Hey there my name is Heinrich Maartens. I also have a nickname that goes by Meerkat. I got this name because I am a really good track and field athlete. My home country is South Africa and I live nearby Johannesburg. My country is the best place in the world because of the weather and the surroundings. There are a lot of animals and a lot of nature surrounding my home as well as the whole country!

My family consists out of 4 people including me. I have a father by the name Louis Maartens, I have a mother by the name Marinda Maartens and I have a younger sister by the name Monique Maartens. My parents are both working and they were married 19 years. I was born 1990-07-10, also have 3 dogs and 2 birds at home, but I love my dogs the most. I went to high school for 5 years in HTS Vereeniging and had some of my best times in life in those few years. Although there were times that I hated school I still enjoyed it. In high school my track and field started and from there I was just doing the best I can and that is what I am still doing. I enjoy doing my sports because it keeps my head clear and I can do more stuff at a time.

I am an international student and I enjoy being in the states. I have almost been all over the world and I have seen many places in my live. I have been the best athlete in my country and I went to see the World junior championships, IAAF, Worldgymnaside and a few more other meets as well. I have seen half off Africa and love my country. I like to go hunting and do some fishing in my time of and I and my father usually do it together. I like being around my friends and love their conversations. My girlfriend is back home in South Africa and I love her allot. We are really good for one another and love being with each other. Usually in my time of I do some of the stuff that I mentioned above, but don’t happen very often. I am too busy with track or I am studying for school. Sometimes my life seems like a race, but my life is the life that I chose and my life is the best.
to the sources that I can not come to meet here at the U of I. I looked at an article from black enterprise to get a closer background on the concept behind my project. To learn and understand the concept of why these black student athletes perform and also graduate at higher rates as shown and talked about in articles. I also looked at the library website to find articles involving race and track and field and also some other sources like Moodle.

I will discuss the matters of these students and also show why or why not these black student athletes graduate at higher rates and what are some big factors that they have to deal with to become educated and become good in their field of sports.

**Initial Exercises:** I did some journal responses threw the semester that really helped me allot in preparation for the final project. I did about five of these journals and gave me the knowledge on how to write the papers and also how to prepare for my project and also with the project.

**Question:** Why do black student athletes perform better than other students? and why do they say that black student athletes are graduating at higher rates?

**Plan:** I plan on finding the ideas of why black student athletes are graduating at higher rates and so many people say that they outperform other athletes on the track and also on the class. Many people believe that black student athletes are just there for show and to make money for coaches in collage and that they are competitive and successful when it comes to running, jumping and just any form athletic competition.

**Data:** Hendrik Maartens

Rhet 103

Observation

For this of my research project I have decided to observe and make notes about a certain place that I have interesting. During my first four months at the University of Illinois, academics have become an important part of my life and for many others as well. I have decided to describe the Irwin Academic Center, located on the corner of Fourth Street and Armory Avenue on the grounds of the University of Illinois. This place is used by numerous student athletes to make better progress in their academics and become better students and is also provided with help like tutors. While being at this Academic Center I have noticed that there are not many black student athletes and I came to the question: “where are the black students?”
My observation that I have done was around 6 pm on a Thursday afternoon. The Irwin Academic Center has three floors and is a very modern, new and tall building. When I entered the building thru the glass doors there was on my left stairs down to the basement and on my right stairs to the lounge and study tables. When I entered I needed to hand in my ICard to a the man sitting at a table right in front of me to keep track of how many ours I am in the building. When you turn to your right there is a lounge for reading and discussions and also an elevator door for the disabled persons. To your left there is stairs that lead to the second floor. When you on the second floor you pass a stair window that overlooks the street. On the second floor all the offices of the councilors and tutors and people that are a part of this Irwin academic Center, their offices are located on this floor. The building is build in the shape of a square so there are four passages to walk along to get to where you want to be. If you do not enter the second floor on your left there is another set of stairs that lead to the third floor on you right hand side.

