the participants’ perceptions of the experiential learning opportunities from the retreat and their ability to implement the materials into the subsequent athletic season. Program Development consists of questions that identify the participants’ perceptions of the overall value and design of the Gainey Retreat. Table 5 presents the Cronbach’s alpha value for each of the sections of the curriculum presented at the retreat. The value for each summary variable indicates a moderate-high to high degree of consistency of responses to questions in each of the three sections. Survey questions were combined to collapse outcome variables into one scale.
Table 5

*Cronbach’s Alpha Levels for Curriculum Presented at Gainey Retreat*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha level</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>.845</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question Analysis

Analyses of the research questions posed in this study are presented in the remainder of this chapter. The outcomes of the retreat, as reported by the participants in the Gainey Retreat Survey, and the subsequent implementation of leadership training materials in the athletic setting and beyond are presented with various tables and statistical analyses. Finally, open-ended responses are categorized and evaluated (Appendix F) for trends, themes, and patterns to give additional context to the descriptive data reported in the survey.

*Gainey Retreat: Learning Community, Experiential Learning, and Program Development*

Research question one was, “What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) as reported by student-athlete leaders at Calvin College who attended the retreat?” Specifically the research focused on (a) the description the learning community developed through the retreat experience, (b) the value and types of experiential learning presented on the retreat, and (c) the description of the overall program development and curriculum of the Gainey Retreat experience.
Learning community. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with 10 statements about the learning community at the Gainey Retreat.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 6 for each of the 10 statements in the Learning Community section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean. In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. The highest mean scores were reported for the statements, “The retreat curriculum presenters were skilled at facilitating leadership development” ($m=5.56$) and “The retreat curriculum presenters modeled exemplary leadership practice through their interactions with participants” ($m=5.53$). The high mean scores (7 of 9 questions in this section) indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the learning community created by the retreat leaders. In addition, the structure of large and small group sessions provided a multi-layered to learning about leadership. The lower means (2 of 9 questions in this section) reported for the questions about diversity (students and presenters) are more a reflection of the homogeneity of the participants, leaders, and school community as a whole. The responses with the smallest standard deviations were “The retreat curriculum presenters were skilled at facilitating leadership development” ($sd=.631$) and “The retreat curriculum presenters modeled exemplary leadership practice through their interactions with participants” ($sd=.688$). Participants were consistent in their high praise and satisfaction with the retreat leaders.
Table 6

*Participant Responses Regarding Learning Community (Mean and Standard Deviation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Learning Community</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retreat curriculum presenters were skilled at facilitating leadership development.</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat curriculum presenters modeled exemplary leadership practice.</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat curriculum presenters presented quality material.</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat curriculum presenters made an effort to get to know me.</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My small group leader made an effort to get to know me.</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to cultivate one-on-one relationships with peers.</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other retreat participants in my small group were supportive and helpful.</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>1.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to cultivate one-on-one relationships with a retreat leader.</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreat curriculum presenters were from a variety of fields and careers.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a mix of students from a variety of backgrounds.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the Learning Community section as ranked from highest to lowest give additional insight into the student-athlete’s retreat experience. The respondents moderately or strongly agreed (90.9%) that “The retreat curriculum presenters were skilled at facilitating leadership development.” Most of the respondents (90%) moderately or strongly agreed that “The retreat curriculum presenters modeled exemplary leadership practice through their interactions with participants.” The strongest disagreement with any questions in this section was reported for the questions “The retreat curriculum presenters were from a variety of fields and careers” (44.6%) and “There was a mix of students from a variety of backgrounds that attended the retreat” (18.2%). When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the statements about relationships (“The retreat curriculum presenters made an effort to get to know me,” “My small group leader made an effort to get to know me,” and “Through participation in the Gainey Retreat I was able to cultivate one-on-one relationships with a
retreat leader") reported the highest scores; 11.8%, 13.6%, and 19.1% respectively. These results may be a reflection of the brevity of the retreat and the amount (or lack thereof) of follow through and connection with leaders after the retreat. Table 7 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the Learning Community section of the Gainey Retreat Survey.

Table 7

**Participant Responses Regarding Learning Community (Frequency and Percentages)**

| Learning Community: | Strongly Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Strongly Agree | Do Not Remember |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------
| Exemplary modeling  | 0 (0)             | 0 (0)               | 1 (0.9)          | 9 (8.2)        | 30 (27.3)       | 69 (62.7)     | 1 (0.9)        |
| Skilled facilitators| 0 (0)             | 0 (0)               | 0 (0)            | 8 (7.3)        | 32 (29.1)       | 68 (61.8)     | 1 (0.9)        |
| Small group leader got to know me | 5 (4.5) | 1 (0.9) | 0 (0) | 9 (8.2) | 25 (22.7) | 68 (61.8) | 2 (1.8) |
| Quality presentations | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 1 (0.9) | 10 (9.1) | 32 (29.1) | 65 (59.1) | 1 (0.9) |
| Got to know me | 1 (0.9) | 0 (0) | 15 (11.0) | 7 (6.4) | 31 (28.2) | 65 (59.1) | 1 (0.9) |
| 1-on-1 with peers | 0 (0) | 1 (0.9) | 4 (3.6) | 13 (11.8) | 33 (30.0) | 59 (53.6) | 0 (0) |
| Small group was helpful | 6 (5.5) | 0 (0) | 2 (1.8) | 9 (8.2) | 35 (31.8) | 58 (52.7) | 0 (0) |
| 1-on-1 with leaders | 0 (0) | 2 (1.8) | 9 (8.2) | 10 (9.1) | 34 (30.9) | 53 (48.2) | 2 (1.8) |
| Variety of presenters | 0 (0) | 6 (5.5) | 12 (10.9) | 31 (28.2) | 38 (34.5) | 20 (18.2) | 3 (2.7) |
| Mix of students | 2 (1.8) | 6 (5.5) | 12 (10.9) | 25 (22.7) | 56 (50.9) | 9 (8.2) | 3 (2.7) |

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In summary, the respondents reported a high degree of satisfaction about the learning community created at the Gainey Retreat. The skill and modeling of the retreat presenters left a highly favorable impression on the participants. The variability of responses regarding (a) intergroup dynamics between leader and small groups, and within
the small group, and (b) the lack of diversity among students and presenters suggest that care be taken in selecting and monitoring small groups. This variability is not surprising considering the reality of group dynamics and the fact that this retreat is targeted to student-athletes and lead by people with a vested interest in the athletic department.

*Experiential learning.* Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with seven statements about the learning community at the Gainey Retreat.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 8 for each of the seven statements in the Experiential Learning section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean. In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. The highest mean scores were reported for the statements, “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to reflect on leadership principles taught during the week” \(m=5.68\) and “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to have meaningful dialogue with other participants” \(m=5.62\). The responses with the smallest standard deviations were “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to reflect on leadership principles taught during the week” \(sd=.575\) and “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to have meaningful dialogue with other participants” \(sd=.698\). The opportunity for retreat participants to have small group breakout sessions throughout the week fostered confidence and provided a fertile environment for intimate discussion about potentially sensitive team dynamics.
Table 8

Participant Responses Regarding Experiential Learning (Mean and Standard Deviation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Experiential Learning</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was given opportunities to reflect on leadership principles taught.</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was given opportunities to have meaningful dialogue with other participants.</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The small group sessions provided me opportunity to actively engage in the materials.</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat was an opportunity to learn things about myself that I did not already know.</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>1.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The solo experience was an important step in my personal growth.</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was given opportunities to practice the leadership principles taught.</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was presented with information and experiences outside my comfort zone.</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>1.261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the Experiential Learning section as ranked from highest to lowest give additional insight into the student-athlete’s retreat experience. The respondents moderately or strongly agreed (93.9%) that “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to reflect on leadership principles taught during the week.” Two-thirds of the respondents (66.3%) moderately or strongly agreed that “During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to practice the leadership practices taught during the week.” When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the strongest disagreement with any questions in this section was reported for the questions “I was presented with information and experiences that were outside of my comfort zone” (15.4%) and “The solo experience on the Gainey Retreat was an important step in my personal growth” (17.2%). It appears that the solo experience did not drive participants out of their comfort zone to the extent that the planners had hoped. The solo experience was polarizing (high variability of responses) and likely the response was
more reflective of where the student-athlete was at prior to coming into the retreat. That is, a student-athlete who was struggling emotionally or spiritually was likely to be more impacted by the solo experience than another student-athlete who was in a stable emotional or spiritual state. Table 9 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the Experiential Learning section of the Gainey Retreat Survey.

Table 9

*Participant Responses Regarding Experiential Learning (Frequency and Percentages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential Learning:</th>
<th>Frequencies/Percentages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on leadership</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful dialogue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group engagement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn new things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside comfort zone</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice the principles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In summary, the respondents reported a high degree of satisfaction with the experiential learning aspects encountered at the Gainey Retreat. Specifically, the opportunity to reflect and engage in activities that reinforced the materials presented was meaningful to participants. The opportunity to dissect and dialogue with small groups of other student-athletes was also very impactful. There is also support to indicate that the participants in the Gainey Retreat would benefit from material and experiences that push their limits of comfort and control.
Program development. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with nine statements about the program development at the Gainey Retreat.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 10 for each of the nine statements in the Program Development section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean.

Table 10

Participant Responses Regarding Program Development (Mean and Standard Deviation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Program Development</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The retreat prepared me to positively influence my team.</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the retreat I was able to acquire knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively lead teams.</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the retreat I was able to know God and myself better.</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum contained components of interest to my growth as a leader.</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat prepared me to positively influence organizations other than my team.</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum was comprehensive (covered key leadership concepts).</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the retreat I was able to create a Christian community that extends beyond athletic teams.</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat prepared me to be a more effective leader for my team.</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was given the opportunity to give feedback about my experience.</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>1.319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. The highest mean scores were reported for the statements, “The Gainey Retreat experience prepared me to positively impact my team” (m=5.52) and “Through the Gainey Retreat...
was able to acquire knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively lead teams” ($m=5.47$). The responses with the smallest standard deviations were “The Gainey Retreat experience prepared me to positively impact my team” ($sd=.688$) and “The Gainey Retreat curriculum was comprehensive (covered key leadership concepts)” ($sd=.703$). It is clear that the participants were energized and committed to bring something back to their team to impact or change the existing team culture for the better. The participants indicated that they were more confident and more prepared to lead.

In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the Program Development section as ranked from highest to lowest give additional insight into the student-athlete’s retreat experience. The respondents moderately or strongly agreed (82.7%) that “The Gainey Retreat curriculum was comprehensive (covered key leadership concepts).” Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (61.8%) strongly agreed that “The Gainey Retreat experience prepared me to positively impact my team.” When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the strongest disagreement with any questions in this section was reported for the questions “The Gainey Retreat experience prepared me to positively impact organizations other than my athletic team” (12.7%) and “Through the Gainey Retreat I was able to know God and myself better” (13.6%). These findings may indicate that some participants have compartmentalized the value of the retreat to focus primarily on improving the athletic experience. Another possibility is that some respondents did not find the retreat very impactful.

One-fourth (24.5%) of the participants did not remember being given the opportunity to give feedback to retreat organizers about their retreat experience. The last
thing the retreat participants do before leaving the retreat is fill out an evaluation form about their experience that week. It seems that either they may be so ready to get home that they completely forgot that they completed the evaluation or they may feel like the evaluation procedure is meaningless and their voice is not heard. This is clearly an issue that requires some more investigation and consideration by the retreat planning team.

Table 11 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the Program Development section of the Gainey Retreat Survey.

Table 11

**Participant Responses Regarding Program Development (Frequency and Percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Development:</th>
<th>Frequencies/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on my team</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquire skills</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know God and myself</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact outside my team</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create community</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to lead</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components of interest</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was comprehensive feedback</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give feedback</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In summary, the respondents reported a high degree of satisfaction regarding the program development of the Gainey Retreat. In particular, respondents expressed a favorable appraisal of the curriculum’s depth and relevant topics. Respondents felt
confident and invigorated to make a positive influence on their teams. Based on the responses, the stated goals of the retreat were clearly met. Respondents were somewhat critical of the mechanism for providing feedback on their experience. Although a formal evaluation form was administered at the close of the retreat, the respondents did not feel like they were given an opportunity (or do not remember) giving feedback about their retreat experience.

*Gainey Retreat: Implementation, Team Development, and Beyond*

Research question two was, “What are the outcomes of the Gainey Retreat leadership training program (as measured by the Gainey Retreat Survey) on the experiences and perceptions of student-athlete leaders?” More specifically the research focused on the student-athlete’s subsequent athletic season(s) at Calvin College and their leadership practices since completing their athletic experience at Calvin College.

*After the retreat: Implementation.* Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with statements about the immediate impact of the retreat experience (implementation). In this section, a “pop-up” question asking for more descriptive feedback (open response) was provided if the respondent strongly or moderately agreed or disagreed with any question in the section. The respondents’ statements to these open response opportunities are presented in the final section of this chapter.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 12 for each of the three statements in the Implementation section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean. In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and
standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. The highest mean score \((m=5.10)\) was reported for the statement, “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my leadership actions within my team” while the lowest mean score \((m=3.94)\) for this section (and any statement in the entire survey) was, “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my athletic performance.” Interestingly, the second largest standard deviation \((SD=1.409)\) reported for any of the statements in this survey was from the statement, “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my athletic performance.”

Table 12

*Participant Responses Regarding Implementation (Mean and Standard Deviation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements regarding <em>After the Retreat: Implementation</em></th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had an immediate impact on leadership actions within my team.</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates.</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had an immediate impact on my athletic performance.</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

These results indicate that most student-athletes who attended the retreat were not convinced that the retreat experience had any direct impact on their performance on the court, floor, or field. The respondents’ comments in the open-ended questions (described later in this chapter) ranged from some student-athletes that felt strongly that the retreat impacted their athletic performance while some on the other end of the spectrum felt strongly that the retreat’s focus was on personal growth (spiritual) or improving team dynamics (cohesion). The high standard deviation indicates some polarizing opinions about the impact on athletic performance but the low mean score (lowest of any question in the survey) suggests an overall muted impact on performance.
In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the After the Retreat: Implementation section as ranked from highest to lowest gives additional insight into the student-athlete's retreat experience. Table 13 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the After the Retreat: Implementation section of the Gainey Retreat Survey. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents moderately or strongly agreed that “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my leadership actions within my team” (72.7%) and that “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates” (69.1%).

Table 13

*Participant Responses Regarding Implementation (Frequency and Percentages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Frequencies/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership actions</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence to lead</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on ath.</td>
<td>12 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>6 (5.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

The comments from respondents outlined later in this chapter indicates that the student-athlete’s confidence increase was due to new skills learned and affirmation from a coach (who sent them) and/or a retreat leader during the retreat. When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the strongest disagreement with any question in this survey was reported for the question, “The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on my athletic performance” (35.5%), yet there were still 18
respondents (16.4%) who strongly agreed with the statement. This proved to be a very polarizing question as is supported by comments in the open-ended response section described later in this chapter.

_During your team’s season: Team development._ Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with statements about the integration of team development concepts presented during the retreat into the team’s subsequent athletic season(s). In this section, a “pop-up” question asking for more descriptive feedback (open response) was provided if the respondent strongly or moderately agreed or disagreed with any question in the section. The respondent’s statements to these open response opportunities will be presented in the open ended response section of this chapter.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 14 for each of the seven statements in the Team Development section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean. In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. Of the five team building items, the highest mean score was reported for, “Goals and Plans” ($m=5.15$) and “Trust” ($m=5.07$) while the mean scores for the remaining team building items (“Communication,” “Commitment,” and “Accountability”) was 4.69, 4.65, and 4.82 respectively. Based on my personal observations, the items of Goals and Plans and Trust were very tangible and easier to implement while the other three require hard work, time commitment, and vulnerability. Interestingly, the standard deviations reported for the statements in this section of the
survey were all relatively high (when compared to other sections of the survey) ranging from 1.031 to 1.605. I believe that this variability can be attributed to the inconsistency in how the team building initiatives were (a) prioritized by the student-athlete leader, (b) supported by the coach, and (c) received by teammates. The largest standard deviation reported from the results of the survey was from the statement, “I received encouragement and support from my coach(es) throughout the season to help me implement the team building strategies that I learned at the Gainey Retreat” $(SD=1.605)$. Clearly, there are some teams and coaches where the initiatives are not making an impact or the coach is not providing the necessary support and encouragement.

