Managing Collaborative Relationships: An Analysis of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario

Austin Edward Roth

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Managing Collaborative Relationships: An Analysis of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario

By

Austin Roth

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Kinesiology
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

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Managing Collaborative Relationships: An Analysis of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario

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January 10, 2020
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

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ABSTRACT

The central purpose of this research study was to examine the collaborative relationship between Athletics Canada, the national governing body for track and field, and Athletics Ontario, the provincial governing body for track and field. It further reviewed how they manage their relationship. A secondary outcome of this study was to provide recommendations that aim to improve the collaborative management process to this specific case. The primary research question was to determine if the relationship between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario was resulting in a collaborative advantage. That advantage suggests a synergistic result, that by these two groups working together are able to achieve an outcome that they would not have been able to on their own. Five sub-questions were designed to answer the primary research question. The five sub-questions build on one another and are guided by an established theoretical framework, Agency Theory, to answer the primary research question; does the relationship between AC and AO result in a maximum collaborative advantage? The analysis phase of this study determined that Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario by working together were able to produce a collaborative outcome. The conclusion of this study determined that there was room for increased collaboration between the two groups.
DEDICATION

Although this degree means a great deal to me, it means even more to those who supported me long before I started my graduate work. My parents encouraged me when I discussed the possibility of enrolling in the MHK program even when I knew they needed my help on our family farm. It is with their love and support that I am able to say that I have now completed my degree.

Ivona, you came into my life at a time when I should have finished this degree and possibly another. You helped me push through and clear the last few hurdles before crossing the academic finish line. Thank you for understanding that I take on too much, have a hard time saying no when asked for help, and that there might be even more school in the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Scott Martyn for accompanying and guiding me on this academic journey. I know that when we started this masters, you took me on with the plan of finishing an internship in a timely fashion and maybe not a thesis that required so many edits. It has meant a great deal to me to be able to complete this degree and have you as my advisor. Furthermore, I would like to thank my defense committee of Dr. Vicky Paraschak and Dr. Martha Reavley for saying yes and providing helpful and meaningful insights to this thesis.

A special thank you goes to Dr. Jess Dixon; it was your first year Sports Management class that I had my first taste of research and what turned me on to pursuing higher education. Thank you Dr. Michael Khan, my Dean, for including me in the LSRC project during my time as a HK grad student. Together with Lancers United, we were able to complete an amazing task that will forever make a positive impact and experience for future Lancers.

There is one fellow classmate that I want to acknowledge during my time in HK. Celine Freeman-Gibb, we did almost every project together during both our undergrad and graduate degrees. We were Captains, teammates and colleagues and will always be friends.
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<td>AC</td>
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<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcast Corporation</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Canadian Interuniversity Sport</td>
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<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicators</td>
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<td>Management by Objectives</td>
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<td>National Sport Organization</td>
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<td>Ontario Track and Field Association</td>
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<td>PAD</td>
<td>Principal Agent Dyad</td>
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<td>PSO</td>
<td>Provincial Sport Organization</td>
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<td>RJTW</td>
<td>Run Jump Throw Wheel</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Games of the XXXI Olympiad held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, have been identified as one of the most successful Olympic Games in Canadian history for the 314 athletes that comprised the team. With a total of 22 medals won, this equaled Canada’s best total in a non-boycotted Summer Olympic Games, tying the team’s performance in Atlanta during the Games of the XXVI Olympiad. Canada’s best showing in the Summer Olympics came at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles with 44 total medals. However, this festival saw 14 Soviet-bloc countries choosing not to participate in those Games (Cullen, 2016).

Of the 36 athletes who represented Canada in Rio de Janerio from Ontario (Tozer, 2017), three brought home individual medals. London based decathlete Damian Warner earned a bronze medal in the men’s decathlon, Sarnia high jumper and reigning world champion Derek Drouin brought home Canada’s only gold medal in athletics, and Andree De Grasse earned two individual bronze medals in the 100m and 200m while lined up beside some of the fastest men in the history of the sport. De Grasse was also part of the bronze medal 4x100m relay team that comprised three other Ontario based athletes.

Despite being identified as the “most successful non-boycotted Summer Games for Canada” by media outlets such as the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (Bassett, 2016), it must be acknowledged that national team performances and individual athlete results may have benefitted from the suspension of the All-Russia Athletic Federation, the national governing body for athletics in Russia. The suspension saw many of the top world ranked athletes from Russia absent during the 2016 Olympic Games (BBC Sport, 2016). Of those 22 medals earned by the Canadian Olympic Team, athletics contributed six medals.
Athletics Canada (AC) is the National Sport Organization (NSO) that governs all athletics, cross-country, and road running for both able and para-athletes in Canada (Athletics Canada, 2017). AC was established in 1884 as the Canadian Amateur Athletics Association and rebranded to AC in 1991. Since its’ inception, AC has sent a national team to 23 Summer Olympic Games, missing only the inaugural 1896 Summer Olympics and the boycotted 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. Canada made its debut at the 1900 Paris Summer Olympics (Thompson & Wright, 2012). Athletics Ontario (AO), the Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) that governs all the same areas, works on behalf of AC to carry out all services and programming in the province. Prior to 1974, the province of Ontario was divided into three different governing bodies, Southwestern, Northwestern, and Central. However, there was an interest in establishing a more efficient means of developing athletics in Ontario while maintaining a system which would still enable regions to have a voice regarding major decisions in the province (Athletics Ontario, 2016). The result saw a new provincial association, composed of six newly defined regions, formed in 1974. The Ontario Track and Field Association (OTFA) became an incorporated body in October 1977. In 2008 the name was official changed from OTFA to AO.

Both AC and AO operate as not-for-profits and, in turn, rely heavily on government funding and grants to support their organization’s programming. At the national level, according to the 2012-2013 Sport Canada Contribution Report (Appendix B), AC received $5.2 million (Appendix A) in funding through the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) program, which is administered and overseen by Sport Canada (SC). Within the Department of Canadian Heritage, SC is the governmental agency that is the direct link between the federal government and its commitment to funding sport in Canada.

The SFAF funding model is based primarily on objective measurable goals which are
connected to athlete performance outcomes and organizational performance goals. The level of success and how well an organization can meet the goals they have established in consultation with SC, has a direct impact on the level of funding they receive.

At the core of this study was the relationship between AC and AO. The methodology used incorporates an organizational analysis approach and views the relationship using Agency Theory, which employs a principal-agent dyad perspective. Both elements are further discussed in the literature review. The five research sub-questions developed for this thesis lead to the fulfillment of the central purpose of this study, which was to discover if a maximum collaborative advantage is being gained through the existing relationship between AC and AO and, if not, to recommend improvements to the existing collaborative process between the two organizations.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Sport Canada – Sport Funding and Accountability Framework

As previously introduced, Sport Canada (SC) is the federal government’s main authority and source of funding for sport in Canada at a national level. The SFAF has officially been in operation since 1995/96 and was designed and constructed through consultation with sport industry and policy experts to produce an objective based funding system. SFAF is divided into summer and winter Olympic/Paralympic sport cycles and applied over a four year or quadrennial period. As such, NSOs must apply and submit the necessary documents every four years to ensure that they remain eligible for federal funding. There is a four-stage process that NSOs are required to complete to receive funding from the SFAF. Each of the four stages within the framework must be completed and include current and updated documentation every four years. (Heritage, 2019, pp. 1-3)

AC must apply through this model to ensure that their organization has the necessary funding to support their programming and operations. The four stages of the SFAF include: eligibility; assessment; funding; and accountability. Of the four stages, accountability will be reviewed in greater detail due to its relationship with the theory of Management by Objectives (MBO). The SFAF was designed on the basis of an objective based or goal-oriented funding allocation system. MBO is an organizational tool that is used by organizations to establish objectives to direct a workforce toward their desired outcomes. Within the SFAF funding program, establishing performance-based objectives is the main way in which a NSO or other organizations create their organizational plan or direction.
Eligibility

Before being considered for funding through any of the SFAF funding streams, NSOs must meet all the requirements in the eligibility application process. These streams include: Sport Support Program, the main funding stream for organization operations; Hosting Program, which supplies funding for hosting national and international events; and the Athlete Assistance Program, which is a national carding system that allocates funding directly to identified athletes. Eligibility is determined by the type of organization that is applying and since AC is a NSO, they would only be eligible for the section designated for their type of organization. Other forms of organizations that could apply for SFAF funding would include: national multisport services organizations like the Canada Games Council, Canadian Sport Centers, and Canadian organizations and international sport initiatives like not-for-profit foundations, universities, and relevant government research projects that support the Canadian Sport Policy. These different forms of organizations would then proceed through their assigned pathways within the framework to obtain the funding for their organization.

Assessment

The assessment section of the SFAF examines the scope and performance of the NSO programs across several key areas: high performance goals and achievements, sport participation and development ranging from grassroots development to high performance athletes, and organizational management, which includes internal governance, salaries and professional development. AC has programs that vary from grassroots development for athletes, ages 6-12 years, to youth and junior development for athletes ages 14-18, to Olympic and World Championship teams for athletes who are generally 18+ in age. Each assessment section builds
on the previous and is used to evaluate and determine the scope and overall purpose of the organization.

**Funding**

The level and amount of funding that a NSO will receive will be dependent on the assessment and eligibility of SFAF requirements. Winter and Summer NSOs receive funding differently due to the nature of their sport demands. Summer NSOs may only apply for funding for a maximum period of one year. Once an application for funding has been submitted, the NSO is required to submit a list of expenditures they forecast for that year. There are specific requirements in regard to what can be considered an expenditure as well as what is allowed and prohibited when applying for funding. For example, capital costs like buildings and land cannot be claimed as an expenditure. Most of the expenditures that a NSO is allowed to claim are covered in the core contribution blocks; these blocks are specific areas that are essential to the operation and function of the NSO. These core blocks include: administration; coaches salaries; professional development; national team programs; and operations/programming. Each core block has restrictions as to what can be claimed in the relevant section as well as a maximum expenditure point.

Under the expenditure requirements within the funding stage, NSOs are required to submit core contribution blocks to SC to explain how each dollar is being allocated. Core contribution blocks all have restrictions as to how much funding, in terms of a percentage of the total amount of funding awarded from the Sport Support Program, can be allocated to each block. There are also non-core blocks that an NSO can apply for if they meet the SFAF criteria. These non-core blocks are protected, meaning only under specific conditions will funding be allocated.
within that section, and the funding can only be used for the specific purpose of those funding blocks. International sport initiatives, long-term athlete development, sport participation development, and sport participation development for persons with a disability are all non-core blocks. These non-core blocks each have their own subsection within the SFAF for greater clarity due to the nature of the funding and what is required to meet these funding opportunities. Finally, there is a third support block that a NSO can apply for which allows for additional funding if certain criteria are met. These restricted non-core contribution blocks include: Heritage Sport Fund; Own the Podium; and, Team Sport. The restricted non-core contribution blocks are also protected, meaning only under specific conditions will funding be allocated for the specific purpose of those blocks. These three funding blocks are extremely difficult to apply for due to the nature of the funding and requirements needed to qualify.

Accountability

One of the main components of the SFAF application process is the accountability section. Due to the level of funding that AC receives it is required to submit a high performance strategic plan. This strategic plan outlines the NSO’s vision with defined objectives to justify their funding requests and what they wish to achieve. The final stage of the SFAF requires the NSO to design, implement and enforce an accountability policy to ensure that the funding granted to the organization is used, reported and, upon review by SC, allocated properly. Each NSO must include within their strategic plan their objectives, and what goals they intend to achieve in each funding year.

Within this section Management by Objective (MBO) is demonstrated as a NSO’s long-term strategic plan needs to have clear objectives or goals for what they wish to achieve in the
upcoming cycle. This connects goal congruence and accountability section from the SFAF, which includes elements such as contracts to the Agency Theory framework. Through further analysis this study will review the relationship between AC and AO to determine if such a process and exchange of information exists. It will further clarify if the AC and AO relationship mimics that between AC and SC.

**The Study of Collaboration**

The need for different organizations to work together to achieve a greater outcome is critical to the study of collaboration. “Partnerships, alliances, and other forms of inter-organizational collaborations are now a common part of institutional life” (Huxham & Vangen 2000). For this analysis, two non-profit sport governing bodies were reviewed to examine their collaborative relationship. Both groups have other partnerships with other sport and non-sport groups, but due to the unique relationship these two organizations share, the need for a closer review was warranted.

In order to maximize the benefit to sport and leisure organizations from partnerships, it is useful to understand more about how they work, so that strengths and weaknesses may be identified” (Babiak, 2007).

A secondary intention of this study was to provide recommendations and improvements to the collaborative sport management process in this specific case. Due to the fact that both organizations are non-profits, both have increased needs for analysis of their relationship and how it is managed. A challenge that non-profit sport organizations experience is a lack or deficiency within the area of formalized knowledge with inter-organizational relationships and how to manage those relationships. “Without a formal plan or map to guide the development of linkages, sport organizations might face managerial and organizational setbacks” (Babiak, 2007). These setbacks can lead to a mismanagement of essential inter-organizational resources both in
terms of funding and overall organizational success in achieving their desired goals.

**The Principle: Athletics Canada**

AC is responsible for all programming, strategic planning and operational elements for athletics in Canada. The founding organization was established in 1909 as the Canadian Amateur Athletics Association and since then has grown and developed into the current national governing body it is today. The current mandate according to the Sport Canada website states:

> Athletics Canada is the national sport governing body for track and field, including cross-country running and road running. Athletics Canada supports high-performance athletics excellence at the world level and provides leadership in developmental athletics” (Government of Canada; Canadian Heritage; Communications; National Sport Organizations, 2016).