When you are on the third floor you pass a stair window that overlooks the street again. On the top of this floor there is a computer room on your right and a hallway to left with another computer room. Straight ahead is the main computer room where student athletes can make use of the Internet and also make copies and do free print work. The reason for the different rooms is that are too many students and some just prefer the smaller rooms than the big main computer lab. I focused my observation on the main lab and the smell of fresh printed paper covered the air and a cold breeze came in thru the open windows that provided light to the lab. There are about 40 computers in this lab but it was very quiet on at this time of the day and there was only white students busy on the computers. The fact there was only white students raised the question “where are all the black student athletes?”

What I like about Irwin Academic Center is that is very close to campus and very handy to go and get some work done on your own and if you need help someone is there to provide you with help. The fact that it is so quite inside make it a very nice place to go and relax and do work or read and the best of all it makes you feel comfortable when you are there with the soothing atmosphere. I like this center for the fact that it provides opportunities for student athletes to improve.
Observing the Irwin Academic Center helps me conclude the fact that student athletes are provided with lots of opportunities and some of them just doesn’t make use of this facilities. More student athletes should be aware that academics are the future after sport and thus they need to make the best of what they can by using what they have on every day of their lives. But without Irwin Academic Center we as student athletes would not have had the opportunity to become better and make use of what is provided to us.

Hendrik Maartens
Rhet 103
Survey

I have conducted a survey so that I can find out why people say that “black student athletes graduate at higher rates”. My survey that I conducted was very interesting in deed and I have found a few results that answer my question. I have followed a few simple procedures how to do my survey and to write this statement. I have conducted my surveys on 1 April 2009 and this took place at the Irwin Academic Institute for Student athletes on the grounds of the University Of Illinois. I had a random selection of students whom I went to and asked to complete the surveys for me and that they knew what it is all about. I also made sure that whom I asked be persons of different cultures and who was competing in sports and also those who doesn’t do sports at all. I had set up a number of 20 surveys and I limited my questions up to nine in each survey and all of them looked the same.

The reason that I asked different people of cultures can give me a bigger prospective of what I want to accomplish from this survey. People see these questions in different ways and thus it is important to hand out a number of these surveys to get the best results to write a statement on these surveys. There are many figures that I will show you that I got from my surveys that will give me information on my research. After looking at my surveys, I have found that for all persons 100% of them founded academics to be very important to them and also felt that they as an individual are doing above than average on their school work and that is up to standard and that all students think that a person should graduate with some sort of the degree. I have also founded that the majority
of my surveys indicated that it is important for a person to have a balanced life between sports and academics.

The most astonishing find that I made from my survey is that 50% says that black students graduate at higher rates and 50% says they don’t. This is a very interesting piece of information as this focuses allot on my research question and can answer many questions but also turn up to have more questions. All of my surveys also show that majority of the people said that with an imbursement black student athletes will perform and graduate at higher rates and also stated that they believe it is a good thing that they graduate at higher rates. With this said they also believe that they will be treated equally and also get provided with better opportunities.

Some of these results could be the answer to many questions but why do people agree and disagree, that black student athletes are and not graduating at higher rates. I have concluded from my surveys that although some people don’t believe that black student athletes graduate at higher rates my surveys say that the majority of people do believe that these student do perform well and do graduate not necessarily at higher rates but more average at an average rate. These results may not be 100% accurate but I do believe from this survey that I have shown/concluded that there is some believe that black student athlete’s graduate at higher rates and that with these results I can prove this statement and maybe get the truth of this theory/question that I have proposed.
Hendrik Maartens

Yuky

Text Analysis

My article that I used came from Black Enterprise this is also a website that you can visit at www.blackenterprise.com that is also a source for wealth and creation. This is the issue of Oct2006, Vol. 37 Issue 3, p49–49, 1p. The title of the article is “Black students graduating at higher rates”. Author Simon Mashaun: RICHARDSON@BLACKENTERPRISE.COM. Below the article is a set of statistics of student athletes and they perform, there are also a few set of pictures to illustrate what type of sport the rates apply to and pictures of graduate students that apply to the graduation rates of these black students.