Table 14

*Participant Responses Regarding Team Development (Mean and Standard Deviation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements regarding Team Development</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I integrated lessons about <em>Goals and Plans</em> into team activities and experiences.</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrated lessons about <em>Trust</em> into team activities and experiences.</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>1.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrated lessons about <em>Accountability</em> into team activities and experiences.</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrated lessons about <em>Communication</em> into team activities and experiences.</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>1.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrated lessons about <em>Commitment</em> into team activities and experiences.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>1.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My teammates were receptive to the team building ideas I presented.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I received encouragement and support from my coach to help implement strategies.</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.605</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$1=$strongly disagree, $2=$moderately disagree, $3=$slightly disagree, $4=$slightly agree, $5=$moderately agree, $6=$strongly agree, $7=$do not remember

In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the Team Development section as ranked from highest to lowest gives additional insight into the student-athlete’s retreat experience. Table 15 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the Team Development section of the Gainey Retreat Survey. Of the five team building items, the
respondents moderately or strongly agreed that they were able to integrate lessons learned about "Trust" (69.1%), "Communication" (52.7%), "Commitment" (48.2%), "Accountability" (60.0%), and "Goals and Plans" (68.2%) into team activities and experiences. This result indicates that many of the student-athlete leaders were able to make the connection between theory and practice. When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, besides "Trust" (4.5%), participants reported relatively consistent disagreement with their ability to integrate lessons learned about "Communication" (12.5%), "Commitment" (9.9%), "Accountability" (10.9%), and "Goals and Plans" (18.1%) into team activities and experiences. Interestingly, respondents chose "do not remember" more for these five statements (range from 8.2% to 22.5%) than anywhere else in the Gainey Retreat survey.

Table 15

**Participant Responses Regarding Team Development (Frequency and Percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Development:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Do Not Remember</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
<td>n %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Plans</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>15 (13.6)</td>
<td>32 (29.1)</td>
<td>43 (39.1)</td>
<td>15 (13.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>20 (18.2)</td>
<td>34 (30.9)</td>
<td>42 (38.2)</td>
<td>9 (8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>7 (6.4)</td>
<td>20 (18.2)</td>
<td>32 (29.1)</td>
<td>34 (30.9)</td>
<td>12 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>8 (7.3)</td>
<td>25 (22.7)</td>
<td>25 (22.7)</td>
<td>33 (30.0)</td>
<td>13 (11.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>22 (20.0)</td>
<td>28 (25.5)</td>
<td>25 (22.7)</td>
<td>24 (22.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement and support</td>
<td>11 (10.0)</td>
<td>11 (10.0)</td>
<td>17 (15.5)</td>
<td>21 (19.1)</td>
<td>25 (22.7)</td>
<td>22 (20.0)</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teammates receptive</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>7 (6.4)</td>
<td>36 (32.7)</td>
<td>36 (32.7)</td>
<td>15 (13.6)</td>
<td>10 (9.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

These results may indicate that either the experiential activities were not memorable or maybe that they didn’t see the connection between the experiential learning and how to integrate or apply to their own team. Finally, when combining all
levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the strongest disagreement (35.5%) with any statement in the survey was reported for "I received encouragement and support from my coach(es) throughout the season to help me implement the team building strategies that I learned at the Gainey Retreat." This result indicates that there may be a need and desire for the student-athlete leaders to receive help and encouragement from their coach in making a relevant connection or implementation to their own specific team environment.

Since completing your Calvin athletic experience. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, and 7=do not remember) with statements about lasting impression of the Gainey Retreat experience. In this section, a "pop-up" question asking for more descriptive feedback (open response) was provided if the respondent strongly or moderately agreed or disagreed with any question in the section. The respondents’ statements to these open response opportunities will be presented in the final section of this chapter.

Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 16 for each of the seven statements in the Since Completing section of the Gainey Retreat survey as ranked from highest to lowest mean. In order to get a more accurate description of the mean and standard deviation of responses, all of the “do not remember” responses were left out of the calculations. The highest mean score was reported for the statement, “Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin College” (m=5.59) while the lowest mean score for this section was, “The Gainey Retreat
experience had a lasting impression on my academic development” \( (m=4.21) \).

Interestingly, the largest standard deviations reported in this section “The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my athletic development” \( (SD=1.252) \) and “The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my academic development” \( (SD=1.190) \) also reported the lowest mean scores (4.37 and 4.21 respectively). The smallest standard deviation reported was from the statement, “The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my confidence to take on leadership roles” \( (SD=.733) \). It appears that most respondents didn’t see academic and athletic development as the primary purpose of the retreat. While the large variability indicates a variety of perspectives on lasting impression it is clear that the retreat experience provided a confidence boost of increased knowledge and affirmation for the vast majority of participants.

Table 16

*Participant Responses Regarding Since Completing (Mean and Standard Deviation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements regarding Since Completing</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the retreat was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin.</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the retreat helped build a strong foundation for future leadership.</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my confidence to lead.</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my willingness to lead.</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my spiritual development.</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my athletic development.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my academic development.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In addition to mean and standard deviation, frequencies and percentages of responses for each question in the After the Retreat: Implementation section as ranked from highest to lowest gives additional insight into the student-athlete’s retreat experience. A large percentage of the respondents moderately or strongly agreed that
“Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin College” (87.3%) and that “Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience helped build a strong foundation to encounter leadership experiences after college” (82.7%). When combining all levels (strong, moderate, or slight) of disagreement, the strongest disagreement with any question in this section was reported equally for the questions, “The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my athletic development” (21.8%) and “The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my academic development” (21.8%). Table 17 includes the frequencies and percentages for all of the statements in the Since Completing section of the Gainey Retreat Survey.

Table 17

Participant Responses Regarding Since Completing (Frequency and Percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Since Completing:</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Do Not Remember</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value to ath. Experience</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (1.8)</td>
<td>11 (10.0)</td>
<td>17 (15.5)</td>
<td>79 (71.8)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build strong foundation</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>16 (14.5)</td>
<td>20 (18.2)</td>
<td>71 (64.5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence to lead</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>13 (11.8)</td>
<td>37 (33.6)</td>
<td>58 (52.7)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to lead</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>16 (14.5)</td>
<td>41 (37.3)</td>
<td>51 (46.4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual development</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>21 (19.1)</td>
<td>39 (35.5)</td>
<td>44 (40.0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic development</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>17 (15.5)</td>
<td>36 (32.7)</td>
<td>24 (21.8)</td>
<td>25 (22.7)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic development</td>
<td>3 (2.7)</td>
<td>4 (3.6)</td>
<td>17 (15.5)</td>
<td>45 (40.9)</td>
<td>19 (17.3)</td>
<td>19 (17.3)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

In summary, the respondents reported that they were able implement many components of what they learned through the Gainey Retreat experience in their subsequent athletic season and beyond. Specifically, participants’ confidence in their
knowledge about leadership and their ability to respond effectively in these situations was bolstered by their retreat experience. These student-athlete leaders felt more confident to initiate team building activities that focused on trust and identifying goals and plans for the upcoming season. On the contrary, the participants reported that their ability to implement team building initiatives was occasionally hampered by a perceived lack of support from their coaches during the season and inconsistent follow-up from the retreat leaders once the subsequent athletic season had gotten underway.

Gainey Retreat: Leadership and Overall Impression

Research question three was, "What are the relationships between the leadership curriculum variables presented at the Gainey Leadership Retreat, demographic variables (gender, team type) and the participant’s subsequent (1) confidence/willingness to lead, and (2) overall impression of the retreat experience?" Specifically, the research focused on the relationship between the retreat participants’ confidence and willingness to lead and selected independent variables (curriculum presented at the retreat and demographic variables). In addition, the relationship between the retreat participants’ overall impression of the experience and the independent variables of curriculum and demographics was analyzed.

Confidence/willingness to lead. As outlined earlier in this chapter a new variable was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete’s confidence and willingness to engage in leadership actions. Responses from three survey questions were combined to create a scale of items regarding the confidence/willingness to lead. A Cronbach’s alpha test for internal consistency was conducted in SPSS and yielded a value of .827.
A stepwise multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants’ confidence/willingness to lead based on the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development. A significant regression equation was found ($F(3, 106) = 33.509, p<.05$) with an $R^2$ of .487. The R Square tells us the proportion of variance in confidence/willingness to lead that can be explained by variation in the curriculum variables. Therefore, 48.7% of the variation in confidence/willingness to lead can be explained by the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development. Table 18 shows the results of the regression computations for the curriculum variables and identifies those which were found to be significant. Results indicate that experiential and program development has a significant impact on the confidence/willingness to lead. While learning about leadership may have value, the suggestions for implementation (experiential learning) and overall value and design of the retreat (program development) experience is a predictor of confidence and willingness to lead in the future.

Table 18

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Curriculum Variables Predicting Confidence/Willingness to Lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>-.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.314*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.449*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

A stepwise multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants’ confidence/willingness to lead based on the demographic variables of gender and team type. The regression equation ($F(2, 108) = 1.793, p<.05$) with an $R^2$ of .032 showed no
significant difference. The R Square tells us the proportion of variance in confidence/willingness to lead that can be explained by demographic variables. Therefore, only 3.2% of the variation in confidence/willingness to lead can be explained by the demographic variables of gender and team type. Table 19 shows the results of the regression computations for the demographic variables and identifies those which were found to be significant. It appears that for this study the confidence/willingness to lead is not a function of the student-athlete leader’s gender or their type of team (individual sport or team sport) that they lead.

Table 19

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables Predicting Confidence/Willingness to Lead*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Type</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

**Overall impression.** As outlined earlier in this chapter a new variable was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete’s overall impression of the retreat experience. Responses from five survey questions were combined to create a scale of items regarding the overall impression. A Cronbach’s alpha test for internal consistency was conducted in SPSS and yielded a value of .871.

A stepwise multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants’ overall impression based on the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development. A significant regression equation was found ($F(3, 105) = 49.279, p<.05$) with an $R^2$ of .585. The R Square tells us the proportion of
variance in the overall impression that can be explained by variation in the curriculum variables. Therefore, 58.5% of the variation in overall impression can be explained by the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development. Table 20 shows the results of the regression computations for the curriculum variables and identifies those which were found to be significant.

Table 20

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Curriculum Variables Predicting Overall Impression*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Community</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.218*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.211*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.433*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

It appears that the whole program does matter in predicting the overall impression of the retreat participants. What they learn and who they learn it from (learning community), how they learn it (experiential learning), and the overall program experience (program development) were all significant contributing factors in predicting the overall impression. This result is a strong indicator that the current curriculum has merit and value to impact the leadership training for student-athletes who attend the retreat. It is also a strong indicator that while there may some specific areas to improve, there is evidence to suggest that the structure and focus of the retreat has a positive and favorable impression on the participants.

A stepwise multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants’ overall impression on the demographic variables of gender and team type. The regression equation \( F(2, 107) = 2.070, p<.05 \) with an \( R^2 \) of .037 showed no significant difference.
The R Square tells us the proportion of variance in confidence/willingness to lead that can be explained by demographic variables. Therefore, only 3.7% of the variation in confidence/willingness to lead can be explained by the demographic variables of gender and team type. Table 21 shows the results of the regression computations for the demographic variables and identifies those which were found to be significant.

Table 21

*Multiple Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables Predicting Overall Impression*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SEB$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Type</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.190*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Although the demographic variables combined were not a predictor of overall impression, there is a significant difference in overall impression for team sport leaders compared to individual sport leaders (see Table 26 for additional insight). This result suggests that the team sport leaders gain from participating in the leadership retreat is different that the individual sport leaders. It is likely (supported by open-ended responses) that the team sport leaders see more opportunity and relevance to the team building initiatives presented at the retreat and therefore have a higher overall impression of the retreat experience.

In summary, the curriculum presented and the demographics of gender and team type have influence in predicting the confidence/willingness to lead and the overall impression of the leadership training experience. More specifically, the curriculum variables (learning community, experiential learning, and program development) are an
important predictor of confidence and willingness to lead, along with the overall impression of the retreat experience. Team type (individual sport leader or team sport leader) is only a predictor for overall impression where gender (for both confidence/willingness to lead and overall impression) and team type (confidence/willingness to lead) is not a significant predictor of relationship in this study.

*Gainey Retreat: Differences by Gender, Team Type, and Year of Participation*

Research question four asks, “What are the differences among participants’ ratings of the leadership training retreat experience as broken down by gender, team type, and year of participation?” Specifically, the research focused on the difference among the participants’ ratings of their willingness/confidence to lead and their overall impression of the retreat experience.

*Confidence/willingness to lead.* As outlined earlier in this chapter a new variable was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete’s confidence and willingness to engage in leadership actions. Differences in participants’ ratings will be analyzed according to gender, team type, and year of participation.

An independent-samples *t* test comparing the means of males and females on the variable confidence/willingness to lead found no significant difference between the means of the two groups *t*(109) = -1.194, *p*<.05. Levene’s test for equality of variances indicated that equal variances could be assumed. The mean of the females was slightly higher (*M* = 5.31, *SD* = .678) than the mean of the males (*M* = 5.14, *SD* = .786). The difference in means was not statistically significant. Table 22 shows the means of the two groups as well as the results of the *t* test.
Table 22

*Independent Samples t Test for Confidence/Willingness to Lead by Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence/Willingness to lead</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>-1.194</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

An independent-samples t test comparing the means of individual sport and team sport leader (team type) on the variable confidence/willingness to lead found no significant difference between the means of the two groups t(109) = -1.389, p<.05). Levene’s test for equality of variances indicated that equal variances could be assumed. The mean of the team sport leaders was slightly higher (M = 5.33, SD = .711) than the mean of the individual sport leaders (M = 5.14, SD = .740). This slight difference in means was not statistically significant. Table 23 shows the means of the two groups as well as the results of the t test.

Table 23

*Independent Samples t Test for Confidence/Willingness to Lead by Team Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Type</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence/Willingness to Lead</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>-1.389</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

A one-way ANOVA was computed comparing the mean responses of participants on their confidence/willingness to lead and the year in which they attended the retreat. No significant difference was found (F(5,105) = 1.085, p<.05) between the years attended.
Table 24

One-Way ANOVA Comparing Confidence/Willingness to Lead and Year Attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence/Willingness to Lead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.879</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>1.085</td>
<td>.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>55.741</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58.621</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Table 24 details the results of the one-way ANOVA.

The means plot in Figure 3 gives a further description of the means reported by year attended. This plot shows that there was some variability among years attended but not enough to show statistical significance.

![Means plot comparing confidence/willingness to lead and year attended.](image)

*Figure 3. Means plot comparing confidence/willingness to lead and year attended.*
Overall impression. As outlined earlier in this chapter a new variable was created to gauge the impact of the retreat experience on the student-athlete's overall impression of the retreat experience. Differences in participants' ratings will be analyzed according to gender, team type, and year of participation.

An independent-samples t test comparing the means of males and females on the variable overall impression found no significant difference between the means of the two groups t(108) = -.368, p<.05). Levene's test for equality of variances indicated that equal variances could be assumed. The mean of the females was slightly higher (M = 4.94, SD = .946) than the mean of the males (M = 4.88, SD = .863). This slight difference was not statistically significant. Table 25 shows the means of the two groups as well as the results of the t test.

Table 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impression</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>-.368</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

An independent-samples t test comparing the means of individual sport and team sport leader (team type) on the variable overall impression found a significant difference between the means of the two groups t(108) = -1.978, p<.05). Levene's test for equality of variances indicated that equal variances could be assumed. A significant difference was found between the mean of the team sport leaders (M = 5.09, SD = .825) and the mean of the individual sport leaders (M = 4.75, SD = .949). The higher mean reported by the student-athletes who lead team sports can likely be attributed to the fact that two of
the five team building initiatives in the experiential learning part of the curriculum (trust and communication) are more relevant to team sports than individual sports. Overall, the retreat is organized around group activities and interactions which may not seem as significant or important to individual sport leaders. Table 26 shows the means of the two groups as well as the results of the \( t \) test.