From grassroots development to Olympic and international team performances, AC manages all national level components for athletics. Within their organizational structure, AC breaks down into several different sections of their organization to assist in the management of these different departments. Currently, there are 12 different provincial and territorial branches that serve as agents of AC to carry out their programming and operations; AO is one of these branches. Governance is one department within AC that comprises the Board of Directors and several subcommittees that oversee the operational elements of the organization. Athlete committee, strategic planning, discipline and appeals are all subgroups that are covered under governance.

The next department is staff, which encompasses a number of sub-groups with a majority of the AC working staff being covered in this section. Domestic Programs; coaching club services, school programming and technical services has five employees that service this element. Finance and Corporate has four employees with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial
Officer and their major gifts officer working within this department. The National Team/High Performance department handles the active sport element of AC and includes national team coaches, sports medicine, High Performance Hub managers and long term Olympic Development. Of the 24 employees within this department there are many groups that work directly with their 12 PSO branch counterparts to ensure the implementation of national team programming. The final department is Public Relations and Corporate Services which has the Chief Operations Officer and four other employees to handle media and sport information duties.

**The Agent: Athletics Ontario**

AO is the provincial governing body for athletics within the province of Ontario. The organization was incorporated in 1977 as the Ontario Track and Field Association (Athletics Ontario, 2016). Since 1977, the organization has rebranded to the current name Athletics Ontario. Much like AC, AO has a formal corporate structure to manage the organization but fewer paid employees due to the size and capacity of the organization. An executive director is employed by AO to oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization with two full time paid employees and several different part time and contract based employees.

The main objectives of Athletics Ontario are:

[to] promote and encourage participation from the grassroots level through to the very highest level of proficiency, assist coaches, officials and club executives in fulfilling their goals and establish an authority which can voice the concerns and desires of members to the appropriate bodies” (Athletics Ontario, 2017).

AO has a Board of Directors with several different sub-committees that are comprised of volunteers occupying positions that allow for the implementation of programming. Executive Governance and Nominations, Human Resources, Finance, Audit and Risk Management and
Quest for Gold, and the provincial financial assistance carding system comprise the major committees with several different operational and Ad Hoc groups designed for specific objectives.

**An operational definition of Collaboration: Collaborative Advantage**

One definition for collaboration is a “cooperative arrangement in which two or more parties work jointly towards a common goal” (Business Dictionary, 2017). Within the literature, a commonly accepted understanding of collaboration is an interaction between two individuals or two organizations. Huxman and Vagen (2006) state that, “collaboration not resulting in some accrued asset is simply a waste of time” (p. 3-5). This would lead one to believe that collaboration should result in a benefit to one or both organizations and should exceed the cost of the collaboration. Since there are so many different definitions, synonyms and interpretations to explain collaboration, such as partnerships, alliances, networks and inter-organizational relationships, the need to provide an operational definition is clear.

Ian Reade’s (2010) definition from his case study on the collaborative relationship analysis between Sport Canada and the Canadian Interuniversity Sport system, the national governing body for all university sport in Canada, encompasses two key factors that are related to Agency Theory. First, he argues that “the most useful definition of collaboration includes a reference to a collaborative outcome”; (p. 25) and second, that it involves “…an interactive process whereby organizations work together to achieve some outcome that could not be achieved by the organization on its own” (Reade, 2010, p. 25). That outcome is more than a tangible result; it is an advantage gained by both organizations working with each other. The intent outcome from a collaborative relationship is achieving what is known as a collaborative
advantage. This term incorporates a synergistic argument; “to gain real advantage from collaboration, something has to be achieved that could not have been achieved by any of the organizations acting alone” (Reade, 2010, p.26). For the purpose of this study, Reade’s operational definition was used to determine if a collaborative relationship exists between AC and AO. This definition will be used to assess this relationship and identify if they are achieving a collaborative advantage.

*Private vs. public sector collaboration*

An important factor that affects the way in which we review this relationship is by recognizing the differences between the private and public sectors.

There are important differences between public and private operating environments that may affect the way organizations within these sectors create, organize and maintain relationships (Roussin Isett & Provan, 2005).

Governance and outcome factors are important differences that need to be considered when reviewing the collaborative relationships with both the public and private sectors. “The primary differences between the two is in the consideration of their outcomes” (Roussin Isett & Provan, 2005, p. 149-165). The private sector organizations normally determine whether collaboration is successful and effective based on reasonable gain or an increase to monetary value that is accrued by the organization. In non-profits, monetary gain may be important, but it is often only one among many outcomes measured to evaluate a collaborative effort.

Agency Theory is more commonly applied to private sector organizations because of the measurable outcomes from that collaboration. When it is applied to public, non-profit or government sectors, the outcome becomes less objectively measured due to the type of work these organizations undertake. An example of a collaborative outcome is the development and
implementation of new public policy. Within high performance sport, the ability to have a measurable outcome is now possible and can be quantified by the principle. Thus, the principle, in this case AC, can determine if their desired outcomes have been achieved. For example, a program designed to increase knowledge sharing between different provincial branches, if successful, would result in a positive collaborative advantage. The ability for a sport based principle to establish, measure, and define high performance outcomes allows for a non-profit sector organization to determine their collaborative advantage.

**Agency Theory**

For this analysis, Agency Theory has been chosen to review the relationship between AC and AO. Other theoretical approaches, such as institutional theory and resource dependency theory, have also been used to study collaboration. Agency Theory, however, was identified as the best approach for the study of two groups. Agency Theory is frequently applied when two entities (a dyad) work together rather than working within a network. “Relationships develop between two organizations at a time, and so the focus on dyads is not inappropriate” (Roussin Isett & Provan, 2005, p. 149-165). The collaborative relationship within Agency Theory is termed a Principal-Agent Dyad (PAD) and discussed in greater detail below.

Agency Theory applies to situations where “one or more persons (the principal) engage another person (the agent) to perform some service on their behalf which involves delegating some decision-making authority to the agent” (Jesen & Meckling, 1976, p. 308). Even though a principal has ownership and control over some aspects of the relationship with the agent, the dependency of the principal on the agent increases the importance of goal congruence and illustrates the need for collaborative action.
Actions taken by the principal to ensure that their goals and those of the agent are aligned generally employ some form of a contract or memorandum of understanding between the two groups. The creation, implementation, and enforcement of the contract are actions that incur both human and financial costs to the principal and the agent. Those costs are termed agency costs, and when left unchecked they can reduce the collaborative advantage gained by the relationship. Reade states that “it is essential for the principal and agent to recognize the existence and impact of agency costs and to take collaborative action to minimize those costs” (2010, p. 56). At the center of this research is AC (the principle) which has a formal corporate structure for organizational operations but relies on volunteer-governed bodies, such as AO (the agent) to recruit, develop, and supply talent for AC. The relationship between the two organizations is critical to the development of both Ontario and Canadian athletic talent but also for the Canadian high-performance sport system and national team.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The five research sub-questions highlighted and discussed below are designed to determine if there was a collaborative advantage being gained by AC and AO. Each question is connected to the framework of Agency Theory.

Sub Question 1

How does Athletics Canada make the decisions that directly affect how they collaborate with agents?

The decision-making process, if formulated, is based on goal congruence and contracts. The element of contracts will be discussed further in the next research question. Goal congruency refers to the alignment of goals, interests, strategic priorities, and shared outcomes. When there is a disagreement or mismatching of these goals, goal incongruence between the principal and the agent can occur, resulting in an increase in agency costs. It is the responsibility of both the principal and the agent to work in partnership to ensure both organizations’ goals and objectives as met. “An agency problem arises where the agent acts… to the detriment of the principal while acting on behalf of the principal” (Mason and Slack, 2005, p. 50). The decision making process that is employed within the PAD being examined is critical to the success of this relationship. Goal congruence is defined as “the integration of multiple goals, either within an organizations or between multiple groups” (Business Dictionary, 2017). Congruence results when there is an alignment of goals and objectives associated with the overarching mission of
both organizations.

A key element of AC’s decision-making process that was reviewed is their long-term development plan in relation to their organizational goals and objectives. MBO is an organizational tool that is used to establish objectives to direct an organization towards their desired outcomes.

[MBO is a] management system in which the objectives of an organization are agreed upon so that the managers and employees understand a common way forward. MBO aims to serve as a basis for (A) greater efficiency through systematic procedures, (B) greater employee motivation and commitment through participation in the planning process, and (C) planning for results instead of planning just for work. In MBO practice, specific objectives are determined jointly by managers and their subordinates, progress toward agreed-upon objectives is periodically reviewed, end results are evaluated, and rewards are allocated on the basis of the progress (Business Dictionary, 2017).

AC’s decision-making process is tied to their long-term goals because of the way in which their funding structure is organized. Long-term would be considered the timeframe associated with their eight year strategic plan. The SFAF, under the subsection pertaining to funding, requires measurable and objective goals as a funding justification method for the allocation of federal financial support.

The decision-making process used by AC will always be aligned with their funding model. In relation to their PAD with AO, AC will ensure that the goals for their organization, the way in which they are established and their relationship with AO, will always be managed in a fashion that benefits the principal’s organization.

Sub Question 2

How congruent are the goals of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario?
The degree to which goal congruence is evaluated within the context of this PAD is based on the perceived level of collaboration. The perceived level of collaborative understanding that is established in performance based outcomes, organizational direction and the process to which the goals and objectives are carried out, is directly tied to the way in which goals are established and communicated.

The development of athletic talent for both national and international competitions, increased grassroots participation and the development of strategic priorities, all need to be aligned and fit with the goals of both organizations. However, if there is no process to determine if these goals have been achieved, it is increasingly difficult to measure their effectiveness, determine cost and conclude who is to be held accountable for those successes and failures.

Within agency theory, the need for established goals and contracts is critical to the success of the PAD and determining the level of collaborative advantage from that dyad. Due to the nature of this particular PAD, AC has limited options in their selection of a desired agent. There is only one PSO within Ontario that oversees all aspects of athletics in the province. This, in turn, requires AC to work in greater collaboration with AO in developing common contractual goals and objectives to ensure organizational success. If AC had the opportunity to select from a variety of agents, a more unilateral decision-making process could be established and they could rely less on collaboration. However, due to the nature of the current relationship, a more balanced negotiation and input process is required to ensure a desirable outcome.

The engagement between the principal and the agent is a contract, but the need for and the creation of a more formulated contract is important. Regardless if both organizations have the same or similar goals, the need for a formal written understanding, such as a contract or memorandum of understanding, is necessary to determine if these goals are congruent or not.
The partnership between the principal and the agent should be directed by a contract that outlines the duties and tasks that are expected to be carried out. As well, the contract outlines the way in which both organizations will be compensated (Mason and Slack, 2005). The two kinds of contracts that can be employed differ between one having behaviour as the main driver of how tasks are to be completed and the other centering on outcomes as the way in which objectives are to be completed.

A behaviour-oriented contract focuses specifically on the outcomes of the agent and what behaviours (tasks) will be undertaken by the agent. An example of this could be AO wanting to increase the number of coaches within the province. This is a long-term goal for AC, but the way in which AO develops and carries out this goal would be more dependent and autonomous. The use of influence by the principal to achieve their goal, allows for the agent to create their own process for achieving their task. An outcome-oriented contract focuses specifically on the outcomes of the agent with less concern for the behaviours of the agent, leading to the outcome.

Within the context of this analysis, both organizations share a similar desired outcome in terms of developing talent, producing performance based results and organizational growth, so the behaviour in achieving those goals should be similar. However, in high performance amateur sport, specifically within a non-profit funding model, behaviours leading to successful outcomes such as athlete development is a subject for debate. This may be due to the fact that it can be difficult to define what behaviours are appropriate. Each organization may determine their own way for developing talent but the need for a formalized congruency is required if both groups are attempting to achieve similar goals.

Therefore, without a formalized congruency AC may find it difficult, if not impossible, to
determine if AO is fulfilling their duties even if they are aware of their behaviours. Knowing what your agent is doing is important, but if there is insufficient information on the agent behaviour an outcome contract based on measurable outcomes would be a more logical option.

**Incentives and Sanctions**

When dealing with goal congruence, while ensuring that the goals of the principal are achieved within the PAD, incentives and sanctions are an important element to include within the contract. If the incentives outlined by the principal are well constructed and appropriate, the agent should be motivated to work towards those desired collaborative outcomes. However, incentives are a form of agency cost (to be described in detail later) and the principal must ensure the motivation created by the incentive is offset by the desired outcome. Through this collaboration, the gain should be an outcome that benefits both organizations.

One element that is unique to this analysis is that both organizations with this particular PAD operate within a non-profit sport environment. Since board governance is the generally accepted mode of operation, compensation or financial incentives may be the main reward. Sanctions that could be employed by the principal will need to be reviewed as they may also be tied to financial compensation. Financial compensation as a form of incentive does not always result in either organization gaining an individual benefit but does demonstrate that a reward is available for achieving collaborative outcomes.

The other element, sanctions, is designed in such a way that in the event the agent does not meet the contractual obligations, the principal can place a sanction on that organization or penalize them in some way. With the establishment of specific measurable outcomes that are clearly communicated, failure to fulfill a stated goal or objective that would have allowed the
principle to achieve their outcome is tied to MBO. AC has a responsibility for fulfilling the required objectives outlined in their contract with SFAF and it uses the agent to carry out those objectives on a provincial level.

Several different methods that could be employed include: renewing the compensation to the agent; eliminating certain privileges; or replacing the agent. Within the context of this specific PAD, sanctions that are based on monetary penalties could harm the principle, since AO is the only PSO for athletics in Ontario. However, it is possible to have operationally defined sanctions outlined within the PAD contract.

**Sub Question 3**

*How does the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) contract contribute to the collaboration between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario?*

*Within agency theory there are goals, contracts and associated incentives. However, without the ability to oversee how those contractual objectives are being carried out, the need for monitoring becomes important. The communication process, including the exchange of information and the need for oversight by the principal, is employed to ensure that collaborative goals are achieved. Monitoring can be used as a tool by the principal to review the process and progress of those shared goals. Within the study of inter-organizational relationship research, collaborative relationship success is tied to information exchange between the principal and the agent.*

*For successful monitoring to take place, the type of contract would need to be determined and the expectations outlined as goals and associated incentives be clearly communicated. If a behaviour-oriented contract is agreed upon, then a report of what tasks would be completed by the agent would be communicated. If an outcome-oriented contract is employed, the report*
would focus on expected accomplishments.