The text repeatedly talks about African American student athletes that are graduating at higher rates. This gives the impression that black student athletes are doing better and becoming more educated. The rates of these graduates are compared to other graduates like black female student athletes and white male student athletes but the there is specifically more attention being given to black students in this article. There is equal atmosphere in the text that brings no thought to racism in the text but an opportunity to see that black student athletes are making a difference in graduation rates.

The fact that “colleges are adding more academic skills and life skills personnel to assist the student athletes” gives an opportunity to make a difference and can be back up by the fact that “black student athletes are graduating at higher rates”. The NCAA strives to open up career opportunities for these black student athletes after graduation. I think that this opposes a good opportunity for these students to make a living and make a difference in life to be
The article focuses on a study on the graduation rate of African American athletes in the U.S. The study, Significant Progress for African-American Students, examines data compiled by the federal government and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. According to federal data, the graduation rate of African American athletes increased from 35 percent for those entering college in 1984 to 52 percent for those who started college in 1998.

"Black student athletes are graduating at higher rates" is a fact thus we should look at ourselves and also try to do better by graduating at better rates in the future and become successful.

Discuss:

Graduate Success of Black Student Athletes

In opening my paper on black student-athletes I define these as
typically young women and men between the ages of 17 and 23 who attend any number of different institutions of higher learning. That is, they may be students attending a junior college, the private liberal arts colleges and universities, or they may attend large state controlled universities. These women and men bring to the institutions remarkable athletic skills, many of which help redefine the sport and entertainment business through the games they play. Because so many also come from impoverished backgrounds, it is also remarkable that they have survived to become college students. This age group has been ravaged by the disease and violence that are a big part of life in black civil society. That black student-athletes outnumber all other African American students on campus, even though the opportunity structure is greater now than ever for college acceptance, raise serious questions. Rising SAT scores and rising class status that account for college acceptances make it ironic that, at the very point in time those opportunities for access to higher education for black students at some of the best colleges and universities in the country is at their highest their acceptance is still being determined by their athletic ability? Many African American student-athletes have a lot of talent in their respective sports but little or no knowledge in how they are treated once they reach campus. One problem in drawing correlations between talent performance and graduation rates is how best to quantify talent. What is talent? Most dictionaries define talent as having "god-given" abilities to accomplish some enviable task. Does having a lot of athletic talent become a substitute for working hard at academics?

According to Black Journal “there are a host of reasons why black athletes graduate at higher rates than black students who are not athletes. A few of those reasons would include: black athletes usually have significant scholarship money, athletes often receive tutors and extra counseling, athletes usually are required to attend “study table,” and athletes can build social networks with other athletes which provides social support unavailable to many non-athletes.” It is sad to see black athletes vilified so often in popular media, especially when they outperform other black students. Imagine how many more black college graduates we would have if we raised the graduation rates for all black students to the level that it is for black athletes. Since most black students are not athletes, this would be a very significant number. In fact, they should paid more attention to black students who weren’t athletes because they don’t get the same level of social and financial
support. Of course, the ultimate goal would be to close the graduation gap between blacks and whites, but in the short run, raising the graduation rates for non-athlete black students is a much easier goal. But nobody is focused on that problem, since they tend to think black athletes are the source of lower achievement for black college students. A nurturing environment for black students is almost certain to have a positive impact on black student retention and graduation rates.

More African American students are graduating from college, and they are graduating at a higher rate than no athletes, according to a study released earlier this year by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida. The study, Significant Progress for African-American Students, examines data compiled by the federal government and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

According to federal data, “the graduation rate of African American athletes increased from 35% for those entering college in 1984—the first class for which the data was compiled—to 52% for those who started college in 1998 that is nine percentage points higher than the graduation rate of the entire African American student body. According to the NCAA, however the graduation rate of African American student-athletes jumped even higher to 59% over the same time period. Why the difference? Federal graduation rates do not present an accurate snapshot of the colleges and universities polled, according to the report. For example, a student-athlete in good academic standing who transfers to another university and graduates is considered a no graduate of the original school. Even junior college graduates who then enroll in four-year schools and graduate are counted as no graduates. The NCAA takes such factors into account, hence the higher rate.”