Table 26

**Independent Samples \( t \) Test for Overall Impression by Team Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Type</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>( df )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>-1.978</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(*p < .05\)

A one-way ANOVA was computed comparing the mean responses of participants on their overall impression and the year in which they attended the retreat. No significant difference was found (\( F(5,104) = 1.052, p < .05 \)) between the years attended. Table 27 details the results of the one-way ANOVA.

Table 27

**One-Way ANOVA Comparing Overall Impression and Year Attended**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>( df )</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Impression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4.301</td>
<td>.860</td>
<td>1.052</td>
<td>.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>85.046</td>
<td>.818</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89.347</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(*p < .05\)
The means plot in Figure 4 gives a further description of the means reported by year attended. This plot shows that there was some variability among years of the retreat but not enough to show statistical significance.

![Means plot comparing overall impression and year attended.](image)

Figure 4. Means plot comparing overall impression and year attended.

In summary, there are very few significant differences between groups (gender, team type, and year attended) in the participants' ratings of confidence/willingness to lead and their overall impression. More specifically, there is only a significant difference $t(108) = -1.978, p<.05$ in mean rating of overall impression of the Gainey Retreat between individual sport leaders and team sport leaders. There was no significant difference in mean ratings of confidence/willingness to lead (gender, team type, or year attended) or overall impression (gender or year attended) for the groups compared in this study.
Open-Ended Responses

In this section open-ended responses are categorized and evaluated for trends, themes, and patterns to give additional context to the descriptive data reported in the survey. The open-ended questions popped up in the survey when a respondent answered any previous question in that section of the survey with strongly or moderately agree or disagree. Open-ended questions were developed to retrieve feedback about (1) immediate impact, or lack thereof during the team’s season, (2) the team’s development, or lack thereof during the team’s season, (3) lasting impression, or lack thereof after their Calvin College athletic experience, and (4) overall impact, or lack thereof since completing their Calvin College athletic experience. Table 28 shows the distribution of responses in the four open-ended response categories. The analysis of the comments serve primarily to give additional insight into the quantitative analysis completed earlier in this chapter however, the specificity of the comments gives explanation and detail that the numbers alone do not provide.

Table 28

Open-Ended Response Summary (Frequency and Percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Category</th>
<th>Frequencies/Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate Impact (n=77)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Development (n=58)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasting Impression (n=72)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Impact (n=51)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Immediate impact. The trends, themes, and patterns that emerged from this open-ended response question were quite clear and prevalent. A large majority of the respondents (75%) shared comments that described a positive immediate impact on their
team's season. About 9% of respondents shared negative comments, another 10% shared both positive and negative comments, and 5% of the comments were neutral. All of the respondent's comments can be found in Appendix F.

The positive comments focused on feelings of increased understanding, knowledge, and effectiveness when leading their teams. One participant responded, “I was more comfortable addressing issues within the team. Being a vocal leader, and challenging those around me.” It was reinforcing and reaffirming for these leaders to be chosen to attend the retreat. Their confidence increased and they sensed an increased level of respect from their teammates and coaches for their role as a leader. Another response from a retreat participant describes the impact of increased confidence:

My Gainey experience had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates because I know had the skills needed to lead them correctly. Plus, since I was one of the chosen ones to be on this trip, I already some leadership abilities, and Gainey helped to further explore my confidence. My leadership actions were greatly changed because I learned how to be an effective leader and how those actions should look. My athletic performance increased in a more mental aspect of the game. I was able to be more of an effective leader on the court.

They spent much of their efforts focusing on building relationships within the team and carrying out their clearly defined leadership role. The respondents felt that they communicated better than in the past and improved their leadership actions. Participating in the retreat also gave them a network of other team leaders and administrative support from within the athletic department to carry out their role as leaders. Participants felt
inspired and committed to be more thoughtful and intentional about leading their teams.

“I took control of the team's small group meetings that we have, leading them which I
would not have done before going to Gainey. I was a better leader keeping people
accountable and understanding what my role as a leader was.”

On the contrary, those who shared negative comments identified that there was no
impact on their athletic performance. Some felt the retreat was detrimental to
performance in their sport and caused disruption and distraction to an otherwise
functioning team. Some respondents shared that there was a lack or acceptance or
skepticism from their teammates about any initiatives attempted by the team leader as
reported by the following participant:

The only thing that was disappointing to me was that no matter how much you
learn about being a leader, if your teammates do not want to accept you as a
leader either because of jealousy, self-doubt, or whatever, your ability to
positively influence the team is hindered.

Some felt a lack of carryover or support from the coaches and retreat leaders
when they progressed through their athletic season. One respondent shared:

We are given all this information and ideas in a week and then expected to just
know what to do once we were back with our teams and I would say there was not
much carryover from Gainey. We lacked the leadership experience we needed and
we didn't have any follow up support from the Gainey leaders.

Finally, some felt that there was little new information provided at the retreat or
that the curriculum focused on things that their team was already doing. While these
comments were made from a small group of respondents, therefore not impacting the
quantitative results, it is worthy of acknowledging their criticisms. This appears to be a vocal minority viewed in the context of the very high percentage of positive comments.

*Team development.* The trends, themes, and patterns that emerged from this open-ended response question were consistent and very positive. Sixty percent of the respondents shared comments that described a positive impact on the team’s development during the subsequent athletic season. Nineteen percent of respondents shared negative comments while 5% shared both positive and negative responses in their comments. Sixteen percent of the comments could not be described as either positive or negative. All of the respondent’s comments can be found in Appendix G.

The positive comments focused on feelings of better understanding and buy-in of what the team was trying to accomplish. The intentional team building activities of building trust and developing communication amongst team members were viewed as significant in a team’s growth. Regarding the team building initiatives one respondent shared:

Our team met and went through all of the steps listed above [team building initiatives]. Some sessions were more effective than others, but overall I think that meeting to build trust was one of the most beneficial sessions. We learned a lot about each other that we would not have otherwise.

Attention to group accountability was seen as a byproduct of the leadership training of the retreat. The respondents identified a clearer overall purpose and a true sense of working together to accomplish team goals. One leader reported, “We really tried to tie the team together and I think it really had a huge impact on how we played as team. The team was closer and made the year smoother.” The Gainey retreat experience
was cited as the impetus for both team leaders and coaches to facilitate team building initiatives and turn any negative team interactions into growth opportunities as described by the following participant:

As a team I believe there were 'make it or break it' times throughout the season. Times where if leadership had been lacking the team would have fallen apart. However, because we had covered things like trust, communication, commitment, accountability, and goals we turned negative situations into opportunities for growth.

On the contrary, those who shared negative comments identified that there was little or no support from their coach when they tried to implement initiatives with their team in the months following the retreat. One leader reported, “Head coach would never let us build team unity or implement team-building strategies.” Similarly, the lack of buy-in from the coach and/or teammates was cited as a concern and criticism as represented by the following comment: “We lacked clear leadership support from the coaching staff so it made complete buy-in and implementation of the program throughout the season difficult.” The lack of communication between the team coach and the retreat participant along with lack of opportunity for the retreat participants to implement team building initiatives was identified as problematic. Finally, some felt that returning to the team after a “mountain-top” experience was hard to translate into excitement and motivation to change or alter a team climate. One respondent shared:

It was somewhat difficult to come back from a "Mountain Top" experience and try and share that excitement with everyone, including your coach, on the team. It was difficult at first to not come across as proud or "better than you" because you
were selected to attend the retreat. But slowly you can win over people and get them on board.

_Lasting impression_. The trends, themes, and patterns that emerged from this open-ended response question were overwhelming and clear. Eighty-eight percent of the comments about the lasting impression on the participant after completing their Calvin College athletic experience were positive. A mere 6% of the responses were critical of the lasting impression of the retreat while 3% shared both positive and negative responses in their comments. Four percent of the responses in this section were neutral. All of the respondent’s comments can be found in Appendix H.

Consistently, the respondents described an increase confidence in their leadership abilities and strengths. One participant reported, “I was always a very quiet leader and this retreat helped me to realize that others saw leadership potential in me. It gave me more confidence to use that ability.” Some did not view themselves as leaders prior to the retreat experience but felt affirmed and inspired by the opportunity to attend a time of focused leadership training. Many described the week as life-changing especially in their spiritual development. Regarding spiritual development and impact one leader wrote:

I think the Gainey Retreat has provided me with a lasting impression as a Christian leader in my personal life, the work place, friends, family, relationships, and etc. Now that I have graduated and my competitive sports days are through I am able to use the cognitive skills of sports, teamwork, leadership and most importantly God's gifts in all areas of life.

Most respondents reported that they were better equipped to take on leadership positions on their team and in other venues after completing their athletic career. The
intentional time spent on leadership topics was significant and memorable. One student-athlete shared:

The retreat encouraged me during my time at Calvin which led to confidence after my experience at Calvin. One of the most lasting impacts was seeing how building relationships between teams had a positive impact on my soccer team. I now try to build that community atmosphere in other areas where I have a leadership role.

On the contrary, the negative comments were few and far between. The lack of follow-up and follow through was identified as a negative as reported by the following respondent:

I was very disappointed with the follow-up of the program. The leadership team did a poor job of promoting continual leadership development. Since the retreat in 2005, I only had a single correspondence with my team leader, and the relationships I developed with my peers did not develop after the retreat. This was extremely disappointing because of the vulnerability we were asked to give throughout our week.

The only other negative comment described a feeling of being preached to rather than being communally engaged in the process.

*Overall impact.* The trends, themes, and patterns that emerged from this open-ended response question were readily apparent and clear. Ninety-two percent of the fifty-one comments about the overall impact on the participants after completing their Calvin College athletic experience were positive. Six percent shared both positive and negative responses in their comments and 2% of the responses in this section were neutral. There
is no ambiguity about the positive overall impact on the participants since completing their Calvin College experience. All of the respondent’s comments can be found in Appendix I.

The respondents frequently described that their confidence and sense of purpose was positively impacted. One participant reported, “I think that the Gainey Retreat gave me the self-confidence and the better self-understanding in order to truly thrive in my athletic experience at Calvin College.” They described an ability to apply the concepts and resources gained through their experience to other venues outside of college and athletics. The ability to extend the impact of the retreat was described by one retreat participant as:

I love the Gainey Retreat and it is something that I will always remember as I look back on my experience at Calvin College. It was a wonderful opportunity that I was extremely fortunate to have. It helps me see how important it is to learn about leadership and teach others about leadership. As I coach at the high school level, I am looking to implement some of these same team building ideas and things I learned at the Gainey Retreat so that these students can start learning some of the leadership skills that I did not learn until later.

They described the impact as significant, special, and important to their growth. The relationships developed with peers and the mentoring received from retreat leaders provided a positive climate of guidance and encouragement as described by the following participant:

The experiences I had at the Gainey Leadership retreat have certainly impacted by role as a high school athletic director. I developed my leadership skills during this
time, developed relationships with leaders, and developed relationships with other athletes (met my wife!). All of these experiences gave me a foundation for my senior year and allowed me to leave Calvin with a strong support of mentors and quality friends.

Open-Ended Responses Summary

Overall, the open-ended response questions provided a rich insight into the perspectives and experiences of the Gainey Retreat participants. Themes in the responses not only provided additional support for various observations from the rest of the survey but also gave more detailed explanation of these results. In particular, the survey data indicated a high level of confidence to lead ($m=5.03$) when athletes returned to their teams (immediate impact). The open-ended responses regarding “immediate impact” further explained that the reasons for participants’ increased confidence included: (a) a better understanding about leadership, (b) affirmation from retreat leader, (c) clarity of leadership role on the team, and (d) being inspired and energized by the Gainey Retreat experience.

In a similar way, the open-ended questions helped describe and explain the respondents’ relatively low mean scores about encouragement and support from the coach and receptiveness of teammates in the Team Development section of the survey. The open-ended responses indicate that some participants received (a) little or no support from their coach, (b) experienced little or no buy-in by teammates, (c) found it hard to motivate their peers in the team setting, and (d) had a lack of opportunities to implement any team building initiatives. These negative comments are outweighed by the positive comments but they do give some substance and insight into the reasons for the lower
reported mean scores ($m=3.97$ for encouragement and support from my coach, $m=4.45$ for teammates being receptive to team building ideas).

In my opinion, the most significant value of the open-ended responses is reflected in the last survey category of “Overall Impact.” All of the respondents who offered comments stated positive comments about the Gainey Retreat. This overwhelming response of the overall impact is described by: (a) increased confidence and sense of purpose, (b) the ability to apply information to other venues, (c) the significant impact on personal growth, and (d) the establishment of positive, mentor/mentee relationships for guidance and encouragement. The mean scores alone would not have provided such a detailed picture of the impact that this retreat has had on the student-athletes at Calvin College.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

This study examines the impact of a leadership training and retreat experience of student-athletes at a NCAA Division III institution. Given the lack of research in leadership development in athletics, specifically student leaders in sport, this study serves as exploratory research into the value and impact of a leadership training retreat experience in the collegiate athletics setting. The lack of previous, comparable studies in leadership development research prohibits direct comparison to the results from this study; however similarities and differences to the outcomes in this study will be discussed. This chapter includes: (a) key findings from the Gainey Retreat Survey and a comparison of these findings to related literature, (b) implications for leadership training and development in athletics, and (c) recommendations for further study.

Key Findings and Comparisons to Related Literature

The significant findings of selected demographic variables are identified in this section. Eich’s (2008) classifications of learning community, experiential learning, and program development are used to frame the discussion regarding the outcomes of the retreat as reported by the respondents. In addition, the findings regarding team building initiatives, confidence/willingness to lead, and overall impression are discussed.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic variables within this study were gender, team type (individual sport or team sport leader), and year of participation. The sample was comprised of 54.4% females and 45.5% males. There was a distribution of 53.6% of respondents who were individual sport leaders and 46.4% represented a team sport. The largest segment of
respondents (15.5%) came from track and field (where two participants per year attended the retreat), but interestingly some of the team sports that sent two participants each year had a low response rate such as volleyball (3.6%) and softball (4.5%). Basketball (10.0%), cross-country (12.7%), soccer (13.6%), and swimming & diving (12.7%) were the teams most represented in this study. Each year was represented in this study with 2008 reporting the most respondents (22.7% of the total), while 2005 (9.1% of the total) was represented the least with the remaining years showing a remarkably even distribution of responses to the survey invitation. There are no significant differences in predicting or identifying confidence/willingness to lead or overall impression by gender. There are no significant differences in predicting or identifying confidence/willingness to lead by team type. There was a significant difference in predicting and identifying overall impression of the retreat experience by team type. Team sport leaders rated the overall impression of this leadership training experience higher than their individual sport leader counterparts. Finally, there are no significant differences in predicting or identifying confidence/willingness to lead or overall impression by year of attendance at the retreat.

Gainey Retreat Outcomes

Determining the quality and impact of a leadership training retreat is a complicated matter. The use of previous research by Eich (2008) on high-quality student leadership programs provided a foundation on which my study’s survey was created. After analyzing multiple cases of leadership programs Eich concluded that high-quality programs include: (a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community, (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences, and (c) research-
grounded continuous program development. Discussion of the results outlined in the previous chapter will follow the categories identified in Eich’s research.

**Learning community.** The six attributes (see Figure 2 in Chapter I) identified by Eich (2008) in this category were reported as present to various degrees in the retreat experiences of student-athletes who attended the Gainey Retreat. Subjects in my study reported favorable outcomes related to the skill (90.9% moderately or strongly agreed) and modeling (90% moderately or strongly agreed) of the retreat leaders. The supportive culture (87.3% moderately or strongly agreed), and one-on-one relationships nurtured with peers (83.6% moderately or strongly agreed) and leaders (79.1% moderately or strongly agreed) at the Gainey retreat were also reported as an important component of the retreat experience. Of the attributes identified by Eich, the lack of diversity of the student-athlete participants (18.2% disagreed) and the lack of variety of the retreat curriculum presenters (44.6% disagreed) indicate areas to consider modifying or improving for future retreats. Based on this feedback, additional care could be taken to invite student participants of various backgrounds and experiences and also consideration given to inviting guest presenters from backgrounds outside of athletics. Inviting other student groups (outside athletics) and outside presenters may add an exciting dynamic that positively challenges the current learning community paradigm.