An issue arises when monitoring is needed for organizational success. Agency theory states that a knowledge gap can occur when the goals of the principal are not aligned with those of the agent or there is a communication breakdown on how the goals are to be completed. Since the principal cannot know everything that the agent is doing and the agent has a degree of organizational autonomy, a separation or gap referred to as information asymmetry, can be a source of concern. This knowledge gap creates the need for monitoring by the principal. The establishment of a communication pathway or monitoring system between the two organizations may result in an increase in time, planning, and human involvement and in turn increase agency costs.

The relationship between AC and Sport Canada through the SFAF has built in monitoring elements. This is done to ensure that the agreed upon objective set out by AC are achieved. With AC relying on AO to carry out their desired objectives, the need for AC to monitor AO and their progress is critical to achieving organizational and collaborative success.

To protect the principal’s interests, attempts must be made to reduce the possibility that the agent will misbehave. In this attempt [monitoring], costs are incurred. These costs are called agency costs (Barny and Hesterly, 1996, p. 118). In collaborative relationships, monitoring costs are incurred by both the principal and the agent. This element can affect the result, which is to maximize the collaborative advantage of the PAD.

**Sub Question 4**

*How do Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario monitor their relationship?*

Within any organizational relationship that requires collaboration, there are costs
associated with maintaining that relationship writes Shapiro. “All agency relationships experience agency costs” (2005, p. 281). Those costs can include incentives; agent self-interest; unethical behavior; monitoring and sanctions that can affect the overall success of the relationship. Agency costs as defined within Agency Theory are the human and financial costs incurred in the creation, implementation, and enforcement of a contract between the principal and the agent (Reade, 2010, p. 55).

For this organizational analysis, agency costs were critical to determining the successfullness of the collaborative relationship between AC and AO. The need to identify what costs produced a positive return and which ones detracted from achieving a collaborative advantage was necessary to answer the central research question. The costs associated must be evaluated to ensure that those costs do not put the collaborative advantage at a loss. Within the context of the PAD, both parties need to be aware of the cost connected with that relationship. The way in which the monitoring of the relationship takes place is important in determining the agency cost associated with that monitoring.

**Sub Question 5**

*How are the agency costs in the relationship between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario managed?*

The way in which the costs are managed required analysis of the strategies developed by both parties to address the costs associated with the collaborative relationship. Assessing the management of those costs will lead to a conclusion about how well AC and AO manage their relationship and if they are maximizing their collaborative advantage by being in a PAD.

The five sub-research questions developed for this thesis from the Agency Theory
framework provide the structure for the thesis to follow. The answers to the research questions support the main purpose of this analysis and the central research question: Does the relationship between AC and AO result in a maximum collaborative advantage?

Data Collection

For this organizational analysis, three different data collection methods were employed to gather documents and information pertaining to the PAD between AC and AO. Data collection was separated into three sections: personal narrative; document review; and personal interviews. There was a degree of overlap with the three different forms of data collection, but the breadth allowed for greater analysis and a more robust conclusion. Prior to any data collection involving human subject, clearance from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board was obtained.

Section one – Personal Narrative

A personal narrative was included in the data collection due to the researcher’s personal experience with both organizations under review. As a major stakeholder within the sport, I have experience from different perspectives and have held different formal positions which add to the conversation and analysis. As an athlete, coach, official and race director, I have had the opportunity to train, coach and work with many different individuals in the sport and learn about their personal interactions with both AC and AO.

Section two – Document Review

Document review of both AC and AO was employed to determine what, if any, formal or written understanding between the two organizations exists. Long-term development models; strategic plans; mission statements; formal contracts and other related documents were reviewed
to assess if a collaborative relationship is taking place. Through formal requests, documents that are not publicly accessible on either organization’s websites were requested for document review. As well, during the interview process other important documents identified and cited by the interviewees were evaluated.

Documents were selected and reviewed based on the following criteria:

1. Their relevance to the SFAF;
2. Connectedness to the relationship management of AC and AO;
3. Documents written within the last quadrennial cycle;
4. Accessibility.

Section three – Personal Interviews

The intended purpose of the interviews ensured the interviewees had ample opportunity to comment and expand on information related to the research questions from their own personal and professional perspectives. Individuals selected for interviews were purposefully chosen based on their knowledge, position and connection to the two organizations. For this section five key actors were not only selected based on their current positions within their respective organizations, but also due to the importance their positions play in the management of the PAD.

The current Executive Director of AO, Director of AO, AO NextGen Manager, AC Chief Executive Officer, and the AC Director of Finance were all identified as potential candidates for interviews as they all hold (or have held) key positions within their organizations that pertain to the development and administration of the relationship between AC and AO.

By selecting the aforementioned individuals, it was hoped the knowledge gaps previously identified involving both AC and AO will be addressed thereby aiding the organizational analysis. Interviews were conducted by either phone or E-mail correspondence to allow for interviewee and interviewer convenience. Interviews were recorded, with
permission, and transcribed to provide attributable evidence of the conversations for reference. Names and positions of the interview individuals remained open to aid in the common knowledge sharing process between the two organizations.

First contact with an interviewee was made with an electronic copy of the Letter of Information outlining the scope of the research project and the process in which the interview will take place. Upon accepting the Letter of Information, the interviewee would be sent an electronic copy of the Letter of Consent that required the interviewee to sign and return the document electronically. After the Letter of Consent was received a time and date was established for the one hour interview. Prior to the interview, verbal consent was sought to ensure the interviewee understood the process for the interview. Following the phone interview the digital recording of the interview was transcribed and sent to the interviewee for review. A 14 working day period was provided to the interviewee to review, edit, change or remove any items from the transcript prior to retuning their transcript.

**Member Checking**

During the interview phase of the data collection process the use of member checking, or Interviewee Transcript Review, was employed to increase the credibility of this qualitative research tool. There are several different forms of member checks that could have been used. Generally, the term refers to the interviewee having the opportunity to review, comment, and/or add corrections to their submissions. The review could either be of their own interview, receiving a copy of the unpublished findings or viewing a draft copy of the research report. All interviewees were provided a copy of their transcript after their interview for review.
[The] quality, validity, and credibility in qualitative research often recommend(s) member checks, such as sending respondents their transcript for review, as one of the recommended procedures to confirm or enhance credibility in qualitative research. (Lo, 2014, p. 61).

Since this research thesis relied on the submission of information from key individuals from both AC and AO, the need for their names and positions to remain public was important. The importance and seniority they held or currently hold within their organizations allowed for information submitted to be interpreted as credible.

Two important elements that are connected with the use of member checks and central to the success of interviews is their representation and participation. Both these elements within the research process increase the quality, validity, and credibility of the submissions. In terms of representation, researchers have used the term transactional validity as a way to describe the process of improving representational aspects of research validity.

Transactional validity in qualitative research [is] an interactive process between the researcher, the researched, and the collected data that is aimed at achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy and consensus by means of revisiting facts, feelings, experiences, and values or beliefs collected and interpreted (Cho & Trent 2006, p. 321).

The other element, participation, refers to the ongoing involvement of respondents through multiple contacts with the researchers. For this thesis, the interviewees had an opportunity following their interview to review their submission. In the research process this required the active participation of the participants even after the interview. Member checks allowed for greater interaction between the researcher and the participants because they were both provided the opportunity to discuss and review the information submitted.

Member checks are also suitable for researchers who view the research process as participatory, consisting of building participant capacity, collaboration, and mutual learning, or for action research in which the aim of the research is to utilize findings to inform social action. Here the act of engaging in dialogue and
providing feedback regarding the researchers’ initial qualitative findings increases participant ownership over the data to utilize for social change (Kornbluh, 2015).

The use of member checking within this specific research project was designed to provide an opportunity to understand and determine what the interviewee intended to do through their actions. As well, it gave them the ability to correct errors, modify statements, and challenge what may have been recorded or interpreted incorrectly. Member checking also provided the interviewee an opportunity to volunteer additional information which may be stimulated by the review process. Importantly, member checking provides the interviewee the opportunity to assess the adequacy of data as well as to confirm particular aspects of the data.

**Data Analysis**

Upon collection of all desired data sets, the information was reviewed and applied to each relevant research question. The research questions aided in providing a framework for connecting the interviews and collected documents for analysis. Due to the collection of this information a greater depth of analysis was possible, thus providing the researcher a clearer perspective to determine whether or not there is a collaborative relationship occurring between AC and AO.

**Limitations**

Due to the scope of this project there are several different limitations that have been identified. Firstly, both AC and AO are large non-profit organizations with staff that are spread across both the province and the country. This caused difficulty in document retrieval and scheduling interviews. Secondly, there are several major international athletic events happening throughout the year and the availability of the previously identified interviewees was limited due...
to their work duties and responsibilities. Lastly, some information that was shared by the interviewees was sensitive, confidential or unavailable for review due to the nature of the information.

**Delimitations**

For this research study, several factors were considered due to the nature of this project. Firstly, a single case study design was selected to limit the amount of information assessed to allow for a stronger comparison between AC and AO. The intention of this was to allow for greater analysis and to focus of the relationship between the two organizations. Secondly, the individuals identified were specifically selected due to the positions they hold or have held within their respective organizations. Third, the data collection methods chosen were selected to focus the information collected for analysis and review. Lastly, all interview interactions were recorded and transcribed with each interviewee’s name, position, and contributions remaining open and not redacted. However, the interviewee did have the ability to review their contributions prior to inclusion to ensure all information provided is clear and concise. Further, they were provided with an opportunity to modify the transcript to allow for changes to their submissions with the ability to add, revise or retract any information they feel is important or sensitive to this study.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The following section will address the five research sub-questions and the relevant information that was connected to each question as responded to by the interviewees. Document analysis of both AC and AO strategic plans was conducted as part of the data analysis. The purpose of the five research sub-questions was to answer the central research question: Is the relationship between AC and AO resulting in a maximum collaborative advantage?

The results section incorporates both interviewee responses and document analysis review as it pertains to each sub-research question. For ease of reading, the five sub-research questions have been repeated at the beginning of each section. Some sub-questions may have additional questions associated with them during the interview process and are included with the associated sub-question. As noted earlier, the names and organizations associated with the individuals who were interviewed will be connected to their responses. The information provided by the interviewee has been reviewed by that individual and used within the context of each sub-question. None of the interviewee’s requested a follow up after their transcript was returned to them for review.

Only five of the six identified interviewees were able to be contacted for interviews. One of the potential interview candidates could not be reached even after several attempts were made. Of the five interviewees, one of the participant’s information did not connect well to the research questions, as their position within their respective organizations did not allow them access to knowledge relevant to this study. Within Appendix D – Interview Contribution Review, AC East Hub Lead Molly Killingbeck, was not able to provide information that related to the research
interview questions. This was due to the fact that her position, although is connected to collaboration between AC and AO, is an outcome based role and not one that deals with the organizational relationship between AC and AO.

Sub Question 1

How does Athletics Canada make the decisions that directly affect how they collaborate with agents?

Decision-making in Athletics Canada,

Athletics Canada has both a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a Board of Directors (BOD). The BOD is chaired by Bill MacMackin, who oversees and directs the board with overall direction for the organization. At the time of the interviews AC was in the process of hiring a new CEO so the Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mathieu Gentes was the primary contact for interviewing.

Essentially, I oversee, lead, and help implement a lot of the business relationship side of the organization. Usually I tell people that I oversee everything that’s not sport performance related, so marketing, sponsorship relationships with funding partners, communications, events that kind of stuff. (Gentes AC)

Within that position, the COO also is connected to the strategic decision making processes that AC uses when developing their new long term strategic plan. Currently, AC is still using the 2013-2020 plan that is going to be reviewed and revised for 2020-2028. When asked how AC makes a decision that directly affects collaboration, MacMackin and Gentes had similar perspectives.

At the end of the day I think the keyword is collaboration. It’s important to note that that Provincial organizations are member branches, and the athletes, coaches, officials and everyone else is an associate of AC, so we really have the 10 members, and any decision that we take that would have a direct impact on AC
business or AO themselves must be done collaboratively and with consultation. However, to be quite honest, because of the way we’re setup there’s not a lot of decisions that we would take on a day to day basis that would have any impact on the end user in Ontario. It is within AO’s jurisdiction to deliver programming and to support the clubs and to do other good things. We’re here to support the branches and AO, to help them advance their goals and reach their objectives. (Gentes AC)

Our rules and our existence are really creatures of the provinces. The provinces are our shareholders, and they have a voting impact on our organization that’s proportional to two measures, the population of the province and the total membership they have in our sport. We have a strategic plan that’s been built in conjunction with the provinces. We have a lot of collaboration and discussions with them, and do things together as much as we can. (MacMackin AC)

What are AC’s or AO’s top priorities and how are they established?

The priorities that AC has established are outlined in their current strategic plan and will be reviewed later. During the interview, both Gentes and MacMackin stated that there are three key pillars to AC’s priorities: performance; positive experience; and participation.

Among the three guiding principles that lead our strategic plan, one is the whole performance piece. That’s putting athletes on podiums at the World Championships, Olympics, Paralympics, right down to U20s. The second pillar is the positive experience element, which is really about ensuring that people are participating in the sport in a safe and healthy manner. From a policy perspective you’re seeing a lot of this out there right now with the whole safe sport initiatives. AC is providing a framework for participants to operate in a safe, healthy and positive fashion. Our doing so also ensures that people see the Athletics Canada brand in a positive manner, that they like going to Athletics Canada events, and think they have value and they’re getting their money’s worth. The third of what we call the three Ps is participation, and that’s where we want to get a lot of people trying the sport from the grassroots all the way up, as athletics is a lifelong sport. We want to get kids into the sport at a very young age doing Run Jump Throw Wheel right up to working with the Canadian masters to ensure that we’ve got masters competing in a sport as well and everything in between. (Gentes AC)

AC has the National Team management and high performance program for the Olympics stream. This area is one section of their plan that is solely connected to only AC. Within their
strategic plan they also employ a three pillar system that outlines their three main priorities.