"Colleges are adding more academic and life skills personnel to assist the student-athlete," says Richard Lapchick, president and CEO of the National Consortium for Academics and Sports and author of the study. These programs open up other career opportunities to athletes after graduation, Lapchick adds. "An African American student has a better chance of becoming a doctor or attorney than an NBA or NFL player. We need to do better at letting them know that."

According to Black Journal “It is important to penalize the schools
that still fail to meet greed to academic performance standards. Every school that falls below the standard is to be penalized for its failure to deliver on the promise it makes to its students-athletes when they enter the university: that they will graduate.” This is an ethical contract between the college and the student-athlete. At some point, those schools also will be held accountable specifically for the academic success of their black student-athletes. If they graduate 80 percent of their white basketball players but only 45 percent of black basketball players, the NCAA should take away scholarships. Accountability is critical. Should some of the blame for the disparity between graduation rates be directed at coaches who recruit students-athletes solely to win games? I have no doubt that some coaches work closely with the school’s admissions office to admit student-athletes who have little or no chance at academic success. In some cases, coaches might believe a player will leave after one or two years to turn pro anyway, so the coach will not have to be accountable. This is thinking without an ethical foundation. If a student is brought to a school, he or she has to be ready and must have the appropriate support to succeed.

Are admissions officers at fault when they accept students who cannot succeed academically on their campuses? Some are fans of the game. Some, no doubt, feel the pressure from an unethical coach. Either way, the student-athlete loses. What about the fans and alumni who care more about winning than about the academic performance of the student-athletes on their favourite teams. They reinforce a coach who feels the heat to win. They make it easier for an admissions officer to admit a gifted athlete who can't compete in the classroom. They cheat the value system for the student-athletes who ultimately win or lose the games. And how much blame should be placed on the student-athletes themselves? They are partners in the contract with their institutions. Surely, they bear some responsibility for their own behaviour academically. But who is providing them with the road map to what is right? On many campuses, the atmosphere sometimes isn’t welcoming to students of colour who might be underrepresented in the student body, among faculty and administration, and in the athletic department. Maybe there is a Martin Luther King Boulevard or a Malcolm X Center somewhere on or near campus, but it's a safe bet most of the buildings and streets are named after white people. Should the general public be held responsible? At least, the part of the general public that assumes black student-athletes simply aren't as
capable in the classroom as white student-athletes? These black student athletes begins to think it is okay to have poor academic performance because that is what everyone expects. This thought is damaging to the student-athletes self-esteem and their ability to succeed academically. Every time the college publish graduation rates, they routinely get e-mails, letters and phone calls from fans that represent that sort of thinking -- the sort of thinking they can only be described as racist. The first year of college is a difficult one for most black student’s athletes. Everything changes suddenly for the student who now experiences living away from home, more freedom, and a confusing campus environment. However, these black student athletes must also become oriented to NCAA regulations, practice and game schedules, and the stress that comes with being a student-athlete. Athletes who compete in fall sports may be on campus weeks earlier than other students for practice purposes. According to Black Journal 2009: “Normal support programs to help first-year students miss the student athletes because they do not have time to show themselves of the services. First year student athletes may be the highest need group of the entire student athlete population.”