**Experiential learning.** The seven attributes (see Figure 2 in Chapter I) identified by Eich in this category were reported as present to various degrees in the retreat experiences of student-athletes who attended the Gainey Retreat. Subjects in my study reported favorable outcomes related to Eich’s categories of leadership practice (66.3% moderately or strongly agreed), reflection activities (93.6% moderately or strongly agreed), and...
agreed), and meaningful discussions (92.7% moderately or strongly agreed). Of the
attributes defined by Eich’s research in this category, the lack of difference (15.4 %
disagreed) and lack of self-discovery through the solo experience (17.2% disagreed)
indicate that there are some areas to consider modifying or improving for future retreats.
Based on this feedback, helping student-athletes develop as leaders through experiential
learning activities should focus on pushing participants outside of their comfort zone
more so that they learn more about themselves. As found in the research of Hirst, Mann,
Bain, Pirola-Merlo and Richver (2004), the value of experiential learning may be
maximized by simulating conditions of stressful leadership situations for retreat
participants. The solo experience is an apparent attempt to encourage personal growth in
retreat participants, but survey results and open-ended comments indicate a mixed review
of this strategy. The experiential learning component of the Gainey Retreat is clearly
valued by the respondents but could also use some tweaking to fully utilize its potential.

Program development. The three attributes (see Figure 2 in Chapter I) identified
by Eich in this category were reported as present to a significant degree in the retreat
experiences of student-athletes who attended the Gainey Retreat. Subjects in my study
clearly reported favorable outcomes related to Eich’s category of value content—
referring to clearly stated, explicit program values. The respondents were in consistent
agreement that the retreat met its stated goals of knowing self better (85.5% moderately
or strongly agreed), acquiring new skills (88.2% moderately or strongly agreed), and
creating community (82.7% moderately or strongly agreed). While the retreat did not
offer much programmatic choice within the retreat, respondents reported that the
curriculum was comprehensive (82.7% moderately or strongly agreed) and contained
components of interest (83.6% moderately or strongly agreed). Eich’s category of systems thinking (continually innovating and implementing new features) is difficult to evaluate from this research study. The lowest mean score (4.77) in this section for “opportunity to give feedback” indicates that suggestions for program improvement and development are not being communicated to the retreat planning team. The retreat assessment process needs to be evaluated in order to gather meaningful and insightful suggestions for implementation in future retreats.

Team Building Initiatives

The effectiveness and impact of the Gainey Retreat can in part be determined by the influence of student-athlete leaders on the attitude, behaviors, and performance of the teams to which they belong (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cramer, & Hoag, 2005). There is survey evidence to suggest that team building initiatives of “trust” and “goals and plans” were subsequently integrated into the team activities once the student-athlete leaders returned to their teams. The other team building initiatives of “communication,” “commitment,” and “accountability” were not as easily integrated into the team culture once the student-athletes leaders returned to their teams. Perhaps more time and emphasis during the retreat on the experiential learning related to these initiatives from Lencioni’s (2002) work is need to foster behavioral change (Hirst, Mann, Bain, Pirola-Merlo, & Richever, 2004). It is clear from both the survey numerical responses and open-ended questions that the retreat participants did not receive the desired encouragement and support from their coaches to help implement the team building initiatives. Components of Yukelson’s (1997) research on team building...
interventions for the purpose of impacting team dynamics, cohesion, and goal setting could be useful for Gainey Retreat planners for future retreats.

*Confidence/Willingness to Lead*

Another component of measuring impact in this study was the confidence and willingness of participants to lead both in their subsequent athletic season and in their life after college athletics. This new variable (confidence/willingness to lead) combined three questions from the Gainey Retreat Survey shown in Table 29. This table displays items extracted from various other tables in this study. By asking for a response to both the immediate impact and the lasting impression an overall perspective can be formed.

Table 29

*Confidence/Willingness to Lead Variable (Mean and Standard Deviation)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements regarding Confidence/Willingness to Lead</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my confidence to lead.</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my willingness to lead.</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates.</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

I believe that the lower mean score and wider variability concerning the immediate impact is explained by the research of Avolio, Mhatre, Norman, and Lester (2009) which indicates that the degree of impact varies based on the focus of the intervention impact, leadership theory, sample characteristics, and study setting. While the immediate impact showed variability, the lasting impression of the Gainey Retreat on both willingness and confidence to lead is both strong and consistent. This is a new finding not addressed in the current literature.
By using a multiple regression, I was able to determine that the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development explain 48.7% of the variance in confidence/willingness to lead. This means that the curriculum design of the leadership training retreat has a significant impact on the confidence and willingness of the participants to lead in their team settings. The Gainey Retreat curriculum appears to have merit and value in its structure and focus for the student athletes who have attended since its inception. This finding in and of itself is new to the research in the field of leadership training in athletics, but it is consistent with Eich’s (2008) research claims about the components (attributes and actions) of high-quality leadership programs. It is evident in both the numeric data in my study and the open-ended responses that the confidence/willingness to lead of Gainey Retreat participants was impacted by the retreat curriculum. The experiential learning (team building activities) and program development (overall value and design of the retreat) have the most impact on predicting confidence/willingness to lead in the future.

Glenn and Horn’s (1993) research about forecasting leadership behavior in athletes indicates that a coach’s selection of a leader to that role impacts motivation and leadership direction. The open-ended comments in my survey strongly indicate that the confidence of the student-athlete leader was significantly bolstered by their coaches selecting them to attend the retreat. This selection confirmed, affirmed, and acknowledged to the participants that those sent on the Gainey Retreat had the requisite characteristics for leadership. The survey results indicate that in turn, the retreat participants became more confident and willing to lead both on their athletic teams and in situations post-college.
Overall Impression

The final component of measuring impact in this study was the overall impression of the leadership training experience on participants to lead both in their subsequent athletic season and in their life after college athletics. This new variable (overall impression) combined five questions from the Gainey Retreat Survey shown in Table 30. This table displays items extracted from various other tables in this study. The first three questions isolate responses to the impact of the retreat on the development of athletic, academic, and spiritual characteristics in the student-athlete leader. While the spiritual focus of the retreat is a primary objective, the athletic and academic development of the retreat participants is not beyond the scope of the program. This is brought into focus by both variability of responses for these two components (athletic – 1.252, academic – 1.190) and the responses of participants in the open-ended questions of the survey.

Table 30

Overall Impression Variable (Mean and Standard Deviation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements regarding Overall Impression</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the retreat was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin.</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the retreat helped build a strong foundation for future leadership.</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my spiritual development.</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my athletic development.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat had a lasting impression on my academic development.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree, 7=do not remember

While some participants attributed athletic and academic development to leadership lessons learned during the week regarding personal discipline, most comments regarding development were regarding spiritual formation. Reave’s (2005) research on spiritual values and practices as they relate to leadership effectiveness is supported by the
findings of my study. Respondents reported increased awareness and clarity of spiritual
development and its subsequent impact on the leadership skills and behavior exhibited on
their athletic teams and beyond.

The overall value of the Gainey Retreat to the participant’s athletic experience
and leadership development is strongly supported by the final two questions in the survey
and the corresponding open-ended responses. Two of the highest mean scores reported in
the entire study (5.59 and 5.46) indicate a very favorable overall impression of the
Gainey Retreat by the participants. This is echoed in the open-ended responses about
overall impression as all positive comments (51) and no negative comments were shared.
This is supported by Dunn and Holt’s (2004) research that points toward understanding,
cohesion, and confidence being positively impacted by personal-disclosure, retreat-like
experiences. A majority of the comments in this section spoke to the fun, challenging,
and life-altering impact that the Gainey Retreat has on a large number of participants who
have attended over the years.

By using a multiple regression, I was able to determine that the curriculum
variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development explain
58.5% of the variance in overall impression of the Gainey Retreat. This means that the
curriculum design of the leadership training retreat and how it is carried out has a
significant impact on the overall impression of the participants. This finding in and of
itself is new to the research in the field of leadership training in athletics, and it is
consistent with Eich’s (2008) research claims about the components (attributes and
actions) of high-quality leadership programs.
## Table 31

### Key Findings of the Study and Comparison to Other Research Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings (Bergsma, 2011)</th>
<th>Previous Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the learning community created by retreat leaders.</td>
<td>Supports Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality leadership program components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the experiential learning practiced on the retreat.</td>
<td>Supports Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality leadership program components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants reported a high degree of satisfaction with the program development components of the retreat.</td>
<td>Supports Eich’s (2008) grounded theory of high-quality leadership program components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants were able to integrate some team building components (trust, goals and plans) but not others (communication, commitment, accountability) into team activities.</td>
<td>Supports findings (Brawley &amp; Paskevich, 1997) that team building interventions are tempered by resources, time, cost, and magnitude of change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants experienced an immediate impact on confidence to lead and leadership actions in the team setting.</td>
<td>Supports finding by Avolio, Mhatre, Norman, &amp; Lester (2009) that degree of impact varies based on intervention impact, leadership theory, sample characteristics, and study setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants reported a lasting impression on their willingness and confidence to lead their teams.</td>
<td>No previous research found, thus Bergsma (2011) is a new finding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much of the variation in confidence/willingness to lead can be explained by the curriculum variables of experiential learning and program development.</td>
<td>No previous research found, thus Bergsma (2011) is a new finding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The demographic variables of gender and team type are not a significant predictor of confidence/willingness to lead.</td>
<td>Supports finding by Avolio, Mhatre, Norman, &amp; Lester (2009) that leadership interventions have an equal impact across gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey Retreat participants reported a highly favorable overall impression of the retreat as it related to value of the athletic experience at Calvin and the building of a strong foundation for future leadership.</td>
<td>No previous research found, thus Bergsma (2011) is a new finding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much of the variation in overall impression can be explained by the curriculum variables of learning community, experiential learning, and program development.</td>
<td>No previous research found, thus Bergsma (2011) is a new finding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The demographic variable of team type (individual sport vs. team sport) is a significant predictor of overall impression.</td>
<td>No previous research found, thus Bergsma (2011) is a new finding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30 provides a summary review of the key findings in my study and the comparison to other research findings. There is lack of previous research located that identifies specific components for leadership training for team leaders in athletics.

It is evident in both the numeric data in my study and the open-ended responses that the overall impression of Gainey Retreat participants was impacted by the retreat curriculum. The learning community (knowledge about leadership), experiential learning (team building activities), and program development (overall value and design of the retreat) all have impact on predicting the overall impression of participants who attend the retreat.

A second multiple regression analysis predicted that team sport leaders will have a more favorable overall impression than individual sport leaders who attend the Gainey Retreat. This is a new finding in the field of leadership training for team leaders in athletics based on lack of previous research located.

Implications for Leadership Training and Development in Athletics

My study about the impact of leadership training on student athletes at Calvin College has several implications regarding opportunity, high-quality curriculum, short-term and long-term impact, and overall impression of the retreat experience as a leadership development tool. First, the Gainey Leadership Retreat provides a rich opportunity for student-athletes to learn and practice leadership skills. This retreat experience has as one of its primary objectives the goal of equipping leaders with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to effectively lead their teams. It is reported by the participants in my study that they do feel more prepared, confident, and willing to take on the leadership challenges they face when they return to their teams. The
opportunity to learn more about leadership skills and to practice those skills during the retreat and with their teams upon return for their subsequent athletic season is one that the participants speak of very favorably. There is a clear indication in this study that the opportunity to participate in this leadership retreat is one of the most significant and memorable experiences in their college experience. Serving as a team leader provides a rich opportunity for student-athletes to learn and practice leadership skills (Grandzol, Perlis, & Draina, 2010). This worthwhile opportunity (Gainey Retreat) for learning and application is of considerable value to the student-athlete leaders and therefore by extension to the athletic teams and college as a whole.

Second, the curriculum that has been developed for the Gainey Leadership Retreat is a high-quality program as defined by Eich (2008). The seventeen attributes and corresponding actions identified by Eich are mostly present in the Gainey curriculum. A high-quality curriculum makes a difference in positively impacting the leadership training experience of the participants. The participants report that the implementation of the curriculum adheres to the stated goals and is effective in building the leadership confidence of retreat participants as they go out to lead their teams. The overall impression of the retreat participants is overwhelmingly positive—they unanimously report that the retreat experience was of significant value to their athletic experience in college and prepared them effectively for leadership challenges after college.

Third, the Gainey Leadership Retreat experience has both a short-term and long-term impact on the confidence and willingness of the student-athlete leader to lead their athletic teams and beyond. Successful leadership training has an immediate effect on the collective purpose and meaning (Fry, 2003) and on the transformation (Manz, 1991) of
those in the whole group. The ultimate success of the leader to positively impact team
dynamics and cohesion (Turman, 2003; Voight & Callahan, 2001) is directly related to
the confidence they have in their skills and the willingness to carry out the leadership role
and team building strategies. The high levels of confidence reported by the participants in
this study as a result of the Gainey Leadership Retreat training experience is likely to
have a positive impact on immediate and long-term leadership success.

Finally, the results from this study indicate that student-leaders of team sports
may need different applications (experiential learning, team building initiatives) than
individual sport leaders to maximize the overall impression of the Gainey Leadership
Retreat. The leadership status and the team environment (Yukelson, Weinberg,
Richardson, & Jackson, 1983) differences between team sports and individual sports
indicate that the leadership training experience should be tailored to the type of team
leader for optimal performance. The reality that the athletic setting is multi-dimensional
and benefits from multiple leadership styles (Loughhead, Hardy, & Eys, 2006) implies
that any leadership training program should take differences into account when planning
the curriculum and experiential learning experiences. In my study, the overall impression
of the Gainey Leadership Retreat experience is significantly higher statistically for team
sport leaders than for individual sport leaders. Both ratings were very favorable but in
order to maximize the experience for the individual-sport leaders some slight adjustments
in the areas of application and implementation should be considered. Because leadership
is a collaborative, relational process (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen,
2005) care must be taken in leadership training programs to ensure that all participants
feel like they are fully invested in the process and in turn getting the most out of the experience.

Recommendations for Further Study

First, the impact of the Gainey Leadership Retreat on the behaviors (cohesion, unity) of the team is worthy of further study. While this study focused on the impact of the leadership training experience on the student-athlete leader it is recommended that the impact on the athletic teams and culture at Calvin College be investigated as well. It would be interesting to know whether or not the energy and enthusiasm reported by the student-athlete leaders in this study is effectively transferred to the teams they represent. In other words, is the impact on the student-athlete leaders having an effect on the teams as well?

Second, the question of “buy-in” to the Gainey Leadership Retreat by the coaches warrants further study. While coaches have the responsibility in selecting who gets to attend the retreat it appears that little, if any, follow through is experienced by student-athlete leaders to aid them in implementing the team building initiatives presented during the retreat. It would be interesting to find out the coaches perspective on the role of student-athlete leader in team building. In addition it would be helpful to find out the best practices for coaches that are fully integrating student-athlete leaders into the overall team leadership puzzle in order to share these insights with the entire coaching staff at Calvin College and other colleges and universities.

Third, further quantitative and qualitative research into the impact of leadership training for student-athletes will be beneficial in identifying attributes and actions of high-quality programs. It would be interesting to investigate and examine similar
leadership retreats or leadership training experiences across schools that are like Calvin College. As more colleges and universities commit resources to leadership training experiences for their student-athletes it would be beneficial to have data to help ascertain direction for curriculum design and implementation. Already a number of colleges around the country have asked Calvin College permission to use the curriculum developed for the Gainey Leadership Retreat. Additional research could be used to confirm the use of curriculum components that have been shown to be effective and provide possible solutions to alter other components that need revisions.

Conclusions

The search for effective leadership within organizations is a worthwhile and necessary venture that impacts organizational success. Leadership within the athletic venue is no different. Coaches and the student-athlete leaders that are chosen or emerge over time to fill leadership roles can benefit directly from leadership training and development. Training and development is often comprised of learning about leadership skills, experiencing firsthand various practical applications, and strategizing on how to implement what has been learned into the appropriate setting. It is debatable whether or not leaders are born or made but it seems critical that individuals develop a mindset that welcomes growth and learning. Constantly revising their perspective on what it means to lead, and ultimately their effectiveness and success as a leader requires a willingness to grow. Chase (2010) points out that “Coaching education and leadership training programs should consider focusing on helping coaches and leaders develop a growth mindset about their leadership abilities, as opposed to attempting to identify the elusive formula for how to be a great leader” (p. 297). Leadership in the athletic setting requires the flexibility to
adjust to a dynamic environment and the determination to apply fundamental principles under the stress of competition. An effective leader in athletics can serve the function of creating a competitive advantage that influences performance but maybe more importantly the effective leader can grow to effect the transformation of those around them. Leadership training serves a practical purpose of improved team function but ultimately its success will be measured in the impact it has on the growth of the leader, the subsequent climate of the team, and the impression it leaves on the program for future success.