Participation, performance and positive experience each have several different objectives.

When you look at the three pillars of our strategic plan, one deals with participation and one with performance. The latter involves high performance, mostly the national team program, coaching development, and such things, in order to support high performance athletics in the country and create a podium pathway. The third pillar is what we call performance positive experiences, which is really quality business management. We want to assure that we are doing the things we do well, that we’re engaging with our members, that we have good business practices. When you look across these three pillars, a lot of what we do on a national team and high performance basis we get to set the direction for ourselves, and we have staff and funding from Own The Podium. But we still consult with the provinces, and try to align with their programs, albeit with a fair degree of autonomy to do so. On a participation basis, we have less because a lot of those programs are really oriented towards getting more youth involved, interacting with schools, interacting with university programs, different things that might build the strength of and feed kids into programs. That’s much more the work done by the provinces. We have less power there, and more of a support function. Then obviously on the positive experience side, that’s all within our control of all the stuff we do. So it’s basically running our business effectively and making sure our athletes and coaches are happy and so forth. (MacMackin AC)

What is the decision making process that AC or AO employ when establishing long term objectives and/or goals that incorporate PSOs (Provincial Sport Organizations) or AC?

The decision making process that AC employs is connected to their three strategic pillars when establishing goals and objectives. The incorporation of PSOs is an important element of this process, as the PSOs play a critical role in AC being able to achieve some of their non-national team and performance goals.

Our strategic plan or our Vision 2020 plan, the one that we’re currently operating under, was built with the PSOs, and in terms of what the priorities are across Canada. Obviously we have some priorities, and when it comes to AC proper, a big part is the performance aspect. Obviously the branches play a role in getting the local club coaches to develop athletes to get to that point. But really, when it comes to the performance standpoint, we’re talking about the AC head coach and performance director. That’s the pillar where I would say AC is more autonomous, where we have a bigger chunk of the work to do. However, we recognize that in the other two pillars participation, and positive experience, they
were crafted with input and feedback from our membership and branches. We wanted to outline this in talking about grassroots programming. Well, the PSO probably owns 80 percent of that, whereas AC can really only put in 20 percent in terms of getting the outcome that we want. When we talk about High Performance the percentages probably flip, but at the same time if the branches are not doing their work even at the High Performance level. If Ontario is not churning out athletes, then we’ve got nothing to work with. Thus, it’s not that one side is more important than the other. In terms of actual delivery, in some cases it’s more on the PSO side and sometimes it’s more on the NSO side. (Gentes AC)

Our strategic plan was developed by 2013-2014, and was meant to take us to 2020. It was developed through a committee structure that involved provincial associations, so there were representatives of the provinces, staff, our Board and others. It was a complicated process that laid out the big goals we were trying to accomplish. Each year we take a look at how are we doing? What are the particular actions we need to focus on over the next year to two? We present those at our annual meetings in the fall or spring, and we get feedback upon which we act. On the high performance side, where we’re required to develop a very comprehensive high performance plan, every year it’s sort of looking down towards the end of the quad. (MacMackin AC)

When asked if the decision making process was congruent with all PSOs the interviewees responded differently. MacMackin responded that, yes, the process of making decisions with all PSOs was the same but Gentes said it was not. When reviewing the interviewees’ responses the differences occurred from an operational standpoint.

One of the ways that we used to try to implement things - this was probably earlier in my tenure and from which we’ve learned - is called the template slash cookie cutter-approach. We would try to implement X-Y-Z in Ontario the same way that we would try to implement the same thing in New Brunswick, the same way we tried to implement it in Quebec. However, every PSO has different realities, whether it’s geography, resources, finances, people or perspectives. Look at Ontario; you can get in a car and Windsor and drive for 12 hours and you’re still in Ontario. Geographically that makes getting people to events much harder when it comes to championships than if you’re talking about New Brunswick where you know that a two hours you’ve covered the whole province. There are a lot of differences like that, so we now work very differently with each PSO. The actual priorities in each PSO are different too, so we really listen to how Athletics Canada can help PSOs achieve their goals and how do we help them move the sport forward in that jurisdiction. How we work in Ontario and what we work on in Ontario will thus be different from how and what we work on in Quebec, Nova Scotia and so on. So the answer to the question is definitely no. (Gentes AC)
In terms of our case we’re responsible to the provincial heads, so the president and chair would come to our meetings and they would vote on behalf of Athletics Ontario. They’d need to be there with the endorsement of their board and as part of their role to represent Ontario’s interests, questions and concerns. They would vote on those things and other related matters. (MacMackin AC)

_Do PSOs have an active role in the planning of AC’s priorities?_

With the PSOs all playing an important role in the decision making process with AC, it can be concluded that the PSOs do have an active role when it comes to strategic priorities that incorporate both AC and PSOs like AO. It should also be mentioned that currently, AC is going through the exercise of developing a new long term strategic plan and that all PSOs across the country are being consulted as a way to include their input.

**Decision-making in Athletics Ontario.**

From the perspective of AO, the decision making process is very similar to that of AC in that they have a CEO Paul Osland and a BOD which was chaired by Lisa Ferdinand. The day to day operations are handled by the CEO, but due to the size and scope of the organization the BOD works closely with the CEO in developing long term goals and through committees to develop operational plans for AO.

The actual decision being made determines whether it’s a governance one or an operational one. If it’s an operational decision then I would work with Athletics Canada to make the decisions and if it’s on a specific subject I would leverage subject matter experts within my own team, depending whether technical subject matter expertise or just operational expertise is required. If its governance related then I might have to go back to the Athletics Ontario board and review with the board what the decision is and get approval. In other words, we’re essentially making operational decisions with the help of our staff, while more strategic and governance related ones involve me working with the board to get board approval of the decision. (Osland AO)

In terms of AO’s top priorities, their long term strategic plan is much more comprehensive than the current AC plan. However, it must be acknowledged that the current
First of all we typically build a four year strategic plan with the board, so the Athletics Ontario board works with the CEO of the organization to develop a strategic plan and determine the priorities that we want the organization focused on. Essentially the four pillars of our strategy plan are sport development, participation, competitions and infrastructure. Under sport development we’re looking at athlete development, coaching development, and official’s development. Under participation, our priorities are developing our masters’ athletes. I’m looking at our road trail and other new athletic events, as well as non-competitive participation and underrepresented groups. Under competitions there are three major areas of focus. First and foremost hosting is excellent Provincial championships for all age groups. Also important are developing elite competitions within Ontario, developing our high performance athletes, and finally ensuring that we’re sanctioning events in Ontario that are safe and professionally run through effective organizations. Under infrastructure, a major area of challenges for athletics around Ontario is facilities. Finally, financial stability underpins all of this, and ensuring this is foundational to AO’s leadership, governance, communication, and culture. (Osland AO)

The decision making process that is employed by AC is directly connected to their mission and vision statements said Lisa Ferdinand, the former Chair of the AO BOD.

Knowing full well that there’s quite a bit of regional diversity from province to province, when we would create new strategic priorities, one of the things that we had the luxury of doing was making sure that we spoke to a lot of what Athletics Canada was trying to do. Of course we’re not a national program, so there are aspects of their programs that require the provinces to take responsibility, which we’ve done. High performance for us is not at the national level, we realize that we cannot provide services the national team coaches might want and what we can do is provide for our athletes the opportunity to participate on Ontario teams in an environment where athletes will want to continue and thrive and perhaps move into the national system. We have thus aligned our programs and our strategic plans for the cycle we’re in right now to ensure that we are dovetailing with the national program, particularly on the competition side. (Ferdinand AO)
CEO Osland had a similar view about AO’s responsibility to the sport within the province of Ontario. Both the CEO and former chair viewed the decision-making process as one that is specific to their own organization.

First and foremost you need to understand that the role of Athletics Ontario is to be the provincial sport organization for athletics in the Province of Ontario. Our mission and mandate are what’s most important, our mission being to promote the sport of athletics in Ontario and contribute to the health and wellness of all participants and to long term athlete-centered development. Our vision is that athletics is the sport of choice in the Province of Ontario. Everything that we are looking at from a long-term strategic perspective has to further our vision and mission of moving the sport forward. (Osland AO)

The question about whether AO’s decision-making process was congruent with other PSOs’ was intended more for AC, but in was put to CEO Osland since his role requires him to work closely with AC in establishing long-term goals. The CEO answered the question in the affirmative.

I would say it’s fairly congruent. The challenge you have is that across the country there’s a big difference between the Province of Ontario and the Province of Newfoundland or PEI or Nunavut or the Northwest Territories in terms of the size and scope of what they’re trying to achieve. Some of them are just trying to get some participation going, to get some people participating in athletics or adopting an active and healthy lifestyle. Ontario is quite a bit more focused on high performance than smaller provinces, but the provinces of B.C., Quebec and Ontario are very much aligned because of our size and the scope of what we cover. (Osland AO)

When asked if the PSOs have an active role in the planning of AC’s priorities, Osland responded that in the past this was not the case but that now the PSOs are much more involved.

In comparison to the past, there’s a lot more synergy that’s starting to happen. This comes back to the kind of role of the national sport organization versus that of the provincial sports organization, and us accepting our role. Looking at it from the perspective of Athletics Canada, which is all about high performance, the province is all about developing the environment to ensure that high performance can be identified and developed. (Osland AO)

Ferdinand echoed those remarks in that AO, the other PSOs, and AC do work
collaboratively when there is an opportunity to do so. Some of the national team high performance priorities are not connected to AO, however.

That is actually an excellent question because there is that sense that both AC and AO is a service provider to athletes. We just went through a cycle of planning for AC at the last AGM. We meet twice a year, all the branches, provinces and Athletics Canada, and during our last session which was last December we did go through a planning session. A lot of what AC will focus on is driven by the requirements of the Canadian Olympic Association, the Federal Government and Sport Canada, so they have requirements above and beyond what we can demand or ask of them. But for the most part we do play a role in determining the things that they need to work on, or that we as a group need to work on. Getting back to your initial question about priorities, AC does give us an opportunity to provide our input into what focuses should be and what the branches need from the national level in order to help us move through various challenges we might have, recognizing again that they’re not the same from province to province. (Ferdinand AO)

**Summary of Sub Question 1**

The decision making process of AC is one that involves all PSO members within Canada. They are referred to as Branches and each Branch has a voice on the AC BOD. The BOD’s work with the different PSO Branches to establish strategic priorities and direction on matters that directly relate to the PSOs. The theme of collaboration is inherent in the approach that AC uses when developing and implementing strategic decisions that involve the PSOs like AO.

**Sub Question 2**

*How congruent are the goals of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario?*

During the interview phase of the data collection, all interviewees commented that they felt that there was a high degree of congruence between the goals of AO and AC. The main difference that was noted was the wording of the goals and objectives. However, the overall interpretation of goal congruence remained very high.

I think we’re on a continuum. I mean we start out with our goals and it feeds into
theirs. We’re focused, for example, on our athlete development and funding for athletes, and they’re focused on providing and increasing funding for their team. (Ferdinand AO)

I would say they’re actually very good. I mentioned when we when we built our current version of our strategic plan it was done in hand in hand, hand in glove with the provincial branches with the expectation that provincially they’re rolling those same plans out at provincial level. (Gentes AC)

I’d suggest that in their intent they’re quite congruent. I’ve reviewed strategic plans for most provinces, and found, by looking at the intent of what they’re trying to do that they’re quite complementary. They may word their plans differently. They may organize the information in their plans differently, but generally the shared intent is to continue to grow the grassroots levels of support of the sport, whether for athletes, coaches or officials, and also to support high performance and positive experience. Overall, there is quite a good congruence between the two organizations and the other provinces. (MacMackin AC)

I think we’re extremely congruent, but that’s partially a reflection of our high performance focus in Ontario, and the understanding that Athletics Canada is not our watchdog; they are a partner. I treat them very much as a partner and leverage them as much as I can, so I would say we’re very congruent with their goals. When I’m talking with AC and they’re telling me about their goal of supporting the top 60 to 80 athletes across the country, I’m in total agreement with them and I’m looking at the next level underneath them and how I can provide the environment and infrastructure to enable us to get more and more of those 60 to 80 athletes from Ontario. So we’re very much in alignment, and probably the closest province to be so. (Osland AO)

*Does each organization individually establish their own objectives and goals?*

This follow-up question was asked with the intention of determining the process by which goals and objectives were established. As both organizations are autonomous, they are not required to develop and coordinate the goals and objectives that are tied to their strategic plans. But, as noted in the interviewee responses, the theme of congruence was highlighted by all interviewees as a critical component of their goals and objectives. As each organization has their own BOD, a main task was to establish their own goals and objectives. This process, however, was done in consultation with each other. AO and other PSOs in Canada work with AC when developing AC’s strategic priorities connected to the PSOs. When AO develops and establishes
their own goals and objectives, they do so because they want to ensure alignment with AC on common goals and objectives.

Participation was one element that both organizations included as key pillars of their strategic plans. Increasing membership was the main objective within that pillar but each organization had their own interpretation of what that meant. Competition and performance had similar goals and objectives in terms of increasing the number of coaches, officials and athletes and creating a positive experience for them. Within the AO plan, elite competition was noted as an objective that would have a strong connection to AC. However, the core theme for AC in terms of their performance pillar was more directed toward a national team focus.