Looking at my observation I have decided to describe the Irwin Academic Center, located at the corner of Fourth Street and Armory Avenue on the grounds of the University of Illinois. This place is used by numerous student athletes to make better progress in their academics and become better students and is also provided with help like tutors. While being at this Academic Center I have noticed that there are not many black student athletes and I came to the question: “where are the black students?” the fact that this facility provides so many opportunities for student athletes why don’t they make use of this? Black student-athletes differ in their perceptions of the university environment. For them, there are stressors that are race specific and not encountered by other students at predominantly White institutions. This may contribute to or provide explanation of why Black athletes are not using the services that are freely offered and which they are encouraged to attend. I have made some conclusion of this that black student athletes are more separated and want to be on their own and do things how they like it being done. Seeing a few black students at this center says that are well black students that want to perform well and graduate towards success. Seeing that there are so many white students the black students may also maybe feel uncomfortable and want to be alone
and in the process maybe attending another center that I am not aware of or could be that these black student athletes could be attending Irwin but on other ours than when the observation was done. I cannot say whether these black students are or are not attending this center for extra help and to benefit them as I have only done so little research on this topic and have not much evidence to back up this claim. A big thing that makes a difference in this center is that most of the black students that are present here are on scholarships and this motivates the black student athletes to perform better. This was also said to be one factor that make these student athletes want to perform better “working under a scholarship”. Some effects like time could also have a big impact on the way these students perform. Student–athletes face barriers that other students on campus do not have to deal with. This can include dealing with heavy practice schedules that eliminate a great deal of free time. Travel schedules can be long and tiring sometime requires 20+ away games/meets in a single season. Looking at this I could say that these black students’ athletes are trying to make a difference and thus time will tell if these students do get better and perform better.

To take the above what I have just said inconsideration and look at my surveys there seem to be a close relation in what is said by the students and how they see things looking at these black student athletes. Looking at these athletes and what I have found from my surveys there seems to be a picture in society that black students do not perform well and do not graduate at higher rates. They say that these black student athletes do not perform and only stand a chance to perform in college if they have some sort of scholarship and have something to work for. One thing that I have noticed while these people where taking the surveys is that there facial and body expression was very interesting and some of them even looked at me and shacked there head at me. Why this happened I cannot explain this could be that of questions was very strange or that some of them were very difficult to answer. What was most astonishing was that these surveys also said that the majority of students of take their academics and school work very seriously and with no doubt is very important to them do well in class and also academics. All of these students want do graduate with some sort of degree but some don’t believe that the black student athletes do. But if this is the case then we should see results from black student’s athletes that graduate at higher rates and see these results being published in news papers like the top white academic
student of the year, but we don’t! Not all of my surveys are saying that if a black student athlete should graduate with a degree that these degrees do not provide them with opportunities but why? Could this be that in the society there is still racism among black and whites and that black people can’t find jobs because they are seen as “worthless”?

In an article that I have read on www.DiverseEducation.com the article said “Black athletes must understand that playing sports must not be the only dream to strive for, but only the collateral benefit of attending school. They must further understand that all the applause and accolades received while playing sports, especially in high school and college, are only for entertainment purposes. Understand that while your sports career will come to an end sooner or later, a college degree is permanent. If, by a remote chance, your dream to play professional sports comes true, ensure that you leave the game with the business savvy to make the most of your post-athletic career, like Eddie George, David Robinson and, now, Tiki Barber. Education is the key to fulfilling most dreams.” This could relate to the fact that some of these black student athletes want to graduate with a degree and perform better overall in what they do. This could maybe explain my survey question and prove that these students aren’t “worthless”!

I ask myself all those questions, about all those cogs in the college sports machine. But I don’t think, in the end, that any of them should bear the biggest part of the responsibility. Ultimately, I think the blame rests on our politicians and government officials. On city managers, mayors, school boards, governors and, yes, even the presidents of the United States who welcome our championship teams to the White House. Too many of them have failed in the urban areas that produce so many of our black student athletes. Too many of them haven’t delivered the resources that would level the academic playing field. Too many of them talk the talk but rarely walk the walk to make it possible for student-athletes and students in general to be successful. They cheer our teams at the local level, but they fail to act when it comes to equipping or, in some cases, creating the computer labs, or purchasing the library resources, or keeping the best teachers in our cities. To them, other things seem to be more important, whether it’s creating tax breaks for the wealthy or pouring unending resources into military efforts overseas in wars that seem endless and take away the dollars that could be better spent on improving the quality of lives
in our cities and improving the students that could be and make
the differences to improve themselves and also the country.
Looking at some the research I have done you will see that some
of these still need to have allot of research been done on. And also
my topic still needs allot of research to be done to prove the fact
that do or do they not (black student athletes) graduate at higher
rates and do they perform better at an academic level in
school/college!