My research has been an exploration of the impact of one leadership training program on student-athletes in a college setting. My survey, based on a grounded theory of high-quality leadership programs, provided insight into the impact of the curriculum presented during a five day retreat. The strong response rate and equal representation from all sports and years the retreat has been offered reflects highly on the value placed by the participants on this leadership training experience. My results indicate that the student-athlete leaders are very satisfied with the Gainey Leadership Retreat experience. They report that they have acquired valuable skills and gained confidence to take on a leadership role on their team along with the willingness to lead in the future. The quality of the learning community created, the experiential activities practiced, and the attention to overall program development were significant hallmarks of the retreat experience that positively impacted participants. While the retreat experience was clearly beneficial there remains a need for systematic support and follow-up for these student-athlete leaders from both the athletic team coaches and the retreat leaders. The value and impact of the Gainey Leadership Retreat is significant and its legacy can be considerable with
continued care and attention to mentoring and guidance once the glow of the retreat experience fades. The following quote by Eich (2008) aptly describes the value of a high-quality leadership program:

Students learn about leadership in the process of understanding themselves, others, and the world around them. The factors that facilitate this learning include the participatory students themselves, the environment in which they learn, the activities they do, and the systems approach of the program that leads to improvement. Put another way, high-quality programs are spaces that help students do leadership and understand what they are doing along with others. In creating a space for this to happen, leadership programs that integrate and enact attributes of this theory demonstrate not only that leadership can be taught and learned but that leadership development can be fostered and accelerated as a result of a program educational intervention rather than leaving leadership development to chance through life experiences. (p. 186)

Learning about leadership through the lens of athletics provides a rich opportunity for student-athlete leaders to put leadership attributes and actions into practice. Through the Gainey Leadership Retreat, student-athletes at Calvin College are presented with a high-quality leadership training experience that succeeds in fostering immediate growth and fertilizing a seed of potential leadership development for future impact in athletics and beyond.
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186.


Appendix A

Email to Participants

Dear (Name from Center for Social Research database),

Will you take a moment to help us understand the benefit of the Gainey Retreat that you were a part of?

Please click here to respond...

As a coach and faculty member at Calvin College, I invite you to participate in an exploratory research study regarding the impact of your Gainey Retreat participation on your athletic team leadership experience and beyond. All past participants who have attended the retreat since its inception in 2004 are being invited to participate. All participants who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for a gift card to Olive Garden restaurants.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept confidential.

This study is designed to explore the impact of leadership training opportunities on participating student athletes. In addition, your answers to the questions in this survey will provide the Gainey Retreat planning team with the feedback necessary to improve future retreats. Your input is crucial in helping train future student athletes through this unique program.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Jerry Bergsma
Associate Professor
Women's Golf Coach
Women's Tennis Coach
Calvin College
Appendix B

Consent Form

Thank you for completing this survey concerning the impact of Leadership Training on student-athletes at Calvin College. You are invited to participate in this survey because our records show that you attended a Gainey Retreat as a Calvin College student-athlete. This project will serve as Jerry Bergsma's dissertation project. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Please read the following before you begin the survey.

Informed Consent:
Your responses will be confidential and will in no way be directly connected to you in data analysis or written results of the study. If data is aggregated, it will be aggregated in such a way that your identity can not be reasonably inferred.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may choose to skip questions you do not feel comfortable answering, stop taking the survey at any time, or ask that data not be included in the analysis without prejudice or penalty. By submitting this survey you consent to allow your responses to be used in this research study.

This study may provide the researcher with information about the impact of the Gainey Retreat experience and will help inform the Gainey Retreat planning team for future retreats. There are no benefits to you for participating in the study.

To ensure that your rights as a research participant have been safeguarded, this study has been approved by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) on [date] and the Calvin College Institutional Review Board.

Please click NEXT below to provide consent and continue.

If you have any questions about the survey or this study, you can contact any of the following:

Vice President for Research
Western Michigan University
269-387-8298
sue.poppink@wmich.edu

Cheryl Feenstra, Chair
Calvin College Institutional Review Board
3201 Burton St. SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
(616) 957-6000
cfeenstr@calvin.edu

Dr. Sue Poppink, Principal Investigator
Western Michigan University
269-387-3569
sue.poppink@wmich.edu

Jerry Bergsma, Student Investigator
Western Michigan University
616-526-7026
jbergsma@calvin.edu

Chair of Human Subjects IRB
Western Michigan University
269-387-8293
Appendix C

Gainey Retreat Survey

This is a survey preview. Responses will not be collected.
Click here to hide this frame

---

What does it mean to be a leader when you are a follower of Jesus Christ?

Sport and Year

1. I attended during the summer of

2. I represented the team.
During the Retreat: A Learning Community

1. There was a mix of students from a variety of backgrounds that attended the retreat.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember

2. The retreat curriculum presenters...
   (large group sessions)
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember
   - were from a variety of fields and careers.
   - were skilled at facilitating leadership development.
   - made an effort to get to know me.
   - modeled exemplary leadership practice through their interactions with participants.
   - presented quality material that was beneficial to my growth as a leader

3. My small group leader made an effort to get to know me.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember

4. Other retreat participants in my small group were supportive and helpful.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember

5. Through participation in the Gainey Retreat, I was able to...
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember
   - cultivate one-on-one relationships with peers.
   - cultivate one-on-one relationships with a retreat leader.
During the Retreat: *Experiential Learning*

1. During the Gainey Retreat I was given opportunities to practice the leadership principles taught during the week, reflect on leadership principles taught during the week, and have meaningful dialogue with other participants.  

2. Answer the following questions about personal growth:

   - The small group sessions provided me with opportunities to actively engage in the materials.
   - I was presented with information and experiences that were outside of my comfort zone.
   - The Gainey Retreat was an opportunity to learn things about myself that I did not already know.
   - The solo experience on the Gainey Retreat was an important step in my personal growth.

During the Retreat: *Program Development*

1. The Gainey Retreat curriculum was comprehensive (covered key leadership concepts) and contained components of interest to my growth as a leader.

2. The Gainey Retreat experience prepared me to positively impact my team and organizations other than my athletic team.

3. Through the Gainey Retreat I was able to know God and myself better, acquire knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively lead teams, and create a Christian community that extends beyond athletic teams.
During the Retreat: Program Development

4. I was given the opportunity to give feedback to the Retreat organizers about my experience.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember

5. The Gainey Retreat prepared me to be a more effective leader for my team
   - Strongly disagree
   - Moderately disagree
   - Slightly disagree
   - Slightly agree
   - Moderately agree
   - Strongly agree
   - Do not remember
After the Retreat: 
*Implementation*

1. The Gainey Retreat experience had an immediate impact on .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Do not remember</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my confidence to lead my teammates</td>
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<td>my leadership actions within my team.</td>
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<td>my athletic performance</td>
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</table>

2. Please describe the immediate impact, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree during your team's season.

During your Team's Season: *Team Development*

1. I integrated the lessons learned from the following Gainey Retreat team building items into my team's activities and experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust (e.g. Things I bring to the team/need from the team, Strengths and Weaknesses)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Do not remember</th>
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<td>Communication (e.g. Mine Field - tire tubes)</td>
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<td>Commitment (e.g. Flying Eggs, Newspaper Bridges, Helium Stick)</td>
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<td>Accountability (e.g. Role Play Scenarios)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals and Plans (e.g. SMART goals)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I received encouragement and support from my coach(es) throughout the season to help me implement the team building strategies that I learned at the Gainey Retreat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Do not remember</th>
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</table>

3. My teammates were receptive to the team building ideas that I presented to the team.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Do not remember</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Please describe your team's development, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree during your team's season.
Since completing your Calvin athletic experience...

1. The Gainey Retreat experience had a lasting impression on my.

- athletic development
- academic development
- spiritual development
- willingness to take on leadership roles
- confidence to take on leadership roles

Do not disagree disagree disagree agree agree agree remember

2. Please describe the lasting impression, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree after your Calvin College athletic experience.

3. Overall, my Gainey Retreat experience...

- was of value to my athletic experience at Calvin College.
- helped build a strong foundation to encounter leadership experiences after college

Do not disagree disagree disagree agree agree agree remember

4. Please describe the overall impact, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree since completing your Calvin College athletic experience.
Appendix D

Western Michigan University HSIRB Approval

Date: May 3, 2010

To: Sue Poppink, Principal Investigator
   Jerry Bergsma, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 10-04-20

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “The Impact of Leadership Training on Student Athletes at Calvin College” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: May 3, 2011
Appendix E
Calvin College IRB Approval

May 6, 2010

Department of Nursing
Science Building
1731 Knollcrest Circle SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546-4403
616-526-7076
Fax 616-526-8567
www.calvin.edu

Professor Jerry Bergsma
HPERDS Department
Calvin College

Dear Jerry,

Your request for approval of the project “The Impact of Leadership Training on Student Athletes at Calvin College” has been reviewed. The proposal has been approved by the Calvin College Institutional Review Board. It is document number 10-031. Please refer to this number in all future correspondence.

All research for this study must be conducted according to the proposal that was approved by the IRB. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to implementation. The approval is good for one year. A request for re-approval must be done if the project will continue past that date.

Best wishes for a successful study.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Feenstra RNC, PhD
Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Appendix F

Open-Ended Responses – Immediate Impact

Q33 – Please describe the immediate impact, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree during your team’s season.

Positive Comments Regarding Immediate Impact

I think the biggest impact from Gainey was my ability to grow and understand how my teammates needed certain types of interactions that may be very different from the ways I personally would like to be treated. It allowed me to be more understanding of my teammates and their situations.

I was given the knowledge to be a leader on my team. It was nice to hear that other athletes were having some of the same ‘problems’ that I was having with my team. It was nice to talk things through and come up with solutions. It was nice to be reaffirmed that I was being a good leader. My leader cared about me and equipped me with the necessary knowledge to be a good effective leader on my team.

I went on the Gainey Retreat the summer before my senior year and the things I learned on the retreat immediately impacted my leadership actions that following year. Without knowing what lay ahead of me while on the retreat, when I got back to campus and started practicing, I was thrown into a situation on my team and the things I learned on the retreat proved to be very valuable right away.

As a younger member of the team, I did not think that I could take a leadership role. I quickly learned that I had the ability to be a leader and that I could be a leader on the team. I always thought that because I wasn't the loudest most outgoing person on the team, I could not be a leader of the team. However, throughout the retreat, I continually saw that I could be a leader while still being myself. Leaving the retreat, I had the confidence to lead in my own way and I had a better understanding of what that means. I focused on my relationships with my teammates first rather than coming in and laying down a lot of rules.

My co-captain and I were able to bring the key principles back to the team to help them during the "buy-in" process. There was an immediate impact, although I noticed it was a bit harder for the other women, because they hadn't experienced the "mountain top" feeling. It's hard to compare to actually being there.

I guess overall, my thoughts and actions immediately started to carry more weight.

Because I was chosen to go on the retreat, my team inherently identified me as a leader. As a result, I gained a lot of respect from my teammates. Younger players and peers identified me as someone to trust and listen to. Coaches also looked for me to establish myself as a leader, and they began to give me a lot more responsibility (on and off the field). Finally, because I had become friends and interacted with a lot of the other well-recognized student athletes, many students began respecting my opinions more often. I think I became a much more recognizable face on campus.

All of this was a major boost to my confidence, which definitely helped my performance. I don’t know if it was 100% a direct result of the gainey retreat, but my stats took a huge jump the fall following the leadership retreat.

Added confidence to my running performance (workouts and races) because I knew my team was relying on me.
Positive Comments Regarding Immediate Impact (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment of goals, positive communication amongst teammates and to coaching staff</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The retreat helped me and the other soccer teammates their recognize or individual leadership strengths. Hearing others affirm those strengths gave me confidence to help lead my team more effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat gave me confidence to lead my team because it taught that there were many different ways to lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt as though I was in a position to lead my team because of my preparation. I had been a captain the previous season and was not sure how I should approach leading a team, but through suggestions, knowledge, and training, I approached with a willingness to put my hands into the gritty business of leading a large team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I helped me take the focus off my individual performance and instead focus on making sure others were performing up to their ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leadership retreat made me reflect on interactions I have had with teammates in previous years, and from this reflection I was better able to see how I could improve teammate interactions to better the cohesiveness and trust within the team. I don't remember anything too specific, just that I felt more confident about my leadership actions after the trip and felt that it was an immediate impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat gave us ideas about discussions we should have as a team that we as co-captains used during a team meeting at the beginning of the season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I became more confident in my leadership abilities with my team and in my schoolwork and ultimately my work life too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after going to the retreat i was more confident in my abilities to lead my team because i was surrounded by such great examples of leadership throughout the week. it helped me to see that what i do as an athlete in my actions affected the younger athletes coming in (freshman especially). a few times i remember thinking about the retreat and how i should be carefully of how i presented myself especially since i was a very visible position on the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My confidence to lead my teammates was marked as moderately agree because we didn't talk about team dynamics or how to inspire large groups of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey was a great experience to engage with other athletes/leaders and learn more about ourselves. The leaders did a great job engaging us in conversation on how we can better serve our teams as a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once returning from the Gainey Retreat, there was a motivation to implement team ideas that had stemmed from different things learned throughout the leadership retreat. The other members of the team and I were able to communicate with one another better, which I could see lead to an immediate impact on our communication as a team throughout the season. I am sure this helped with athletic performance as well, but that was not a main outcome of the retreat. I look at athletic performance as actually training, but the leadership ability carries over into how each team performs and that season we won the conference tournament and went on to the elite 8 round in the NCAA tournament. The leadership actions taken lead to a great season!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-I felt equipped to lead my teammates because I had been proper training for implementation -My interactions with my team was impacted because I was more aware of my role as a leader/captain with teammates -I took my athletic performance more seriously and strived to model fitness/training to enhance my performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actually had one of my poorer seasons performance-wise, but I was still a team captain and had a responsibility to lead activities in practice. I feel like my experience at the Gainey Retreat improved my confidence to interact more closely with my coach and therefore be a better leader for my teammates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive Comments Regarding Immediate Impact (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Gainey Retreat experience encouraged me to take more responsibility in both what and who my team was going to represent. I felt more comfortable in leading because I felt like I had been given a strong foundation for leadership. There seemed to be a higher level of responsibility instilled in my mindset that pushed me to work harder and strive for more, knowing the potential that I had (in myself and for the team). I wanted to see my team grow and be inspired like I had been. There was also a certain stigma about having attended so that when we returned there were higher expectations to succeed and bring unity within Calvin's athletics. It was exciting and inspiring.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was better able to communicate with team members about issues that came up throughout the season. Had more confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worked on getting to know the newer athletes and getting to know my teammates better because that would build trust and lead to team unity. These relationships allowed me to be a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The retreat provided some time to talk with and interact with people who had led other teams and groups. In my opinion, it was easy to accept and apply their advice when they could provide concrete examples of how their methods/examples worked in real situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were encouraged to communicate more openly with other leaders on the team, including the coach, as well as the rest of the team. We were challenged to put forth the effort required to effectively lead a group of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was more comfortable addressing issues within the team. Being a vocal leader, and challenging those around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I left the Gainey Retreat with confidence to be a leader on my team in many different ways. It was also helpful to have a fellow teammate on the Gainey Retreat to brainstorm with and discuss how we could implement some of the leadership skills learned and acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Gainey experience had an immediate impact on my confidence to lead my teammates because I know had the skills needed to lead them correctly. Plus, since I was one of the chosen ones to be on this trip, I already some leadership abilities, and Gainey helped to further explore my confidence. My leadership actions were greatly changed because I learned how to be an effective leader and how those actions should look. My athletic performance increased in a more mental aspect of the game. I was able to be more of an effective leader on the court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew more of where I stood on certain issues after the retreat. I'm one that takes a while to think through things and being given this opportunity helped me to see more angles and think through what I believed in how a team can best work together. It also gave me more confidence to carry that out in words and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had confidence in my skills as a leader and felt comfortable in that role as our season began and throughout the year. I felt prepared to take on the responsibilities that were required of me as well as support my teammates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was a stepping stone to change the way I thought of myself as a member of the team. I realized through this experience I knew I was being counted on to lead the team. This time gave me thoughts and ideas to think about leading the team well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Retreat provided a space to consciously think about how I was going to lead the team during the upcoming year. Without the retreat I would have been &quot;leading on the fly&quot; instead of actually have concrete plans and goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a better sense of how to be my own kind of leader. The retreat helped me understand that not all leadership has to look the same. I was able to help lead appropriately on my team as an underclassmen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the experience helped me stand up in front of my teammates and be a better example of how a Calvin College athlete should act on the field. I don't know if it necessarily changed my confidence, but it helped me know I was ready to accept this role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive Comments Regarding Immediate Impact (continued)

Before the Gainey retreat I thought that leadership had to come from someone who was a Senior or an upperclassmen. After the Gainey retreat I felt comfortable being vocal on my team, challenging my teammates, and sharing my Gainey experience even though I was not a senior/nor a captain at that time. Our team came together that first year after Gainey to set goals, work hard together, communicate better, and foster healthy relationships built on trust and faith. We became a different team.