The base of the AO plan incorporated a foundational platform based on leadership. A specific goal within leadership was increased communication and the use of social media. This was also mentioned in the AC plan under positive experience and included both internal and external communication strategies. Both organizations also highlighted the need for effective policy and governance as goals that were connected to positive experience for AC and leadership for AO.

**Summary of Sub Question 2**

All interviewees commented that they felt that there was a high degree of congruency between AC and AO in relation to goal congruency. The establishment of common or shared goals and objectives is evident in the process in which both AO and AC undertake when creating their long term strategic plans.

**Sub Question 3**

*How does the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) contract contribute to the collaboration between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario?*
The SFAF document is an element that was explored in the interviews as a way to determine if AO was required in some way to work towards the goals and objectives of AC. Due to the content, only three of the interviewees had any connection to the document. Gentes, who was the primary author for AC, mentions that there is no direct link between the SFAF document and any PSO.

There’s certainly not a direct line within it, but in a lot of indirect ways we talk about participation numbers and about a lot of different areas. Then I think it leaves it up to the NSO to figure that out with the PSO. But to me, it doesn’t trace a direct line to it within the framework and all the questions that they ask and all the metrics and all the KPI. If you’re not figuring this stuff out with your PSOs, when it comes to reporting time you’re likely to be asked to explain how did these things happen or how you achieved these goals, or you’re going to get a lot of “We didn’t achieve what we wanted.” A lot of the reasons will be because of that so it’s not a straight line. However, there’s certainly an indirect impact for sure. (Gentes AC)

This question was also used as a way to establish the understanding that contracts or binding agreements on specific outcomes need to be achieved for reporting purposes. The following sub-questions were asked as a way to determine if a similar process exists between AC and AO.

*Is there currently a process similar to the SFAF that AC employs with AO?*

When this question was asked of Osland, his response was that there was no similar process between AC and AO that would mirror the SFAF.

Where we have a written document is when we start getting into high performance. (Osland AO)

Ferdinand mentioned that there is a funding agreement between AC and AO.

We do have that written document. I mean we’ve got a couple of agreements with AC. One we do have is a funding model from AC where we receive a fixed amount of money every year to pay for programming and that is a contract between us for the next three years which we signed just last year. (Ferdinand AO)

Gentes, from AC, mentioned that there is somewhat of a similar process with PSOs, but
they differ from province to province.

A couple of years ago, we started with what we call branch grants. Again looking at the summary of the priorities from each branch, we’ve tried to pick two to three per branch, and we essentially provided them with funding and resources to support their achievement. We have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AO and some of the other branches as well. The priorities identified in the agreements differ from branch to branch, so the things we support different accordingly. In one, to give the example of Quebec, we agreed to provide funding for a high performance, full time coach, because that was really important to them; and if you follow Quebec over the last 20 years, it’s obvious that our funding helped produce outstanding elite athletes. In another, Ontario for example, the priorities, what we supported, and the outcomes were very different. The needs and wants of the individual branches always guide our decisions on what to support. The answer to your question is thus yes. We’ll use KPI and all that sort of thing in terms of funding we’re providing and what we expect to see in return. (Gentes AC)

Is there a contract between AC and AO that binds AO to the objectives and/or goals established by AC?

When Gentes was asked this question, the conversation about the MOUs established that a form of contract or understanding of the responsibilities of each organization existed.

It depends on the nature of what it’s built around. When it comes to Ontario, I would say currently no there’s not. It’s not a hard number; it’s not a hard line. It’s more of a direction and allowing them to do some programming things essentially without a set finish line. If that makes any sense, until recently we used the Run Jump Throw Wheel Program where we were providing funding to pretty much all the branches, and each branch, based on population base, had to deliver X number of kids participating in athletics. It just depends on what it is, where there is a hard "Hey we’ve given you this and you need to deliver X-Y-Z, and if you don’t deliver X-Y-Z either we’re not going to give you any more or we need to have a discussion about why you’re not meeting your objective now". (Gentes AC)

Ferdinand also responded with the comment that MOUs existed and that they do connect AC and AO together with goals and objectives.

MOUs were being signed with each and every individual province, and that was because the provinces themselves had different needs from Athletics Canada. Because there were agreements with each of the provinces, you know these are the things that we’re looking to do and we need to buy into. They all surround
development programs, whether it’s development of coaches, athletes, and now there are more programs involving the development of our officials Canada wide. (Ferdinand AO)

MacMakin’s response was different from two of the other interviewees.

No there’s not, and, I don’t know of any federations that have that. If there is I would be interested in hearing about it. Essentially what we’ve done more is buying into a united strategic plan, written quite broadly to reflect athletics in Canada not just our mandate. Canada being as large and diverse as it is, even though lacking a huge population, there’s considerable difference among the provincial structures across the country. We have to allow a degree of flexibility in terms of how things get implemented in each province. (MacMackin AC)

Are there any incentives or sanctions tied to these objectives and/or goals?

A key component of Agency Theory is incentives and sanctions that are tied to contracts. As mentioned by Genets, the MOUs do not have a negative response outcome if an objective or goal is not met.

We’re not the Bank of AC so we don’t have unlimited resources ourselves. But if we’re investing in something and they’re over delivering we’re going to look at how we continue supporting them and going to find more money if we can. The opposite effect of that is if we’ve agreed that we’re giving you a certain amount, you used maybe three quarters of that, let’s say you are moving the yardsticks forward. In another case where we’re getting only a small return for our investment, there would be other hard conversations. Based on our limited resources we might want to pull funding and give it to someone else who is doing a good job. I wouldn’t call this hard sanctions, but obviously in the course of doing business we’re going to want to reward those who are doing well and if things aren’t going well we’re not going to keep throwing money at that investment and look to put it somewhere else. (Gentes AC)

It’s interesting because every sport organization is lacking funds themselves, so it’s a question of how much support can AC give. However, a couple of years ago the AC Board strategically recognized that they needed to support their top three provinces more strongly and not be looking at trying to be “fair” to all the provinces in the country. You can’t just take the pie and simply split it across all of them. This would not be effective at developing high performance athletes. Thus, Athletics Canada has started working directly with B.C., Ontario and Quebec a lot more closely from a support perspective. This can be providing us with free apparel that they get from Nike to help offset some of the teams’ costs and things like that. We can classify that as an incentive if you will, like you guys are doing well so we want to provide you with some assistance. But it’s very
loose, and the direct answer to your question is that there are no sanctions or rewards per se. (Osland AO)

MacMackin’s response to the question viewed sanctions and incentives from a different perspective. He would suggest there was less focus on contacts and more connection to organizational governance.

We’ve never really talked about it. As a matter of fact, I would argue that it’s probably the other way around. They hold more power over us some days than they acknowledge, because they can basically hire and fire the board. But there’s nothing documented or mandated about sanctions and incentives. (MacMackin AC)

*If AO is not working towards the objectives and/or goals of AC, what process or strategies exist to take corrective action?*

This question was tied to sanctions and was one that all the interviewees connected to in a similar way. The outcome of not working towards the common goals of the two organizations was viewed as one that was not tied to negative outcomes. Both Ferdinand and Osland viewed the question from a governance perspective.

I think if a branch was offside with AC then they could suspend it, but something pretty bad would have to occur, like running a betting operation or something. It would have to be fairly egregious for them to terminate AO’s membership because we do have bylaws that we have to adhere to. (Ferdinand AO)

The relationship that we have with AO is not like a contractor or contract perspective, where we would say “well you didn’t meet your objectives so we’re cutting you off.” That actually would do no good to anybody; it’s no good to us, no good to AO, and it’s no good to people in Ontario. That’s not the kind of relationship we have. It’s more like corrective measures, realignment, how can we help, what’s not working. There’s not a clear policy or process that’s outlined where we would go to page 10 of a document if things are not going well, then follow certain steps to fix them. It really involves just collaborative, open communication and how we can help you achieve your goals. If we see that you’re not going to get there, that’s okay. What else can we focus on with you guys? That’s really the theme of the relationship. There’s no prescribed course of action if things aren’t working out. (Gentes AC)
AC would go to the board of Athletics Ontario and have a conversation. That’s their only avenue really because ultimately the board is my boss. If I’m not doing my job and AO and our organization is not doing our job, then Athletics Canada can choose to work with me to see if we can work together to develop programs or do whatever is necessary to solve the problem. If, on the other hand, if they say this guy doesn’t know what he’s doing, and we don’t know how he even got this position, they could then go to the Athletics Ontario board, talk to the chair and board and say “look, you need to do something because this is a disaster. Your results are slagging because your, say, programming has gone downhill”. The AO board would have to choose to make a change. At that point, though, Athletics Canada has no authority to step in and take over a PSOs role. (Osland AO)

**Summary of Sub Question 3**

The SFAF document was found not to have any direct connection to the relationship of AC and AO. Indirect connections exist but there is no contract or governing document that directs AO to fulfill AC’s SFAF commitments. When referencing MOUs, several of the interviewees commenting that they were a tool used within the AC and AO relationship. Rewards or incentives and sanctions were also an area that was reported not to exist within this relationship. This was due to that fact that there are no traditional contracts that would outline such a system between AC and AO.

**Sub Question 4**

*How do Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario monitor their relationship?*

Both AC and AO interviewees commented that there is a process in place where formal and informal communication takes place between the two organizations. Branch calls, which are a formal communication pathway, are when all the CEOs and Chairpersons of all the different PSOs connect with the CEO and Chairperson of the AC BOD to discuss items on a monthly basis. In addition to these calls, there are two annual general meetings in which all PSOs and AC meet in a central location for a three-day meeting. Informal communication pathways exist too in
that regular phone calls, emails, texts and other communication transactions take place.

Monitoring our own strategic plan is important. We have objectives and goals for each year and for the four year Olympic cycle and we look at those annually and adjust accordingly. That same process happens with the branches with whom we get together with twice a year as well. The Semi Annual General Meeting (SAGM) and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) provide the real opportunities where we get to sit down and have that face to face check-in as well. The branches also provide annual reports, kind of a summary of their activities for the year. Those kinds of documents help them and us monitor what we’re working towards. The branch monthly call is another way, in a lot of the areas where there’s dual responsibility, we discuss updates, challenges, best practices—all those types of things. (Gentes AC)

There are a number of mechanisms for that. For example, a number of years ago, before my time but within probably the last six to eight years they established what is called a branch council of branch presidents. Essentially once a month all the branch presidents, board chairs, and CEOs or executive directors meet together on a call with the CEO and Chair of Athletics Canada to talk about issues, priorities, opportunities and so on. That’s a forum for bringing together all the branches and AC, both at the board and operational levels. That group meets twice a year face-to-face in addition to the once a month teleconference call. On top of that, we don’t currently have formal calls with Athletics Canada, but I would say that not a week goes by that I’m not talking to either the CEO or the board chair of Athletics Canada. Informal communications all the time is going on. I think that the whole world is built on relationships, and the importance of those relationships is crucial to ensuring that everything is operating well. (Osland AO)

Four out of the five interviewees responded that they have taken part in these communication practices. MacMackin commented on that at the start of this process that an action taken by him and the former CEO was to meet with all the different branches as a way to begin a new line of communication with each branch.

In the past, there wasn’t much communication, other than twice a year meetings where you sort of could feel the pulse in the room and guess whether things were positive or not and the periodic branch calls every month. A previous CEO and I also made a concerted effort to visit every province. A year ago we had multiple meetings around strategic planning during our annual meeting. We talked about different directions and things that we wanted to accomplish by working together. I think we’ve made some significant progress but it’s been all through dialogue at the two annual meetings and dialogue on our monthly calls with folks, and the stressing of effort needed by staff to consult, to pick up the phone and talk to
people more than they did in the past. That’s all been really communication based. The staff, to do their work, makes sure that they’re reaching out and collaborating. (MacMackin AC)

Ferdinand mentioned that the reports AC sends to the branches are ones about which there is an opportunity for discussion.

I think we could do a better job of monitoring our relationship, and that goes on at both levels. We provide reports, annual reports to Athletics Canada, every April. AC provides us with a reporting mechanism, and I think that the biggest thing for us, at least for me coming from the mining world, is that it’s hard to see year over year what and how things are improving on anything other than the bottom line which is funding. Has their competition department done well? Well OK, what’s the indicator? Has their Marketing Communications Group done well? OK, well what are the indicators? For a branch it’s hard to see those things, and actually have a baseline, because that comes down to how they report their information year after year. That’s not to say they don’t have strategic priorities and they haven’t been delivering reports to us. They do, don’t get me wrong. They do provide us with reports at each of our meetings to show us what their strategic priorities are and how they’re doing, which is great. However, this amounts to snapshots and I can take snapshots of something and keep saying it’s great; but when you put it all together and you have it over a year or two, then you really begin to see what the trends are and that little snapshots of the positive may be just a little blip in a very large downward trend. (Ferdinand AO)

Is there a system or process in place that AC uses that allows for the monitoring of AO to ensure that AC’s objectives and/or goals are being met?

As answered in the previous question, the branch calls, Branch Council and the two annual meetings, are perceived to be the mechanisms currently in place to monitor the progress of the goals and objectives of both AC and AO. Gentes commented that AC does keep track of the goals and objectives that incorporate both groups as one way AC uses to monitor the progress of their priorities.

We’ve got a chart with all the provinces and there are about 12 kinds of priority areas where we checked off what was important to what branch. This really serves as a model for when I talk about how we support them in some cases financially and with other resources. That kind of check and balance is really useful in terms of when the branches self identify where they need some help. Then we can look at that and review to see how we can help them and in what areas. Obviously we
can’t do everything, but at least there’s a process or kind of a path to get there. 
(Gentes AC)

Both AC and AO mentioned communication as part of their strategic plans but there was no language or focus on monitoring their relationship. AO, under foundation and leadership highlighted the need for enhanced two way communication with stakeholder groups but not specifically AC. AC, however, focused on monitoring their strategic plan as a critical success factor. AC as well, within their strategic plan, included a point about the need to increase the capacity of athletics organizations to deliver programming. The term capacity was not defined but within the next point on the list of critical success factors, making positive use of analytical tools was used. Under positive experience the use of feedback and evaluation systems was noted as a goal for AC as well.

