Tom Morrison

March 6, 2014

CO-150 Shields

Blog Entry: “Used Goods”

After reading Krystal Beamon’s article, “Used Goods”, I believe that college sports both provide access to education for underprivileged students as well as exploit them. There is no question that a large amount of African American student athletes, particularly in the bigger sports such as football and basketball, would not be able to attend school at a university without a scholarship for sports. However, Beamon the argues in her article that despite the fact that student athletes receive an education, it is usually not the athletes first choice and the university is making much more money off the student from their sports entertainment than the students are receiving from the university (317).

One major point to note is that although “African American student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than non-athlete African American students” (323), many of the student athletes are not upset with their ability to get through school, but rather the fact that “majors were chose for them” and these majors were not anything close to what they were promised they would be able to pursue (320). Additionally, Beamon states that an “emphasis on the athletic abilities of student-athlete reproduce student-athletes with an educational inequality who are not prepared academically or culturally for the transition into the occupational sector” (310). The major reason for this is the fact that “exceptional athletes are of great financial value to universities” (308) and bring in so much money through sporting events and recruiting that “universities are far more concerned with exploiting the athletic talent [of student-athletes] than with nurturing academic potential” (309). Once the athletes are no longer serving their athletic purpose, the University really could care less about them, whether they have a degree or not. Most people would say, “well, what separates them from anyone else with financial struggles?” The problem is that the NCAA prohibits any athlete from working for pay during the season. Therefore, these students who are barely able to get to school in the first place are now broke and struggling to get by with a small stipend from the school to pay bills. Student-athletes are arguing that coaches are “getting paid millions to wear Nike products” and stand on the sideline; whereas, the athletes are “getting paid a $675 stipend per month” to live off of when they were making tons of money for the schools (318).

I do not think this is a fair dichotomy to use because although the Universities are gaining more from the athletes than they receive themselves, the athletes are often being given an opportunity they would not be given without athletic opportunities. Sometimes it is worth it to sacrifice monetary gains for an opportunity at a higher education so you can make that money yourself through the intelligence you build in college. Universities will always be taking money from our pockets, the fact that athletes are being paid to play a sport they love playing while receive a free education of any sort is a beautiful opportunity. Sometimes we simply have to weigh out our gains with our losses, and I believe an education is always a valuable asset.