It was definitely a positive experience, and prepared me for my leadership role that next year.

It gave me the confidence to be a leader on the team and it motivated me to work hard and be an example for the others on the team.

Throughout the retreat, I felt like I learned and reflected a lot on my own character and leadership qualities. This immediately impacted my confidence in leading others as I am typically more of a follower. I learned how I could use the tools presented to better lead my teammates.

I felt more prepared for challenges. I felt more prepared for conflict. Overall I was more confident in myself and how I could help the team.

Everything was practical and immediate action steps were provided for athletes to put into practice immediately upon their return home, if not already on the Gainey campus with other teammates on site. If the individuals in attendance were willing to buy into the methods and theories presented at the retreat, the results were immediate and limitless.

The information helped me know how to relate to teammates more and help them through encouragement and support.

I was already confident about being able to lead my team, but Gainey gave me a game plan to create specifics that would help me accomplish my team goals. Throughout the year I frequently recalled the different components of the book that we read- especially those of a leader being a servant and the importance of knowing my teammates. As a captain for track, I found Gainey especially helpful in learning to lead about such a large team. It was helpful to have time to get to know the other track and cross country athletes so that I could go to them during the year to have them help me.

After my experience at the Gainey Retreat my confidence to be a better team leader and teammate had significantly grown. The collective group of athletes from the Calvin sports teams was truly special. It was important for me to interact with the leaders from these other teams. My opportunity to meet these amazing athletes lead to friendships and a better understanding of the other sports teams. Working with the leaders of the Gainey Retreat provided me with better tools to grasp the chemistry of the team and lead the team to best fit that chemistry. My personal athletic performance was also affected through this retreat. I wanted to prove to my team that being a good leader also means being a positive impact on as well as off the pitch in all areas of the game, respect to teammates, opponents, and officials.

The Gainey Retreat increased my confidence in my ability to lead my team. My teammates noticed my increased confidence and my ability to be a leader, and as a result, were willing to follow my leadership. One thing that I noticed is that I am a sacrificial leader. I understood that part of the true meaning of leadership is to serve others, and thus there were times when I realized that the skills of others were better suited for certain situations. In this way I would say my leadership responsibilities affected my athletic performance.

Everything that occurred at the retreat was mostly great and helpful. I think that the title of "Gainey Retreat" carries something for my teammates. If you have gone it means you have been identified by your coach as a leader and your teammates see this. This is how it really had an impact

felt more compelled and knowledgeable in getting our team prepared and ready for games and practices
Positive Comments Regarding Immediate Impact (continued)

| I feel like my interactions with my teammates were much better due to the gainey retreat. |
| Gainey Leadership retreat gave me the confidence to lead my teammates because I felt empowered. I was confident in my own abilities and was empowered by the knowledge that my other soccer teammate supported me—and that athletes around calvin were committed to leadership as well. |
| Since I felt confident, I was able to be an active leader on the team. I as well prepared to handle tricky situations with a keen eye and open heart and with the confidence that my teammates would be drawn to a person with strong values. Being put in a leadership position drove me to be the best player I could be. I worked harder than I ever had before in my life and had the best season in my life. I think that the leadership was partly responsible for this! |
| It just prepared me to handle situations and to be more confident in my abilities as a player, a friend and a leader to those around me on my team. I was given the tools that helped me to better assist my teammates and I was able to create a more open community within our team. Being asked to an "elite" retreat gave me confidence and legitimized my actions as a leader. Perhaps this was just in my own head, but it also could have been that other people on my team acknowledged me as a leader because the coaches had identified me as someone who was worth sending to the retreat. Either way, it boosted my confidence! I think the retreat also had a strong immediate effect on my actions within my team. I was more intentional about what I did after the retreat. It was no longer "hit or miss"...it was more calculated...for better or worse. I think the retreat gave me a good framework for understanding leadership and it's importance. The next summer, I was able to attend the Willow Creek Leadership Summit. This experience also inspired me to be a good and faithful leader. I think retreats and conferences are useful for many reasons. One of the main ones, though, is that they simply pump you up to lead well. They give you a desire to serve the people around you and influence them for the better. That is a good reason in an of itself! |
| I took control of the team's small group meetings that we have, leading them. Which I would not have done before going to Gainey. I was a better leader keeping people accountable and understanding what my role as a leader was. |
| I was already quite confident to lead my teammates, however the retreat helped unify me with the other leaders from my sport so that we could lead together. I was more thoughtful and intentional about the way I led as a result of the retreat. I had a poor season performance wise. I know some of the things that contributed (fatigue, importance of schoolwork, etc) yet why it was so rotten I'm unsure. However I don't believe it had anything to do with being a better leader. It helped having the confidence of peers to connect with from other team. Also, I tend to be a leader through example, so it is helpful having other peers from different teams with similar goals. |
| After attending the leadership retreat, I was so encouraged and pumped to spend time with my team and get to know them better. I was so honored that I was given the opportunity to attend this retreat that I just couldn't wait to take what I had learned and use it to better our team. This experience had such an awesome impact on my faith as well. It really was life changing to me. My small group leader and my small group was awesome. |
| It gave me a better understanding of how to relate to various players. |
| I was enabled to lead meetings more effectively and care more about my teammates because of the Gainey retreat. |
| I was better able to create team cohesion and know how to keep people accountable. |
Negative Comments Regarding Immediate Impact

The entire focus of the trip seemed to be on getting my team not to drink alcohol during the season, or at all I suppose. In years past, we had a few drinks on Saturday night, nowhere near to playing in a game or practice, and our team moral was incredibly high. Their goal was to get rid of that...that's all I took home with me, unfortunately.

Leadership retreat had no impact on my athletic performance for the remainder of my athletic career at Calvin.

I was shown just how important it is to be a leader of a team making me question my abilities to lead after the trip. I was and still am a confident leader; however, the Gainey experience pounded it into my head that no matter what I did, I was never going to be that great leader everyone looked up to. I felt like more than anything Gainey further taught me how to be a leader, but that I probably wouldn't succeed at doing so. I hope that in the future the Gainey staff can continue to teach about leadership but can also teach about how to forgive yourself for not being that perfect leader they try to turn you into.

my athletic performance actually suffered because I was so focused on trying to lead properly and effectively. I took on too much (didn't delegate) and was not preparing myself adequately for each competition... I was distracted and didn't focus on my game!!!

The team issues that were discussed at Gainey, were either not addressed with the coach or were not well received by the coach and caused a negative impact on the athletes.

The Gainey Experience didn't help with my confidence at team leadership because I found that I disagreed greatly with some of the issues that the program directors emphasized. It made me wonder if I would be a good leader for my team if those were the characteristics that were most important for a leader. The points that I think to be most greatly valued in a leader were only briefly mentioned. I really liked the book that we read beforehand, "The Way of the Shepherd," and thought that truly was an example of a good leader, but at times during the retreat I felt that I was looked down on (not just by the directors, but students as well) as a horrible leader for thinking differently on issues that I consider to be minor ones. Apparently to others, there were not so minor.

The only thing that was disappointing to me was that no matter how much you learn about being a leader, if your teammates do not want to accept you as a leader either because of jealousy, self-doubt, or whatever, your ability to positively influence the team is hindered.

Both Positive and Negative Comments Regarding Immediate Impact

After Gainey I felt very encouraged and full of self-confidence about leading my team. My other team mate at Gainey and I discusses changes and goals that we wanted for our team and we were very excited. However, we are given all this information and ideas in a week and then expected to just know what to do once we were back with our teams and I would say there was not much carryover from Gainey. We lacked the leadership experience we needed and we didn't have any follow up support from the Gainey leaders.

In my experience, the retreat was moderately informative and helpful to me as a leader as far as learning new techniques and skills. However, for whatever reason, I didn't feel like that much of it was new information or that it was as applicable to my sport as to some others. However, the experience of just being chosen to go to the retreat was huge for my confidence as a leader.

I already had the confidence to lead my teammates, the retreat did reinforce that confidence, however. The experience did have an impact on the actions that I took within my team in that I tried to be more of a leader outside of the sport to my team by spending more time with the individuals. It did not have an impact on my athletic performance, I played every game with as much passion and effort that I could both before the retreat and after the retreat.
Both Positive and Negative Comments Regarding Immediate Impact (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There was no impact on my athletic performance. I understood the other captains on the swim team better from this, so we were better able to work together and our collective leadership actions improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think the experience directly impacted my athletic performance for that season—and if it did it was not a positive impact. The positive impact on confidence and leadership actions were a result of a better understanding of how to approach a leadership position and having an ability to know how and when to take a more central leadership role versus act more behind the scenes and let group dynamics and other natural leaders shape the team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>being chosen to go to Gainey meant that my coaches respected me and felt that I could contribute as a leader on my team, and that gave me a lot of confidence. That was probably the best part of the whole thing, that and getting a free trip to Montana which was beautiful!</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think having more confidence made me more likely to take action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don't really think it had a big impact on my performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was chosen to go after my freshman year, which really showed me that the coaches valued me and that maybe I could make an impact on my team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The retreat was not good for athletic performance. We were not allowed to run the day we got there and there wasn't time during free time to run, so we ran early in the morning and didn't sleep enough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The retreat's content affected my response to an issue of pornography at a team gathering very early in the fall semester (less than 2 months after the retreat). I heard about the incident the day after it happened, and was preparing to respond as a captain. I can't remember exactly how the retreat shaped my actions, but I clearly remember thinking about things I'd learned while making decisions on discipline, etc. I also had new friends in the administrative and coaching staff whom I consulted on the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think the retreat had any direct positive or negative impact on my athletic performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral Comments Regarding Immediate Impact</td>
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<td>forced me to think of how to positively impact team bonding, unity and how I approached those goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well it didn't make me faster, but I don't think that was the point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not practicing your sport for a week can't exactly improve your performance, however I don't think a week off is a bad thing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I trained that week but it didn't change how I ran.</td>
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Appendix G

Open-Ended Responses – Team Development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Q41 – Please describe your team’s development, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree during your team’s season.</th>
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**Positive Comments Regarding Team Development**

- What helped the most was the number of guys that had attended the retreat on our team. 3 captains and a Jr. had attended the retreat so there was a universal understanding of what we were trying to accomplish.

- Our team got along very well. It was like 6 years ago so it is hard for me to remember exactly some of the things we did. But I know we had devos, set team goals, and had team trust...which was huge!

- Gainey helped me understand that every person on the team is important. I knew that before...but it helped me realize the importance of getting to know every person on my team for who they are. As a captain, that made a huge difference in how our team got along.

- We also do goals individually and as a team, so we discussed what appropriate goals were and how to aim for success as a Christian athlete.

- I tried to implement trust in my team in that, you need to rely on others collectively, no one person is the team. That there is a reason we were called a 'team,' because one person could not do it all, I was simply one person who was put in charge to help bring them together by sharing my experiences. I also opened communication, let my team know that I am not always right, that someone may have differing views than mine and they are to be accepted as well. Lastly, I hoped to help the team develop by setting goals throughout the season, setting goals that I knew were higher than what I thought we would likely achieve, but were definitely within our grasp if we worked hard enough and wanted to succeed bad enough.

- Our team met and went through all of the steps listed above. Some sessions were more effective than others, but overall I think that meeting to build trust was one of the most beneficial sessions. We learned a lot about each other that we would not have otherwise.

- My team implemented written and oral goal-setting, both personally and as a team. This is something we had done previously, but I encouraged that we be even more intentional about it. We grew as a team in many ways...spiritually, friendships, competitively...etc. Our team grew a bond with each other and also supported other teams at Calvin.

- Since it was the first year of the gainey retreat when I went, my team was not involved in many of the team building options I know they had in years following. We focused a lot on the goals part and communication aspects.

- We placed a large emphasis on off-season workout accountability as a way to increase our team's ability, but also to ensure that social lives were under control.

- Our coach facilitated sessions to promote team building, which directly affected the team's commitment to each other and the sport.

- The "accountability" session we did during the retreat helped prepare me for the next season when the team captains had to confront a group of underclassmen about drinking.

- The "trust" activity/session was implemented during team meetings and pre-meet activities and I thought that was especially beneficial to our team.

- The team participated in multiple team building activities with each other to build the relationships with each other as well as develop trust and communication. Accountability was addressed right away and continued throughout the season.
**Positive Comments Regarding Team Development (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The soccer season took place immediately following the gainey retreat, so a lot of the ideas were fresh in our minds. We were excited to try some of the things out, and we started off with a bang. At the time, the soccer team had developed a bit of a reputation for being big partiers, so we decided to try to enforce some kind of drinking accountability program. We weren’t able to eliminate drinking, but I do remember we were able to put some rules in place, and id say 95% of the guys jumped on board with it. We were also able to put some small bible studies, school studies, etc. together. As the season went on these things got noticeably weaker and weaker though, because we were getting so wrapped up in other things.</th>
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<tr>
<td>However, we won the MIAA and I think ended up finishing #4 in the National Rankings. That was a major success, although I have to say, it wasn't necessarily unexpected. We had a very good team going into the season and expectations were pretty high.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I found that many of the structures for leadership had been put in place already on the team. What needed to happen was for each member to play their own specific roles. I learned more about how to use each person's individual strengths to make the team better overall. I also found that in being willing to delegate responsibility, other team members felt more a part of the growing process. It was great to see that things I had really disliked doing, other people now did and really enjoyed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team members generally enjoyed the out of practice team building activities as long as they were fun and didn't cost a lot (sometimes got help from the school to pay for activities and it helped a lot).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During my teams next season we were able to buy into the plan which was presented to us by our coach and we were able to bond with each other unlike any other team I had played on before especially because there was such a wide range of younger players on our team. We acted as a team and played as a team. Even though the results were not always what we wanted I feel my experiences at the Gainey Retreat helped lead to a successful season for us.</td>
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<tr>
<td>that year was a rebuilding year for the hockey team. despite that we stuck to our team goals of hardwork and respect and managed to have a good finish at nationals. i think gainey helped me stick to those team goals and lead by example to achieve this</td>
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<tr>
<td>We implemented a lot more team meetings into our season. This helped bring information to all the members fairly and in a more organized fashion than what we had had in the past. There was definitely a deeper sense of commitment desired the more the team worked to succeed in our goals. The difference between our first season after having attended the Gainey Retreat and the year before was remarkable. Our team felt much more involved in the athletic program in general.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I dont know if it was directly because of the Gainey retreat, but accountability was a point of emphasis the following season. Also, goals had been focused on all 4 years that I swam and that season was no different.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that both communication and accountability played a huge role for us during the 06-07 season. Those were items that I thought were lacking in the past and I thought if those things improved, so would our end result. And it did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities and discussions that we had based on information that I brought back from Gainey helped us to open up and trust each other and to have more open conversations about tough topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and commitment were very important in motivating each other to train our hardest in practice. Trust came in huge with trusting the coaches' training methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not employ any of the team activities learned at the Gainey Retreat; however, I still feel like I displayed leadership within my team and my coach encouraged and supported me as a captain/leader</td>
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Positive Comments Regarding Team Development (continued)

We had a difficult situation because we had a coaching change in the middle of the year. That was a time when I needed to step up as a leader, but had a hard time finding time (due to a large engineering workload).