**Summary of Sub Question 4**

All interviewees commented that there is a process in place where formal and informal communication takes place between AC and AO. Both these forms of communication were seen as useful and important in that it allowed for a constant connection to the shared goals and objectives for both AC and AO. That said, it should be noted that Ferdinand did indicate that the reports AC provided AO did not do an adequate job in providing an accurate representation of the success and shortcomings of AC.

**Sub Question 5**

*How are the agency costs in the relationship between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario managed?*

The costs of this relationship, as viewed by both organizations, are perceived to be very low. AC is responsible for the planning and hosting of the two AGMs and providing a platform
for the branch calls. Both organizations responded that the costs associated with managing this relationship were not ones they believed to be cumbersome.

I don’t think that’s something we really monitor, to be quite honest. But if you’re asking what the costs are, obviously the costs, the real hard costs are when we get people together for our annual meetings twice a year or we’re going out to the provinces to meet face to face. There’s some time costs as well. Monthly branch calls tie up some of our staff time. These are examples, but they’re not something we monitor or keep tabs on. They’re Just the cost of doing business. Those are our members and we need to serve them. (Gentes AC)

The agency costs would include the costs of hosting meetings twice a year, of hosting conference calls which occur once a month and which you know ensure that we have branch reps on committees, and on occasion funding of transportation to the odd meeting two or three day in some instances. (MacMackin AC)

Osland mentions the point that AO does have some funds they transfer to AC in terms of national member fees. Part of all AO athlete membership fees include a membership fee that is directed to AC. Osland also agreed with MacMackin and Gentes about the cost of managing the relationship, in that the overall cost to both AC and AO was low.

There are two answers to the question; the very first simple answer is that every member of Athletics Ontario and every other PSO is automatically a member of Athletics Canada, through the contribution of a 15 dollars fee per member to Athletics Canada. I had just over 6000 members in Ontario last year, so my bill to AC was just over $80,000. The other side is just the cost of face to face meetings each year. We have annual general meetings because the provinces are basically the members of Athletics Canada, so we have an AGM usually in the spring and a semi-annual AGM in the fall. (Osland AO)

*What are the agency costs (cost of managing the relationship) in the relationship between AC and AO managed?*

The cost of planning, hosting and running the two AGMs, the time needed to prepare and execute the branch calls and any face to face interactions between AC and the member PSOs are the only costs associated with the management of this relationship. The human and financial costs incurred in the creation, implementation and enforcement of managing this relationship
were reported to mainly fall under the purview of AC, and were ones that were not viewed as a burden to either organization or the relationship.

Preparation for the AGM, predominantly falls to the staff and the Board chair and is dependent upon the involvement of some of the other directors. Committee reports are often presented by committee chairs and vice-chairs with the help of AC staff. The three senior staff will typically report plus the CEO and our finance person, our chief operations person and performance director. (MacMackin AC)

If I were to put it into a number of days I’d say it’s probably a couple a month that I work on the relationship. That’s about it, so it’s not a huge amount of time. (Osland AO)

Are there currently any strategies in place to deal with the cost of managing this relationship?

Osland mentions that there are currently no strategies in place, and that the overall cost of the relationship is nominal. This view of the relationship was shared by all interviewees.

Well, there’s no strategy to manage the costs. I think the costs are relatively nominal, considering what we get out of it. (Osland AO)

MacMackin makes a point about the need for professional development to improve the quality of the meetings for branch members, but says that there are currently no strategies in place to assist with the cost of managing this relationship.

I’d say we are careful. We certainly don’t go overboard on investing in our meetings. We actually intend to try and invest a little more over the next few years to make them more valuable to the provincial branches, maybe through some professional development. To be honest it’s not an area of cost concern, given the size of the organization at this stage, but we certainly pinch our pennies. Costs depend on where we host meetings because we do try to travel around the country to different sites. (MacMackin AC)

There was no mention of managing costs or anything that was related to budgets or financial planning within the AC strategic plan. AO, however, within pillar four titled infrastructure, included a strategic focus on financial stability. Their action plan was to develop and maintain sustainable budgets in order to support strategic and operational planning. This was the only area dealing with costs or finance within their strategic plan.
Summary of Sub Question 5

Due to the lack of Agency Costs associated with this relationship, it was difficult to evaluate the level of costs that may be incurred in managing the relationship between AC and AO. Of the interviewees who provided responses to the question about Agency Costs, all indicated that since there were little to no costs, the need for a strategy to manage them was not necessary.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The relationship between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario has a central theme: developing athletic talent. Each sport governing body is responsible for their own members, governance and overseeing different organizational programs. The need for collaboration is critical to the success for both AC and AO when shared objectives exist. Since AC is the principal within this relationship the need for them to clearly define their role, goals and objectives that are connected to their operations it is important to outlining their position within the relationship. Shared strategic priorities that require collaboration, goal congruence, and working together, requires strong communication and clearly defined areas of responsibility between both groups.

Since AC oversees both the development of athletics in Canada and the success of the national team, they are responsible to two different stakeholder groups. With national team high performance outcomes being reviewed by Sport Canada with the SFAF contract being the primary document between them, the need for Olympic and international success is paramount to that contract. AC is also made up of all the different PSO branches across the country that requires their collaboration and cooperation in order to develop and provide athletes for those national teams.

AO’s primary goal is to promote the sport of athletics in the province of Ontario. Developing athletes through the club system while providing championships and opportunities for athletes to move up to the national team is at its foundation their main objectives. Since AC cannot manage the 6000 club athletes within Ontario alone and the operations associated with
that large of a participant base, the need for the two organizations to work together to deliver on their strategic priorities is clear.

There is an accessible and reviewable volume of evidence in this relationship of collaborative actions to determine if the central research question is able to be answered. Decision-making, mutual goals, communication and an understanding of how each organization views the other is clearly defined within the results section and provides the basis for discussion. The following section examines the relationship and seeks to explain how it is currently managed. Areas that need to be addressed in order to develop a more collaborative advantage within the area of Agency Theory will also be discussed in the concluding chapter.

The analysis of the data was organized using the five theoretical research questions and the discussion of that information in the same way. Agency Theory, and the management of collaboration from a Principal-Agent Dyad perspective, provided the framework.

*How does AC and AO make decisions: Establishing priorities*

Both AC and AO are autonomous organizations that are able to establish their own strategic priorities, goals and objectives. Each group has their own BODs, executive and support staff to assist with their operations. The process in which they determine what is an important, critical, or strategic priority is similar in that each organization reviews the environment in which they operate and uses that information to develop long term plans. A unique process that is embedded in the development and establishment of priorities is the interdependence and relationship between AC and AO.

As AC is the national governing body for athletics in Canada, they are the federation of all the different PSO branches that exist within the country. Each PSO plays a role in aiding AC
with the development of their goals and objectives that are connected to the PSOs, but AC retains complete control over national team and high performance objectives. It can be viewed as two separate areas within their strategic plan. The first area being goals and objectives that are tied to the SFAF and Sport Canada outcomes for Olympic and World Championship development and the other being the overall growth, development and sustainability of the sport. That second part is where the PSOs are able to contribute to ACs goals and objectives. By being part of that process they are then able to take those goals, objectives and priorities back to their BODs and find ways to integrate them into their own long term plans.

With strategic planning and decision-making being a collaborative process between the Principal and Agent at the onset of this relationship, the establishment of a framework for cooperation and collaboration is needed in order for this to take place.

*Athletics Canada*

AC holds regular calls, which are referred to as branch Calls, and they involve the CEO and BOD Chairperson for each PSO in Canada. AC will have their CEO, COO, BOD Chairman and other senior staff available at this time to discuss current and upcoming matters with the PSOs. Within this process, areas of concern such as grassroots athlete development, talent identification, officiating and coaching development are discussed in order to have the input of all PSOs across the county. With Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia being the three largest PSOs the need to change the way in which AC interacts with their Branches was changed. Currently, there is an individual MOU signed with each PSO that outlines specific goals and objectives that are directly tied to that PSO. This MOU outlines funding support for PSOs in return for measurable outputs on specific objectives. Other PSOs may also have a MOU with AC.
but the contents of their memorandum may be tied to other items that are not related to funding support from AC.

*Athletics Ontario*

Much like the process that AC undertakes when establishing priorities, AO also reviews current trends, data and changes to the sport and develops with their BOD strategic priorities that outline the direction for the organization. This decision making process is also tied to the AC long term plan in that goals and objectives that connect both organizations together need to be included in the AO plan.

*The Role of Leadership*

A theme that was observed from conducting the interviews was the apparent emergence of leadership. Stated specifically within the AO 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, leadership was a foundational principle that underpinned the entire strategic plan. The success of the current collaborative relationship between AC and AO can be attributed to the leadership of both organizations and efforts made by AC to connect with and make efforts to improve communication with their PSOs. The Chairman of the BOD for AC, MacMackin and the former AC CEO made physical trips to many of the PSO branches to meet and connect with those organizations as a way to foster and build a stronger collaborative relationship. These efforts made by AC show leadership as an important quality to building and maintaining a positive collaborative relationship. Historically, AC was not viewed as a collaborative partner and the relationship between AC and the PSO branches was not cohesive. As the new CEO of AO, Osland, mentioned in his interview, he will leverage his position with AC when needed to ensure positive outcomes for AO. This approach to work with AC, and improve the overall experience,
demonstrates that both AC and AO understand the need for cooperation and communication when developing goals and objectives through shared-decision making.

Within the principal-agent dyad, when the principal does show leadership in defining desired outcomes, the agent should show leadership in developing the strategies needed to achieve those outcomes. In a collaborative relationship, leadership, which could come in the form of strong open communication and a willingness to work together or providing direction to the agent, is required from both organizations when establishing mutual goals. Additionally, the principal needs to maintain the motivation of the organizations to work towards those goals.

There is a difference between leadership and control that should be highlighted. As AC and AO are both autonomous organizations and AO is the only PSO within the province of Ontario, as well as the largest PSO in Canada, AC is not and would not be in a position to have control over how AO makes decisions or creates priorities. With this understanding, that AC is not in a position of control but more so one of leadership and has the ability to influence AO is a more accurate way to view the principal-agent dyad relationship between AC and AO.

How congruent are the goals of AC and AO

Goal contingency between AC and AO was viewed by all the interviewees as being positive and an area where both organizations displayed a high level of collaboration. Within Agency Theory, there is the assumption that the goals of the principal and the agent will be incongruent. This incongruence between AC and AO was not as apparent as the theory would suggest but as noted previously, both AC and AO are independent and autonomous organizations. That said, interdependence does exists between AC and AO. The need to have both major goals
and objectives congruent would lead to a higher degree of congruence and it would be assumed as both organizations are attempting to achieve the same overall mission.

AC has two major roles as the NSO for athletics in Canada. The first of these roles being the development of national, Olympic and World Championship teams, and the second involves the development of the sport within Canada. As national team performance outcomes are specific to only AC, those goals, such as winning medals at the Olympics, are not goals or objectives that AO can assist with directly. These high performance priorities are not ones that can be considered incongruent between the two organizations as AO is not involved in national team high performance objectives. In contrast, AO has every intention of attracting and supporting high performance athletes within Ontario as this is in part because of collaboration with AC in developing national team training hubs, hosting AC staff in AO facilities and supporting the development of national team members that come from Ontario.

The common goals and objectives that were shared by each organization were constructed to have similar outputs but one difference that was viewed is the wording of those goals and objectives. AC, within their strategic plan, outlined several different goals under their Pillar of Participation that were connected to coaching, officiating and new athlete recruitment across the country. AO, under their pillar of Sport Development, had three different strategic focuses that were connected to athlete development, coaching education and officials’ development. AC may have long term strategic goals for how they want the sport to develop in Canada, but it is the responsibility of AO to implement action plans to achieve those goals and produce outcomes that AC believes are achieving their goals within the province of Ontario.

An area that should be noted where incongruence does exist is the language used by both organizations when describing shared goals and objectives within their strategic plans. When
establishing goals and objectives the primary purpose along with the desired outcomes that both AC and AO want are present, but how each organization describes the goals or the action plans differ. An example of this can be viewed within the AC Strategic Plan and their pillar of Participation. One of their objectives is to increase first contact participation to 350,000 participants annually, primarily through the Run, Jump, Throw, Wheel (RJTW) program. This is a grassroots program, aimed at youth that would be of an elementary school age introducing them to the sport of athletics. Within the AO Strategic Plan and under their pillar of Participation, grassroots is listed as a strategic focus with an action plan of three different items. One action item relates to increasing quality of grassroots programs and has an associated 2021 target of an increase in quality and numbers within grassroots programs including clubs and school competitions. When viewing these two goals for both AC and AO, it can be confusing as to what programs, actions or overall focus are related to which goal. For example, AO, when referring to grassroots programs that relates to youth athletes, most likely is referring to the RJTW program. Because it is not stated in a way that connects those two action plan items together, goal incongruence may be interpreted.

After reviewing both the AC and AO strategic plans, it can be stated that both organizations do have a high degree of goal congruence. A disconnect, however, appears within the depth and level of their action plans associated with the AC plan when compared to the AO plan. The AO plan included greater explanation, context and provided additional information that described each pillar in greater detail. The lack of descriptive language and there not being a clear or direct line between shared AC and AO goals could also allow for the interpretation that the goals of both organizations are incongruent. The overall understanding that parts of the AC plan are intended only for World and Olympic stream athletes and those sections of the plan are
created with collaboration from PSOs is hard to determine if review of both plans was done in conjunction with AC and the PSOs. Viewing each plan in isolation could lead the reader to believe AC and AO are not working in collaboration when in fact they are.

Although the AC strategic plan is set to expire in 2020, it was noted by the COO of AC that AC is currently in the process of developing their new strategic plan to take them through to 2028. This plan will incorporate the theme and process of collaboration more than in the past as a way to increase goal and objective congruence.

How does the SFAF contact contribute to the management of the relationship?

The Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) contract that exists between AC and Sport Canada is a series of documents that outline objectives for the AC and all NSOs on how they will spend, invest and direct funding from the Government of Canada to their respective sports. One of the criteria of the SFAF contract is the submission of a high performance strategic plan from the NSO. This plan is intended to outline what goals and objectives will drive the organization for the upcoming year and four year period. The AC 2013-2020 Strategic Plan would have been submitted in addition to other documents when AC applied through the SFAF process.

When the question concerning the involvement of the SFAF contract and if it is connected to AO was presented to the interviewees, only one individual had specific knowledge of this process. The COO, Gentes, is responsible for the SFAF contract with Sport Canada and had a great deal of experience with this document and process. He stated that “there’s certainly not a direct line within it but in a lot of indirect ways we talk about participation numbers” (Gentes AC). This indirect line is the common goals and objectives that are shared between the two organizations. The interpretation of the SFAF contract from the perspective of AO was that
the document had to do more with AC and Sport Canada objectives. CEO of AO, Osland, did note that:

Athletics Canada [is] wanting to ensure that athletics Ontario is operating on all cylinders so that we can ensure that we are developing the athletes that they can then take. So if, as I said, Ontario Athletes represent almost 60 percent of the national team. If we start doing a poor job locally then Athletics Canada is going to start to lose a number of top athletes on their national team which isn’t going to help them. (Osland AO)

The perspective from Osland, that AO success is important to AC success, is where the indirect line exists between AC, AO and the SFAF contract. The success or shortcomings of the contract between AC and Sport Canada are not directly the responsibility of AO but they do play an important role in facilitating and assisting with the overall goals and objectives of AC.

When asked if there is a process similar to the SFAF contract between AC and AO there was a mixed response from the interviewees. Contracts are a key feature of Agency Theory and the presence or absence of a formalized document that outlines responsibilities or expectations is important to outline. Although the presence of a formalized contact between AC and AO was reported not to exist, a MOU was mentioned by both Gentes and Ferdinand. This MOU is one that is specific to the relationship between AC and AO but is not formalized or interpreted as a legally binding contract between the two organizations. The purpose of the document between AC and AO is more to provide a shared understanding of the direction taken on programming objectives and provide funding support to those specific programs. This was the only mention of any kind of document that brings the two organizations together on a common program with funding ties. Gentes mentioned that this document is not to be viewed as a traditional legal contract in that if a target number or an objective is not met, it would not result in less funding being provided. The purpose of this MOU is intended to provide direction for both organizations. If objectives are not being met and there is the need to provide corrective measures, assistance or
determine why something was not working then the MOU will provide the process needed for those actions.

The component of sanctions and incentives that are inherent within contracts and Agency Theory was a topic that was asked of all the interviewees. Since there is no formalized contract between the two organizations the presence for such components was not present. There was no direct answer to the interview question that related to sanctions or incentives. As well, with sanctions or corrective action, AC has very little power as the Principal to take corrective action against their Agent because of the highly autonomous position AO is in. The theme of collaboration, cooperation and open communication when dealing with corrective action was apparent from both Gentes and MacMackin when it came to their relationship with AO or any PSO.

*How does AC monitor AO?*

Within Agency Theory, the ability for the Principal to monitor the actions and behaviors of the Agent is one of the main components of the theory. Monitoring or reporting systems did exist between AC and AO in the form of two main methods. The first being the Annual General Meeting and Semi Annual General Meeting. These two meetings have been in place for a substantial amount of time and include all the different PSO Branches, the CEO and Chairperson from each PSO, along with the CEO of AC and their executive staff. In addition to the Chairpersons and executive officers of the two organizations the BOD of AC is also part of these meetings. Reports from AC and the different working committees and reports from the PSOs that deal with PSO operations are shared, discussed and reviewed.

The reporting systems that are employed by AC when reporting back to AO were viewed by the former Chair, Ferdinand, as lacking historical data to show if trends or changes over time
had taken place. Snapshots, as described by Ferdinand, were the main substance of the reporting mechanisms back to AO. Within Agency Theory, it is generally the Agent that reports back to the Principal. However within this relationship, AC does supply reports to AO as they are a branch member of AC.

The second reporting method more recently involves what is referred to as Branch Calls. These were added as a formal ongoing reporting tool to allow for more communication between the PSO branches and AC. These calls generally deal with ongoing projects and objectives but allow for the PSOs and AC to maintain a consistent line of open communication. In addition to these two formal communication and reporting systems, informal communication between the CEO and Chairman of AC and the CEO and Chairpersons of the different PSOs also exists. Both AC and AO interviewees reported that this is due to successful leadership and positive relationships between AC and AO executive staff. In the past this form of informal communication was not present. However, with recent personnel changes within both AC and AO, open communication has been reestablished.

*How are agency costs managed?*

Due to the nature of this collaborative relationship, the costs associated with the management of the relationship are relatively low. With the increase in autonomy of AO and the need of AC to rely on AO, there are little costs attributed by either AC or AO when it comes to agency costs. Both AC and AO reported that they spend very little money on managing their relationship and since there are no formal contracts or sanctions and the monitoring systems employed are very cost effective, there was very little mention of the costs by any of the interviewees.
AC did mention that they do take on the majority of the costs associated with hosting the two general meetings, but the PSO, CEO and Chairperson are responsible for their travel and accommodations. Unlike many other Principal-Agent Dyads, this relationship has resulted in very low agency reported costs.

The Chairman of AC, MacMackin, did mention that AC was looking to invest in professional development strategies in relation to the two general meetings but there was little focus on this area from both AC and AO. Both organizations did not view the cost of managing the relationship as one that required new strategies or interventions.

Summary of Discussion: Has a collaborative advantage been achieved?

The relationship between AC and AO can be viewed as one that involves collaboration. The ultimate goal of both organizations is to develop athletic talent within the sport of track and field. As AO is the largest PSO branch member and agent in the country with AC, the need for meaningful collaboration is required in order to achieve a collaborative advantage. With this relationship involving a lower degree of control from the Principal, collaborative actions and activities with the Agent are needed in order to achieve a collaborative advantage. One key feature that has been noted through this analysis was that AO is its own autonomous organization. As the only PSO within Ontario that can be an agent for AC they have increased their position within the relationship with AC. This increased position lowers the level of control the Principal has over the Agent, but AC is still the NSO for athletics in Canada and by virtue of that status retains the position of Principal.

One condition that is present within this collaborative relationship involves leadership from both AC and AO. As previously mentioned, in the past three years both AC and AO have seen a change of executive staff in both organizations. The new and current leadership within AC
and AO have fostered open forms of both formal and informal communication that have resulted in a positive collaborative process when it comes to shared goals and objectives. By each organization being able to communicate their goals and objectives and build action plans that will result in achieving those outcomes, both AC and AO are actively participating in a collaborative relationship. If the leadership and communication between the two organizations did not exist the way it currently does, the possibility of incongruent goals, action plans or strategic plan outcomes could result in potentially negative outcomes for both AO and AC.

Shared decision-making, as viewed within this relationship, with PSOs being able to play an active role in the establishment of goals and objectives with AC, has resulted in a higher level of goal congruence. Goal congruence as stated within the study of collaboration, suggests that when two organizations have congruent goals, control by the Principal is less of an issue and the need for contracts, sanctions and monitoring decreases. With a decrease in these control mechanisms, AC and AO are able to lower agency costs, which has resulted in the overall cost of this relationship to be viewed as low.

The operational definition for collaboration that was employed for this analysis suggests that there be a collaborative outcome. That outcome can be viewed in the strategic plans and processes used by AC and AO to achieve their own and shared goals. The second part of the definition outlines that through an interactive process whereby both organizations work together to achieve some outcome that could not be achieved by the organization on its own, encompasses a synergetic argument. That by working together each organization is able to achieve an outcome that they would not have been able to do by themselves is present within this collaborative relationship. The Branch Calls, the general meetings, PSO input on shared strategic priorities and
open communication are all part of the process that both AC and AO use when interacting in this collaborative relationship.

AC and AO are achieving a collaborative advantage as defined by the operational definition employed for this study. It is clear that AC would not be able to undertake the important and critical operations of any of their PSOs, let alone the largest PSO for athletics in Canada. Similarly, AO would not be able to develop national talent on their own, access federal funding or be able to support a national team at the Olympic Games or World Championships. By each organization working together to develop shared strategic priorities, have strong goal congruence, foster and support open communication, and keep the cost of this relationship low, they are achieving a collaborative advantage.

Managing Collaborative Relationships

The work by Ian Reade was used as a guide in both the use of Agency Theory and the review of two sport governing bodies. Within his work, he reviewed the relationship between Sport Canada and Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) governing body. Both of these organizations are multi-sport national governing bodies that based on Reade’s conclusions, collaboration between the two groups was minimal. AC is a NSO and AO is a PSO, both groups only govern the sport of athletics. This is the first difference between this work and that of Reade. Another area where this work and Reade’s do not align is the scope of these two organizations. Sport Canada oversees all aspects sport within Canada and the CIS governs all sport within the Canadian university sport system. The size and scope of these two organizations in comparison to AC and AO is not equal and thus the outcome of replication is not possible. Reade’s work reviewed how Sport Canada and the CIS collaborate, but the need for them to do so is minimal because neither group relies on each other for resources or outcomes. It could be determined that
Sport Canada is the Principal and CIS the Agent within Agency Theory, but unlike the PAD relationship between AC and AO, Sport Canada does not need the CIS to operate, develop athletic talent, or produce future national team outcomes because that is not the mandate of the CIS. Although the CIS is an important organization in the development of athletic talent, their mandate and purpose of existing is to the university sport, a specific demographic within the sporting scene within Canada.

Reade’s work represented a complex and national level relationship that attempted to review the collaboration between Sport Canada and the CIS. The use of his work as a guide to understanding nonprofit organizational relationships was utilized in establishing the framework for evaluating the PAD between AC and AO and their collaborative relationship. The outcomes that Reade discovered and that of this work do not align, mainly due to the major differences between the organizations selected and their purpose for existing. Although both AC and Sport Canada are Principals and AO and CIS are Agents, they are not similar in anyway and thus result in a difference in outcomes when reviewing the level of collaboration between them.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Having concluded that a collaborative advantage is being achieved with the relationship between AC and AO, it must be acknowledged that the opportunity to increase that advantage exists. Both AC and AO are independent autonomous organizations that work together to produce an outcome that neither organization would be able to on their own. Within this chapter, recommendations to future research will be presented. Practical recommendations have also been included for both AC and AO to increase their collaborative advantage and have been aligned within the five areas that are connected to Agency Theory to increase the existing collaborative advantage.

Theoretical Recommendations

The use of Agency Theory to review the organizational relationship between AC and AO was chosen because of the assumption, as outline in Appendix A – Personal Narrative, that AC was above AO in terms of governance and decision making powers. Inherent within Agency Theory is the Principal Agent Dyad, that one group has another perform a task at their request. This power relationship leads to the assumed relationship between AC and AO but in fact is one that does not exist. By using Agency Theory, it was intended to view this PAD of AC and AO and determine if they were achieving a collaborative advantage. For future theoretical recommendations, the use of a different framework could be employed to determine if collaboration is taking place and level of that collaboration. Agency Theory was a meaningful research tool but since AO is not a traditional Agent within this PAD, the relationship is one that was difficult to evaluate. Additional consideration could be employed when determining a
theoretical framework to evaluate two non-profit sport governing bodies and determining their level of collaboration.

The central research question included the use of the term maximum in quantifying the level of collaboration between AC and AO. The word maximum generally has the connotation that it is the greatest or most possible to achieve. Given this connotation, it is reasonable for one to ask how it would be possible to determine if a maximum was being achieved. An alternative term that would allow for a wider review would be the use of the term optimal. With the use of Agency Theory, evaluating a relationship can result in an outcome where the Principal and the Agent are achieving collaboration but is this output optimal? As there are costs associated with collaboration such as financial, time, and human, the evaluation of that relationship could be optimal for many different reasons. The size and scope of both organizations, level of available resources, or the desired outcome from both organizations. Rather than using the term maximum, which could lead to an outcome that does not offer an opportunity for interpretation, using the term optimal allows for greater interpretation when evaluating the level of collaboration between two groups.

Part of the associated costs with collaboration that have the potential for further research is the subject of contacts and MOUs and how they are incorporated into the collaborative relationship. Contracts generally imply that specific work is to be done in a specific way but an MOU offers more opportunity for the parties to discuss the environment in which an outcome will be achieved. By reviewing the structure of existing MOUs between two non-profit sport governing bodies, additional research could lead to a more effective understanding of how MOUs are incorporated into the collaborative process.
Establishing Priorities

The current process of AC communicating with AO, specifically their CEO and Chairperson, is a great strategy employed by AC, but it can become a more inclusive process. As both organizations are member focused and membership fees support operations, the need for member input as part of the process of establishing priorities is important to include. AO could, through their own tools and resources, connect with member clubs to hear their perspective when it comes to needs, priorities, and direction. By allowing member clubs to submit their ideas and opinions, AO would be offering the member clubs the opportunity to actively participate in the larger process of shaping the strategic direction of their sport.

AO, much like AC and other non-profit organizations, holds an AGM to allow members the opportunity to attend and learn about the current affairs of the organization and contribute to the conversation. However, like most AGM gatherings, input from the members is generally received after the fact and little importance is placed on these inputs. By AO hosting a town hall session or some form of an online discussion, AO members would then have the ability to contribute directly to the strategic direction of AO. This would allow members to directly contribute their ideas and personal experiences to AO as a way for AO to learn more about their members. The timing of this submission process is important to note. If AO has a specific period during the year in which they are dedicating time to reviewing their strategic plan or know that their input is required with AC, hosting this process prior to that would be beneficial to its success.