We simply kept open lines of communication and tried to help teammates feel comfortable talking with each other and with leaders.

My team was very good at keeping each other accountable. That was the main thing we wanted to work on.

We really tried to tie the team together and I think it really had a huge impact on how we played as team. The team was closer and made the year smoother.

During our season we sat down as a team and made a list of goals- something we had not done the previous season. We were also proactive in planning more team functions, we had announcements about top performances, and created a listserv- all things that we had not done the year before. We also made a big effort to cross event lines between distance, sprinter, and thrower groups.

My team's development was in great need. My teams core group was underclassman who had had a very successful high school career and had felt like they were going to easily transition into the next level of the game. It was evident quickly that they were in need of guidance and leadership. It was helpful to have gone through the Gainey Retreat with new ideas and perspectives when working through this season.

We didn't use the accountability thing as much because our team didn't "break the rules" much. However, building a base of trust was hugely important and we focused on doing that at team camp before our fall season. Also, the goals concepts were important. We vocalized our goals often and were able to keep those at the fore of our minds all season long.

As a team I believe there were 'make it or break it' times throughout the season. Times where if leadership had been lacking the team would have fallen apart. However, because we had covered things like trust, communication, commitment, accountability, and goals we turned negative situations into opportunities for growth.

We were a tight knit team, able to be open and trust each other in a relaxed and fun- yet extremely competitive environment.

As a team, we developed great bonds on the court and more importantly off the court.

I think this past season was the best season I have had with our team in the past 3 years of playing. We all became so close and encouraged and pushed each other to all be leaders and support each other.
Negative Comments Regarding Team Development

We underachieved that year - relationships were poor mainly because of the implemented drinking rule inspired by this trip, we should have been a lot closer, we lost in the first round of the tournament and should have made it to the sweet 16 at least...

Leaders on the trip need to be real, down to earth with the leader's of the teams. Don't act above them as if they've never been there. I felt talked at instead of talked to the entire week.

The gainey retreat actually pulled apart our team. some players thought they deserved to go over 2 soon to be sophomores and when you are only a sophomore it was a challenge to implement the leadership skills that I had just learned.

Going to the retreat is great, the problem is bringing the motivation back to your teammates. If there is a way to implement what we learned on the retreat, there needs to something done - more team building exercises (by sport), a booklet to help the leaders, a new topic to talk about to your teammates per week, etc.

Head coach would never let us build team unity or implement team-building strategies. In fact just the opposite he often set us against each other and created distrust.

The team was very segregated, and we were not always encouraged to come together as a whole team (all EVENTS). Good team development occurred in my event group throughout the season. We became a great support group for one another.

It was somewhat difficult to come back from a "Mountain Top" experience and try and share that excitement with everyone, including your coach, on the team. It was difficult at first to not come across as proud or "better than you" because you were selected to attend the retreat. But slowly you can win over people and get them on board.

We were going through a lot of transitions and new coaches therefore I felt like we never really had that strong team development. We were given minimal time for team-building exercises and I think that affected our team-building efforts.

There was not a very high acceptance of the ideas I brought back from gainey.

I did not receive any support from my coach.

It didn't really seem like it changed our team that much. The cross country team is made up of very dedicated and committed people. We did implement accountability buddies which helped in the summer and we made goals, but I think we would have done that anyway.

Opportunities were not given to develop the strengths I obtained. I believe that since there were so many seniors, our coach tried to spread out the leadership too much, and thinned it out, giving many people a little bit of leadership. I believe this encouraged different groupings to develop around different seniors or groups of seniors. I was very disappointed in our coaches' reaction to *the leadership abilities both me and my teammate developed. I believe team issues that did not get adequately resolved due to the head coach and assistant coach being on different pages in nearly every realm of coaching. Unfortunately this discord passed among the team and fostered criticism of coaches and confusion among the teammates leading to unnecessary power struggles of non-captains with chosen captains. I would also comment that making every senior a captain made for too many individuals to have discussions that came to any type of agreement. I believe coaches must set clear guidelines for teams- such as supporting the no underage drinking law and stance Calvin. Leaving such issues to the team to decide is unethical and bred a lot of anger from individuals with opposite views. This put our season off to a horrible start regardless of my own and other teammates' attempts to offer leadership and final decisions. I was extremely disappointed in my the disagreement between the coaches in how to treat players. One coach treated all the players like friends and failed to set boundaries, the other constantly removed themselves from the team. A medium between too much leniency and too much discipline and separation should be found. This sets an example for team leaders and other players to foster respect and friendship.
**Both Positive and Negative Comments Regarding Team Development**

The team was willing to participate in activities and have discussions about the things we brought back from leadership, but we lacked the self-discipline as a team to follow through on our accountability goals which shows the team didn't really care that much regardless of the goals we had set as a team.

The results varied from the two teams I was on. The basketball program adopted the curriculum and practiced it intensely throughout the season. There was complete buy-in from top to bottom - coaches included.

On the baseball team, we lacked clear leadership support from the coaching staff so it made complete buy-in and implementation of the program throughout the season difficult. You are also dealing with a very short spring season. The time frame that the group is together also was a limiting factor in the development of a strong culture.

My coach was not a very supportive person and was not invested in the principles of the Leadership Retreat. Thankfully, he is no longer coaching at Calvin. At times I felt that my team followed the leadership of myself and the other captains more than that of the coach. The Gainey Retreat helped shape me into the leader others wanted to follow.

**Neutral Comments Regarding Team Development**

The year following the Gainey retreat, our team went through some ups and downs. We had some issues with players being ineligible, and it took us quite a while to gel as a team. I think it was helpful to have four attendees from the Gainey retreat working together to keep our team together.

It was a culmination of a few seasons after that where our women's team really showed development and trust for one another and buying into the goal or teamwork and where we wanted to see ourselves at the end of the year.

SMART goals - we made it a priority to have the goals as a central part of our team

Accountability -- dry season and held each other accountable (as far as I know we all stuck to it ... but that could be naivety)

The team's development was really strong during my entire 4 years at Calvin so it was easier for me to maintain a strong team atmosphere that was already in place when I arrived.

Prior to going on the Gainey retreat I felt that I was already a part of a well knit team with many capable and willing leaders. While the retreat was beneficial and encouraging, many of the issues that were addressed were not a problem on my team as we were already pretty united and focused.

I was able to incorporate the ideas in my mind and present them with my fellow participants however, I did not use them directly as we were taught.

The team-building games were fun, but I don't think they really taught me anything.

We discussed a lot of the topics that I learned from the retreat during the first couple weeks of the season. As the season progressed, however, we did not go back to these goals and concepts very often. I think we were already driven enough and did not need to reiterate many of the things we talked about the first couple weeks.

With a new coach and new way of going about training, the captains and athletes were called upon a lot to fix the communication issues we had going on. So, while communication wasn't the greatest between coaches and athletes, we sought to work things out and understand the other side.
Appendix H

Open-Ended Responses – Lasting Impression

Q47 – Please describe the lasting impression, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree after your Calvin College athletic experience.

Positive Comments Regarding Lasting Impression

| I learned a lot about myself and my convictions through sport and my spiritual life through this experience |
| I loved the gainey retreat. It was a life changing experience for me. It forced me to sit down and really think about my spiritual live and the person that I wanted to be. I loved the solo experience because it forced me to think about life. |
| I enjoyed the focused time of small group discussions, as well as the time for personal devotions - oftentimes when we are in our normal routines back at home we fail to have focused times where we can concentrate on those things so it was nice to have that intentional time. |
| For me, the Gainey Retreat reemphasized the leadership strengths I already knew I had and gave me new tools to use in leadership situations. I would say I'm still using those tools in my life today, in many different ways. |
| Academically, the retreat had a lasting impression slightly only because I was a senior and already had a job lined up that I was working basically full time for, which took up the majority of my time. Spiritually, I think the retreat helped me grow, brought me closer to God, and helped me set up routines in which I still do today. Willingness to take on leadership roles, whether it be in work or in recreational activities, or even amongst friends, I'm always ready to take on the leadership role. |
| As I said earlier, I had never viewed myself as a leader in the past. I now have so much confidence in knowing how to lead that I am very willing to take on a leadership role at work or at church. My husband and I are currently part of a small group at church that refuses to name a leader and we both just cringe because we know how much better the group could function with someone in that role. Spiritually, the leadership retreat challenged me to reevaluate my spiritual life and how I "scheduled" spending time with God. It has been very beneficial for me to continue to think through how I can deepen my relationship with God. The retreat provided an excellent time to reflect on my participation in my sport from a spiritual perspective. I actually had a pretty rough season athletically following the retreat, but having gone helped me realize that I needed to be a leader regardless of how my season was going. It gave me the confidence to take on leadership roles, even if my athletic performance was frustrating. |
| I changed my major as a result of this retreat. Because of the emphasis on leadership, I became a Psychology major and wanted to dissect people and group dynamics. This retreat also refocused my spiritual life and made a difference in the way that I viewed the opportunities around me. The retreat encouraged me during my time at Calvin which led to confidence after my experience at Calvin. One of the most lasting impacts was seeing how building relationships between teams had a positive impact on my soccer team. I now try to build that community atmosphere in other areas where I have a leadership role. |
| I feel more confident in taking on leadership roles |
Positive Comments Regarding Lasting Impression (continued)

I was able to go to Gainey for 2 years in a row. Both years presented new challenges and opportunities. I think the most memorable moments at Gainey included the solo experience. I really was able to listen to some inner voices, perhaps for the first time in my life. The daily devotionals and realization that I can truly lean on the Lord for everything have also stayed with me. I guess what I'm saying is that it was more about spiritual growth (especially in the second year) than effecting my athletic goals. That being said, our team was better, our goals were clearer and our communication tighter and I can point those results to lessons learned at Gainey. Truly, the opportunity of a lifetime!

The retreat helped contribute to the success of the soccer program and me as an individual. I don't reflect directly on the gainey retreat a whole lot, but I focus on the things the the retreat indirectly impacted. The relationships I built with teammates, the individual and team successes, and the life lessons learned. I think where I am at today was profoundly impacted by a compilation of experiences like the gainey retreat.

The best lesson I learned all week was the importance of learning to lead yourself before you can lead others. Nancy Meyer spoke on the importance of personal discipline and leading by example. It has continued to be a great lesson for me as I've taken on new leadership roles in my working career. The importance of leading myself and disciplining myself made me a better athlete, and it has made me a better employee and friend.

Gainey will always be a time that I remember being close to God, and being encouraged of my calling to be a leader.

I feel more confident as a leader. I still will talk about the leadership retreat as something I did that I was proud of and that I learned a lot from. I was so thankful that I was able to go and I have great memories of the trip. I think that one of the lessons I learned was to be supportive of other teams at Calvin, and it brought the sports communities closer (although that still is not perfect :) it was also helpful to hear from the other people in your small group and for them to bring up team situations that you could listen to and help solve - it was nice that it wasn't just told to us what to do, but we could talk together and try to find a solution as students on the sports teams.

Different communication styles, accountability, and knowing myself were concepts that have been important for me in other jobs and postgrad academic experiences since leaving Calvin.

I was always a very quiet leader and this retreat helped me to realize that others saw leadership potential in me. It gave me more confidence to use that ability. Now I am running my own high school basketball program and have multiple coaches working with me that I am leading. Without the Gainey Retreat I may have not had the confidence to believe I would be able to run my own program. It has helped me communicate in my teaching career as well, both with other staff members and parents.

It taught me the value of mentally and spiritually preparing for such responsibilities. The need to seek God for guidance in difficult times. also left me with the constant reminder that all we pursue in life, athletic or otherwise, has room for God and requires our effort.

Great experience, won't forget it.

Having had proper training has been useful in many areas of my life beyond sports, and has given me the confidence/willingness to accept leadership roles in a variety of scenarios.

I loved my experience at Gainey. It was truly life changing. It was a great opportunity to learn about leadership and fellowship with other Christian athletes.

This retreat taught great leadership methods which carried over into the season. Most importantly the retreat developed friendships and accountability among different team leaders which lasted throughout the school year.
**Positive Comments Regarding Lasting Impression (continued)**

The Gainey Retreat was a pivotal point in my life as an athlete and leader. Leading others while maintaining self discipline and responsibility is difficult. It is even more difficult when you're balancing an academic life, as well. I truly feel that the retreat made me more comfortable in accepting all of the responsibilities that I needed to to be successful. It also made me want to encourage others to accomplish more within their own lives and within the athletic program. Being a social and network oriented person it was important for me to gain friendships outside of my specific sport. I learned so much from those continued friendships on campus due to their encouragement, accountability, insight, and determination within their own venues. They were a constant reminder of my responsibility as a Christian athlete and in the end, a great group of friends.

I don't doubt my experiences impacted my performance on the athletic field or my desire to pursue a masters and doctorate degree in sport management. I have seen the impact athletics can have on individuals and the Gainey Retreat reinforced this. I want to be a part of the bigger picture of athletics and what it can do for individuals and therefore have chosen a field where I am able to give back.

The retreat gave me confidence and inspiration to be a better leader than I ever thought I could be.

It has reminded me to turn to the Lord and acknowledge him as the one who gives and makes possible everything, including my athletic experience. He is the one who enables me to step up and step in for a given task, etc.

The retreat provided some good time to interact with people in leadership positions. As with any new activity, practicing the necessary skills will make anyone more comfortable with the new activity.

The one on one time was a great time to stop and think. I really enjoyed it.

In retrospect, the Gainey Retreat was a very useful tool. My athletic development increased because of what I had learned about becoming an effective leader. My academic development wasn't affected good or bad by my experience at Gainey; I already had a good handle on that. My spiritual development was greatly influenced by my experience at Gainey. There were many opportunities to open up to others and be able to communicate my issues, but also to become closer with God. Once I learned the tasks to become an effective leader, it was easy to take on leadership roles because I had the confidence and the tools to do so.

The Gainey Retreat equipped me with more confidence in what God could actually use me for and trust in following His will for my life, be it on the field or off. It has helped shape the attitude I bring to the field as a player and now as a coach as well. I continue to use many of the tools that were taught me at the Gainey Retreat with my own team I coach now and hope that I can lead the current high school girls I work with to see the bigger picture of athletics just as it was shown to me by my previous coaches and leaders from the Gainey Retreat.

During the Gainey retreat I developed stronger leadership skills and have used those when taking on new roles and positions. I also began taking a more active role in my academic development and in my spiritual life.

I viewed myself as a leader thought this week, whereas before I didn't think of myself as one.

Anytime you have the opportunity to spend a week thinking about Leadership is beneficial to your overall view and confidence in how to be a leader. It may not have been life-changing but it was certainly a good way to spend some intentional time thinking about leadership.

When I look back at my time at Calvin, I would have to say that the Gainey retreat had one of the largest impacts on me of anything that I participated in. The community that grew out of that retreat was absolutely amazing; many of my closest friendships started as a result of my time at Gainey.
**Positive Comments Regarding Lasting Impression (continued)**

To have someone tell you, by sending you to Gainey, that they see leadership potential instills a confidence and desire to meet those expectations. Suddenly you expect more of yourself. I also learned how important it is to have leaderships and direction. Knowing that leadership comes in different forms assisted me to find ways to use leadership no matter the context or situation I find myself in.

My experiences while at Calvin helped my as I furthered my education at Western Michigan University. I was able to gain my Master's Degree and throughout it all I found my challenges at Calvin were tougher to face than those I faced at Western. I feel my retreat experience helped me to enter a new school where I knew no one and excel. I was able to take on group projects and tasks and be a leader in those situations.

After the Gainey Retreat, I am better equipped to manage the day-to-day requirements of being a leader in the athletic arena.

Being called out as a leader makes one step into those roles, so it was helpful to know I was seen as a leader, and thus allowed me to take more initiative in these settings (athletic or otherwise).

It was an experience I will never forget and it will assist me in all aspects of my life. I think it was a really good confidence booster. I also enjoyed being surrounded by the athletic community and learned from other people while I was there. Everybody there was unique and it was exciting and inspiring to think of them all being effective in their own realms.

The retreat reaffirmed my gifts as a leader and encouraged me to continue to serve and lead selflessly. My Calvin athletic experience as a whole, including the Gainey retreat, definitely shape who I am today.

Now that I am in the work world I am thankful for everything I learned at Gainey. I am a leader at work and actually think of Gainey often. It helped me most with how to help with people and their problems. It was a great trip and I would do it again!

I still reference my leadership materials and lessons learned in my personal life today. I actually married another attendee, so having the same spectacular experience in our lives to use as a guide during our decision making processes is extremely helpful.

I feel that I have been a leader in many things before, so Gainey didn't necessarily increase my willingness to lead, but it did increase my confidence. Knowing that I took time to focus specifically on leadership skills and knowing that others have seen leadership abilities in me, have helped increase my confidence in leading.

I think the Gainey Retreat has provided me with a lasting impression as a Christian leader in my personal life, the workplace, friends, family, relationships, and etc. Now that I have graduated and my competitive sports days are through I am able to use the cognitive skills of sports, teamwork, leadership and most importantly God's gifts in all areas of life.

During the retreat, I was able to really spend some quality time with God and talk to Him about the talents I have been given and how I should be using them on my team. The retreat gave me a great environment to do that and the leaders of the retreat gave me the resources to use to guide some of this prayer and thinking. I also gained a lot of confidence from the retreat and that carried over into my leadership. Learning for a whole week about leadership makes you feel more equipped to lead others.

Spiritual Development: Gainey brought me closer to God. In college I drifted away from God, but the retreat provided time for me to reflect on my relationship. Willingness and confidence to take on leadership roles: The retreat was one of many leadership experiences I have had the privilege of experiencing. All of which have helped me to be a better leader. I've been able to take these experiences and mold myself into a successful leader. I think I really learned a lot about myself and how I interact with other people on a team because of the retreat.
**Positive Comments Regarding Lasting Impression (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I learned some valuable things from the retreat. Most importantly it was great to get to know other athletes from around school. This things we did at Gainey were lots of fun as well and is an experience that will stick with me as a privilege I had</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I never would be the leader I am without the Gainey retreat. I really didn't even consider myself a leader before going on this retreat. And now I am very willing and I believe well equipped to lead my team and any group in the future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The retreat forced me to understand that if I was going to push my teammates to be better I first had to push myself to be better</td>
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<tr>
<td>The retreat helped me believe in myself as a leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>The retreat gave me confidence in my leadership abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was an awesome experience, and I will never forget the week I spent there. It really affected and changed my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The solo experience was a really good one that I'd like to repeat on my own sometimes. I would be confident in leading something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gainey Retreat served primarily for me as a grounding experience, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the proper employment of gifts (athletic and otherwise) in a generous life. Upon such a firm foundation, my spiritual life, leadership potential, social life, and athletic teamwork were strengthened by a uniting affirmation of the power of being genuine, bold, and generous.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Again, I had a bad season, yet maintained my academic discipline. It enhanced my spiritual development in part by linking me with other athletes and coaches. And I've always enjoyed leading, but this enabled me to do it better.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I am better prepared to lead a team and have confidence in doing so. As previously mentioned, I think I learned the most about myself during this retreat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The friendships with peers and coaches has lasted thus far and I suspect it will continue. Gainey retreat has a highlight for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My faith was dramatically impacted by this experience. Being without email/cell phones really made me spend time talking with God, and I really needed that. I also was so encouraged to be a leader because I just felt so empowered by what I learned through my small group leader and my peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I will always remember the one-on-one time with the leaders. Leading in various ways on the trip. My favorite were the time I got to know other teams' captains.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gainey was amazing. I was stretched to think more deeply about life and God's plan for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gainey retreat contributed to helping me gain confidence over the course of this year, not just during the cross country season. While it was apparent that I &quot;lost&quot; my excitement that I held immediately after the retreat, I still have fond memories of the retreat and think it was beneficial to my development as a leader on the team. Hopefully, I will benefit from it in future leadership roles as well.</td>
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Negative Comments Regarding Lasting Impression

| The Gainey Retreat had the potential to be awesome, but it failed, in my opinion, because it was more of a sermon than a communal gathering. |
| The Gainey Retreat experience left a lasting impression, but more for its flaws rather than a positive experience. I was very disappointed with the follow-up of the program. The leadership team did a poor job of promoting continual leadership development. Since the retreat in 2005, I only had a single correspondence with my team leader, and the relationships I developed with my peers did not develop after the retreat. This was extremely disappointing because of the vulnerability we were asked to give throughout our week. |
| As I mentioned before, I was less willing and less confident as a leader after the trip because of how little the trip reminded me that I was still human. I was surrounded by alpha-males and females. We all were leaders and we all were very athletic and intelligent. It was hard not to want to one-up the next guy, but that in-turn made it hard to forgive yourself when you weren't perfect and being "the best". Athletes hate to lose. Even when it isn't cut-and-dry win-or-lose situations, we still have to feel like we won by doing it better than the next guy. I wish the retreat would have worked in a session describing this common problem amongst athletes. |
| The Gainey Retreat had no impression on my academic development |

Both Positive and Negative Comments Regarding Lasting Impression

| Gainey was a fun week that for me was a week to step back from my normal schedule and think about my life, character, goals for my life and my team but it didn't affect my athletic or academic development. |
| No impact on my athletic development at all. Huge impression on my confidence. Took on situations and roles after Gainey that I would not have before. |

Neutral Comments Regarding Lasting Impression

| The retreat helped plant seeds within one's self, it is up to the person if they want that seed to grow bigger and bigger. |
| Gainey established a community of leaders from similar groups of people. That community is encouraging to the leaders who have gone through the retreat. |
| I really enjoyed that day of "alone time" |
Appendix I

Open-Ended Responses – Overall Impact

Q50- Please describe the overall impact, or lack thereof, for the item(s) you marked as strongly or moderately agree or disagree since completing your Calvin College experience.

Positive Comments Regarding Overall Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great experience. It was nice to meet other athletes who were dealing with similar situations on their athletic teams as I was. I could get advice from other athletes and the coaches/leaders at the retreat. I don't think I would have developed those connections/relationships if it was for the Gainey Retreat. I still have the notebook and look at the notes I took!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoyed the experience to get to know other student athletes, as well as other coaches, AD's, professors, etc- I think that those experiences help as you go through the college experience to help you get more acquainted with other people who are in your same situation (the student athletes) as well as help you connect with those who are in leadership/authority roles like professors, coaches, and administrators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I look back to the retreat, I realize that was definitely a case where &quot;I was in the right place at the right time.&quot; I needed to hear the things we talked about on the retreat and in the end, I believe it made me a better leader in all areas of my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It gave me many tools to lead my team in my last year at Calvin and I believe I left the team with some positive influence that I hope is still being felt within the team years after I've left. I graduated in 08 and was promoted and requested to move after only a year and a half to another city in order to further benefit my current company. I believe that is largely due to my leadership skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that the Gainey Retreat gave me the self-confidence and the better self-understanding in order to truly thrive in my athletic experience at Calvin College. I never would have imagined having the success that I had, but I do credit a lot of it to what I learned and who I met at the Gainey Retreat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best part of the trip was building friendships with leader's on other sports teams...so we could support them and vice versa at our own events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership is a personal trait as well as an ability. Gainey made us leaders not just for our collegiate athletics teams but also for the rest of our lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The friendships I made with student athletes from other sports was so valuable to me. I had a new circle of friends through a special experience that I will never forget.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I look back on my retreat as an important experience in my education at Calvin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would not have been the leader that I was without this retreat. I received several notes of thanks from teammates telling me that I did a great job. And that would not have happened without the retreat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like I said, it is an ace in the hole for Job interviews. I attended 5 years ago and I still keep it on my resume because it is so impressive to people. It has helped me be more confident in my everyday interactions within my job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i hope they continue this program. the solo experience was great and all the leaders were fantastic. Especially aaron winkle and nancy meijer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gainey Retreat was one of the best experiences I had at Calvin.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Positive Comments Regarding Overall Impact (continued)

I smile whenever I am able to reference my time at the Gainey Retreat, reference things I learned while in an athletic leadership roles in college, or just talk about Montana. I was blessed to be a part of the retreat. I looked forward to seeing others from the team come back inspired in the same way I was, year after year.

I love the Gainey Retreat and is something that I will always remember as I look back on my experience at Calvin College. It was a wonderful opportunity that I was extremely fortunate to have. It helps me see how important it is to learn about leadership and teach others about leadership. As I coach at the high school level, I am looking to implement some of these same team building ideas and things I learned at the Gainey Retreat so that these students can start learning some of the leadership skills that I did not learn until later.

Gainey was a wonderful retreat! I was extremely lucky to be a part of the retreat. Gainey taught me life lessons that I have and will continue to use in my life as a wife, leader in my church and community, mother, teacher and coach. It is events and opportunities like these that stick with you long after you have forgotten how well your team did while you were in college.

The experiences I had at the Gainey Leadership retreat have certainly impacted my role as a high school athletic director. I developed my leadership skills during this time, developed relationships with leaders, and developed relationships with other athletes (met my wife!). All of these experiences gave me a foundation for my senior year and allowed me to leave Calvin with a strong support of mentors and quality friends.

It was good to have a core of team leaders who had gone through the same retreat. This created accountability and lasting friendships. Also, as a whole the retreat was very spiritually focused which helped me grow as a Christian athlete and person. This has carried over outside of sports and helped me to have more confidence in who I am and my leadership abilities.

For me, leadership skills have become valuable, not only in college sports, but in my professional career as well. The Gainey retreat did provide guidance and did encourage me to take the lead in situations where I would otherwise have not.

The Gainey Retreat is something I will never forget. There were so many positives about this experience and so much good came out of it that it helped me to learn a lot about myself, and in turn has helped me over since my time there.

My athletic experiences at Calvin College are and will be some of my best memories I have from my life. The Gainey Retreat was a huge part of my athletic experience and therefore a firm foundation in how I deal with leadership experiences with others in the position, or myself. I am very thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the retreat.

The following athletic season, the team was very successful and I think part of it was because of the leadership. I have had several experiences after college during graduate school, that I would not have pursued without the foundation that was provided at Gainey.

It was a fantastic opportunity to spend 5 days with other athletes who were in similar situations. At that time, I found it very helpful to have not only the support of peers but to know people in distinguished roles at the college were behind us as athletes. Their genuine interest in our success was very motivating and helped me lead my team more effectively.

Similar to before, being able to explore leadership with peers was helpful to see how others engage in leadership on their teams.

I feel more confident in taking on leadership roles in my job as a result of the practice that I got through the retreat. For me, the biggest leadership development came in the form of lifelong mentors that I now have because of the retreat. If I ever need leadership advice, I have people that I can go to with questions. This has been an invaluable resource.

This encouraged leaders of teams to be more purposeful in the way teams are led.
Positive Comments Regarding Overall Impact (continued)

I still consider the Gainey Retreat to be one of the most influential weeks of my life. I walked into that week wanting to leave Calvin, choose a different career, pick a different college to swim for ... all decisions that were selfish and about ME. I left the Gainey week completely changed, realizing the gifts that I had and the obligation that I had to use them in the context that God put me in. Gainey helped me grow tremendously in my faith, relationships with friends/boyfriend/family, my outlook on how to compete as an athlete, and so much more. The skills that I developed there continue to aid me in all that I do at work, home, and church. This is an amazing place where God does amazing things! Thanks so much for the opportunity.

Entering into the Gainey Retreat I was very cautious and even doubted the validity of the experience. I thought it was going to be a waste of time and something I really did not want to be a part of. However after attending the retreat my perspective completely changed and I can say I am happy I was able to attend the retreat and it was definitely one of the best weeks of my life. I would never trade that experience for anything in the world and I wish I could live that week over again. It did wonders for my life and it made me a believer in the program. I got to know other athletes from other sports and it also helped me to gain a closer relationship with other professors and coaches in the athletic department as well as Coop and Aaron Winkle. Overall my experience could not have been more positive and I would encourage any athlete who has the chance to attend the retreat in the future to take the opportunity and make the most of it.

Athletics were a great thing to be a part of during my entire schooling experience. I have been participating in sports since I was 6 years old and I believe it has helped strengthen many qualities that I have today. Not only was my collegiate experience a successful one, but I very much enjoyed being a part of a team with common goals, a strong faith, and a welcoming community. Although I am now finished with college, I will take what I have learned from my team mates, coaches, and experiences and carry them on to future teams that I may coach. I'm exciting for all the students who will be able to be a part of the sports Calvin has to offer. Those who will be a part of these athletics in the years to come whether that be staff or student athletes, I hope that this tradition can be carried on.

Having been on this retreat, it gave me a sense of purpose for myself as an athlete but also for the team I participated on. I felt a sense of accountability to other student athletes and an appreciation for the leadership others had taken on the team.

I had a great time getting to know other athletes and coaching staff. Everyone was very friendly, supportive, and open to talking about serious issues in their lives. We built a strong support system through the encounter however I wish we had been better at continuing those relationships after coming back to Michigan. Overall, the experience was probably one of the best experiences I had while at Calvin.

I really appreciated the opportunity, partly because I was always curious about Gainey, partly b/c I felt honored to be chosen, partly because I learned a lot from the people there, and partly because I just had a really nice time while I was there.

It is life long impact. Take everywhere

All of the lessons taught were completely applicable to office teams, work groups, and personal relationships.

My Gainey Retreat experience allowed me to meet some amazing people and athletes and gave me more confidence in my leadership abilities. It just didn't pay off for my Calvin athletic career.

I hope that I have formed a strong foundation for future leadership experiences, and I realize that I already have stepped out of my comfort zone in a few areas already that the Gainey retreat helped give me confidence to do.

The retreat was fantastic.
Positive Comments Regarding Overall Impact (continued)

I think the Gainey Retreat has provided me with a lasting impression as a Christian leader in my personal life, the work place, friends, family, relationships, and etc. Now that I have graduated and my competitive sports days are through I am able to use the cognitive skills of sports, teamwork, leadership and most importantly God's gifts in all areas of life.

Gainey was and is absolutely worthwhile. I was amazingly blessed to have experienced it and I hope that it is something that Calvin continues to do despite the amount of effort it takes to raise funds and coordinate. The relationships that I built, the foundation of support I received from peers and mentors, and the impact I was able to then have on my team were of great value to me.

Without my participation in athletics at Calvin I would not have had the opportunity to be a part of the Gainey Retreat, therefore the retreat added to the value of my athletic experience at Calvin. Additionally, I have taken what I have learned from the Gainey Retreat and applied it to my social experiences as well as my work experiences. I have been appointed a leader of my peers in many different work situations.

The retreat was the culmination of all my hard work academically and athletically at Calvin. It was my goal coming into Calvin and it helped me foster the skills I already had as a person. It made me better and in doing so made my team better! Elite 8 baby!

I am confident to take on any leadership role in the 'real world' :)

Like I said before, this was one of the best weeks of my life. I absolutely loved Gainey, and I give it all the highest marks for people looking forward to the future trips.

Such an honor to go. And I really built strong bonds of friendship with my teammates that were there.

The overall impact was very significant and will last a lifetime for me.

I know myself better and Gainey turned my focus toward trusting God no matter what.

I think it is such a special thing that Calvin does with the Gainey Retreat. I think it is really something neat to say that you can get a group of team members from all different sports together, encourage and learn from each other and see what God has in store for them. I am not just an athlete at Calvin College. This retreat reminded of that. Being an athlete at Calvin college is so much more than just playing a sport that you enjoy. I have learned how to better understand and communicate with people, and how to be a leader with my team, at school, and when I work as well.

I will always remember the things I learned but most of all I will cherish the relationships that I was able to build while on the trip.

Negative Comments Regarding Overall Impact

None reported
Both Positive and Negative Comments Regarding Overall Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For me, the most important aspect of the retreat was the confidence I gained from being chosen by my coaches to attend. The retreat itself was valuable, but not quite as incredible as it was made out to be. However, I did learn. Also, it was a good time of personal reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gainey trip was a great experience and I am very grateful for the opportunity. The only thing that disappointed me was the lack of contact to the group that I went with after we got back from the trip. I think that there should have been a little reunion/ follow up more than the ice-cream at Pres. Bykers house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree that it helps. Some of the team building stuff wasn't directly applicable, and I wonder how easily one can 'learn' leadership outside a trial by fire... but it helped me step into those fires and learn that way.</td>
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Neutral Comments Regarding Overall Impact

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This was really valuable for my athletic experience at Calvin as written in the stem, not since completing as suggested in this answer box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>