Following this consultative process, AO would be able to review the information supplied by their members and categorize it for further analysis. Once complete, AO could see if there were any trends or common themes of comments from members and determine if further
review of those trends or themes is warranted. When the AO CEO and Chairperson are on either a Branch Monthly Calls or at the AC AGM, they would then be able to better communicate the opinions of their members and assist in the establishment of shared strategic priorities with AC.

**Goal Congruency**

After discovering that AO does play a direct role in the establishment of the goals and strategic priorities of AC, the opportunity for increased congruence is presented. With each organization having their own goals and objectives and ones that are shared, the need for those shared goals and objectives to have congruent language is also needed.

An example from AC’s and AO’s strategic plans was the shared goal of participation. Both organizations want to increase their participation in specific areas. Increasing the number of athletes, coaches, and officials along with strategic areas like RJTW and master athletes are highlighted in both organization’s plans. However, the way the information is organized, presented and worded is distinctly different in that if a non-member reader were to review each plan, their ability to identify this shared goal may not occur. The issue of language congruence may be a result of each plan being crafted by different authors. It is also important to note that each plan is not created within the same time period. With AC currently in the process of establishing a new strategic plan to last until 2028 and AO having recently published their plan, the opportunity for AC to connect the language of their plan with one of their largest members does present itself.

British Columbia, Quebec, and to a more recent extent Alberta, are the other PSO’s within Canada that have a significant impact on the success of AC’s ability to achieve their strategic priorities. Each PSO has their own strategic plan and may not all be in a position to
update their plan to align with AC’s plan. However, the opportunity for all the PSOs under the AC umbrella to establish a strategic directive using congruent language when developing and writing their strategic plans could be enacted as a way to increase congruency. With this understanding and approach being incorporated by each of the PSOs and AC, the appearance of more congruent, in terms of wording and language, strategic plans would emerge. By having this higher level of congruency achieved, the opportunity for enhanced reporting, review, and presentation of information would be achieved.

Contracts and Agreements

The SFAF does provide an objective process for NSOs to apply for funding from the federal government. However, a formal contract between AC and the PSOs does not appear to be a tool that is currently employed. With MOUs currently being used by AC with the PSOs, the use of this tool has proven to be useful as each individual PSO and their relationship with AC is unique. No single overarching contract would be able to cover all the different needs of each PSO and thus the use of an MOU between AC and individual PSOs allows for them to develop a specific plan for their needs.

The development of these MOU’s could be expanded and further connected to the shared strategic goals found in AC’s strategic plan that incorporate PSO involvement. Currently, this process is in place with AC and AO, but only one specific strategic priority is being covered in that MOU. By expanding this process and allowing for other shared goals and objectives to be governed by an MOU, both AC and AO would be able to improve the outcomes of these objectives. As previously stated, within Agency Theory the Principal establishes the objectives and the Agent develops an action plan to accomplish those objectives. With the cooperative
nature of the AC and AO Principal-Agent Dyad, both AC and AO establish shared goals and communicate on the process in which that goal will be achieved. AC also outlines funding support within this MOU to assist AO in completing this objective. By having this documented process applied to other shared objectives, AC would be able to better predict the outcome of other shared objectives. This would also allow AC to budget and forecast their financial support requirements in a more proactive way as they will know and understand how a task will be completed by AO.

The incorporation of incentives and sanctions within a formal contract does not apply to the collaborative relationship that exists between AC and AO. COO Gentes described the relationship as one that is not like that of a contractor with expected work to be done if not completed, or result in penalties being assessed. Incentives, rewards or bonuses which at times are incorporated into formal contracts are also not embedded in this process. Funding support from AC when built into an MOU is, in a way, a form of incentive, in that AO now is able to use the new funding to support an operational objective. With AO being able to use this external funding, they are now in a position to divert other funding to projects that may not be a shared objective but one that is specific to their own organization.

With the development and incorporation of new MOUs on specific shared objectives, both AC and AO will be able to forecast, allocate and reposition funding resources in a more thought out and proactive manner. This process will require AC to improve the language of their strategic plan and provide in greater detail how they would have this objective completed by the PSOs. The language would need to be broad enough that PSOs, like those from PEI or Nova Scotia, would be able to connect that action plan to the scale and size of their organization while being specific enough that it allows for a directional understanding for larger PSOs like AO or
Quebec. By having funding support allocated to these MOUs, PSOs that choose to accept the terms of that MOU will be able to improve how they budget operational spending. This would also allow PSOs to direct funding they receive from their home province or members to projects and tasks that are not connected to shared AC and PSO MOUs.

**Monitoring and Reporting Tools**

The ability of an organization to report information to clients, partners or stakeholders can be difficult at times. This can be due to the tools and systems used when collecting data for reporting or determining what information is required by the party receiving the report. As noted by former Chairwoman Ferdinand, the reports that AC supplies to the PSOs are viewed as snapshots of progress rather than a progress overview of how a specific task or objective is progressing over time. The need for a reporting tool and process that allows PSOs like AO to view ongoing projects and tasks is critical to the successful outcome of their shared objectives.

This also applies to the way in which AO, as the Agent, reports to AC. Branch Calls and AGM reports are a useful tool to submit reports, but the way in which reports are created is also important. Having a system in place that allows for the transfer of information and a shared understanding of what data, key performance indicators (KPI), or objective markers are viewed as useful is needed for both organizations. By agreeing to a common set of guidelines that governs which data is collected, reviewed and reported, both AC and AO will be able to view similar data in the same way.

The development of these guidelines would require all PSOs and AC to determine which data points for reports are critical to their specific objectives. Developing these data collection and reporting tools would in turn also increase the collaborative relationship between AC and the PSOs. If there is an increase in shared objectives between AC and the PSOs, those objectives
would need to be included within an MOU and the common reporting process. With the inclusion of a shared reporting process embedded into the MOU, both organizations will be able to ensure that the data that is collected and reported is meaningful and accurate.

*Agency Costs*

With the cost of this relationship being viewed as low and the associated costs that do exist as minimal, the overall Agency Costs that are presented do not negatively affect the collaborative process between AC and AO. The opportunity to increase the financial investment into the relationship does provide both AC and AO the flexibility to do so as it currently is a low priority. The development and creation of new MOUs and a more comprehensive duel reporting system will result in an increased cost to the collaborative relationship between AC and AO. If the inclusion of these tools does not yield a positive return for AC and AO, then they will have a negative cost impact and increase in agency costs for both organizations. However, if these tools are viewed and report a positive return for both AC and AO then the investment into the relationship would be viewed as meaningful and cost effective. This would still increase Agency Costs, but instead of being viewed as a negative cost it would result in a positive return for both organizations.

In order to determine if these new investments are producing a positive or negative outcome, both AC and AO would need to determine the cost of producing the tools and procedures needed to implement this process. By selecting a shared goal or objective that has this new process applied to it, then AC and AO can conduct a post objective review to determine if the process implemented was a worthwhile investment. If the cost of the process did not return a positive outcome and was viewed as a non-cost effective tool then review of this process would be needed. If AC and AO discovered that the new process was helpful, allowed for greater
operations direction, and resulted in shared objective outcomes, then this process could be applied to additional shared objectives.

Summary

These recommendations are intended to enhance and aid in the continued collaborative process between AC and AO. The current direction that both these organizations are taking demonstrates that AC and AO view each other as important and valued partners. By reviewing and implementing the aforementioned recommendations, the opportunity for both groups to maximize or, more appropriately, achieve their optimal collaborative advantage does exist. With changes to membership numbers, access to funding support and the need for more collaboration in the future, both AC and AO would benefit from reviewing their relationship and discovering ways to improve in all aspects of their shared operations and services. With the overall shared mission of both AC and AO being to promote and support the sport of athletics in Canada and Ontario, the importance of this relationship between them needs to be paramount.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Personal Narrative

*Introduction*

During the initial phases of the design of this research project, I knew that my personal lived experiences would contribute to the collection and analysis of the data. In a study that incorporates the use of primary qualitative methods, such as document analysis and personal interviews, the perspective and viewpoint of the researcher must be recognized and accounted for. As a result, the researcher has an undue influence over all aspects of the research. The intention of this personal narrative is to outline the assumptions, potential bias and gaps that I have as a researcher.

*Gaps, Bias and Assumptions*

*Gaps*

I have had no direct experience in dealing with organizational relationships at either a provincial, national or international level. I have never been employed by a sport governing body but have had an experience in working with Athletics Ontario when hosting a provincial championship. My experience was that of a meet director which required me to work with AO in a limited capacity.

*Bias*

My own personal bias in relation to this research is that I was a former AO registered athlete. As a member of the AO system, my experiences involved the final service and program outputs and outcomes that are a direct result of the organizational decisions that AO makes. As a
current AO registered coach and official, I also operate within the realm of AO operational decisions. However, these positions have no outcome, affect or influence with AO. By the simple virtue of being an active member of the AO, in past and current capacities, the opportunity to make personal connections with AO staff members has occurred. When I began this research project, at the time the Executive Director of AO, was an individual I met on a flight to the Athletics Canada Olympic Trials. We spoke at length about the AC and AO relationship and connected with each other on LinkedIn. When I started the interview process for this research project she was no longer employed with AO. For the purpose of my research I still wanted to interview her but after several failed attempts in contacting her I was unable to.

This research was driven by both my interest and assumed understanding about the relationship between AC and AO. Based on my past experiences and those of others, I wanted to know how this inter-organizational relationship worked and why athletes, coaches and officials had such strong opinions about this relationship.

Assumptions

The following assumptions provide some insight and rationale for the selection of this research topic.

1. The relationship between AC and AO is critical to the success of the sport both in Ontario but also for Canada.

2. AC is the NSO for athletics in Canada and by this fact they are the main driver for all decisions, actions and future outcomes for the sport across the country. AO as the PSO in Ontario and reports to AC for operational direction. That a top down hierarchy of operational control and decision making comes at the direction of AC.
3. That the Sport Canada Sport Funding and Accountability Framework system had a direct impact on the decisions and operations of AO.

4. That AO operates in a reactive manner. The phrase “kitchen table” was used to describe how AO made decisions when dealing with operational matters. This phrase was used by athletes, clubs and general AO members.

5. That there was no clear public or member understanding of how AC and AO managed their relationship. This lack of understanding could be perceived as a lack of transparency or cooperation between the two groups.

**Athlete, Coach and Official**

I have been a member of AO and AC since I joined my first track club in 2006. As a member of AO I competed in sanctioned meets, championships and benefited as an athlete by having the opportunity to compete in the sport. From 2009 until 2014 I was a member of the Windsor Lancer varsity track and field team as an athlete and former captain in 2014. I continued to compete as a club member in my post varsity career and competed within North America. I had the opportunity to compete at two AC senior national championships and placed within the top 10 in the country both years.

In 2008, I became a registered coach by completing my Level 1 National Coaching Certificate Program requirements. Since then I have been a coach for three different club teams, worked with five different Windsor based high schools and am currently entering my sixth year as a member of the Windsor Lancer varsity track and field team coaching staff. As an active coach in the community, I have had the privilege of working with many athletes, local coaches and meet directors. These experiences allowed me to host the 2013 AO Cross Country Provincial...
Championships as the co-meet director. During this time I was able to interact with AO in an organizational capacity in the planning and hosting of an AO championship meet. This experience was both exciting and frustrating due to the nature of how AO at the time made decisions, communicated and operated when working with third parties.

As a registered official with AO, I have officiated in meets ranging from high school all the way to Ontario high school championships and AO club championships. My role as an official has ranged from finish line umpire to starter. By being involved in the officiating side of the sport, I have been able to see how AO organizes a critical element of my sport.
### APPENDIX B

#### 2012-2013 Sport Canada Contribution Report

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Total: $150,242,522

GRAND TOTAL: $183,426,695

ATHLETES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: $27,366,946

GRAND TOTAL 2012-2013: $210,793,641
APPENDIX C

Collaborative Relationships: An Analysis of Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario Interview Script

A research study in partial fulfillment of a Masters Degree in Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor

Participant Profile:
Name: ____________________________ Title: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Telephone #: (_________)
E-mail Address: ____________________________
Interview Date: ___________ Time Started: ___________ AM/PM Completed: ___________ AM/PM

Briefing Paragraph:
What will follow is approximately a 1 hour interview. Please note that you have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions. As stated in previous communication, you will be identified as it is your input and authority that this study relies on.

Briefing Checklist:
Right to Refuse

  Informed •

Please answer YES or NO to the following statements.

1. I ____________________________ (participant name) consent to participate in this interview.

  Signed Consent Received: ____________  Verbal Consent: ____________

    Yes • No •

    Yes • No •

2. I give consent for this interview to be audio recorded. Consent to Audio Record:

    Yes • No •

3. I would like to review a transcription of this interview material.
Review of Transcript requested: Yes • No •

Questionnaire Outline:

General Information

1. When did you start with your organization?

2. When did you start your current position?

3. How would you describe your role?

Research Sub-Questions

4. How does Athletics Canada or Athletics Ontario make the decisions that directly affect collaboration with agents?
   ● What are AC's or AO's top priorities and how are they established?

5. What is the decision making process that AC or AO employ when establishing long term objectives and/or goals that incorporate PSOs (Provincial Sport Organizations) or AC?
   ● Is the decision making process congruent with all PSOs?
   ● Do PSOs have an active role in the planning of AC's priorities? What are AC's top priorities and how are they established?

6. How does the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) contract contribute to the collaboration between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario?
   ● Is there currently a process similar to the SFAF that AC employs with AO?
   ● Is there a contract between AC and AO that binds AO to the objectives and/or goals established by AC?
   ● Are there any incentives or sanctions tied to these objectives and/or goals?
   ● If AO is not working towards the objectives and/or goals of AC, what process or strategies exist to take corrective action?
7. How congruent are the objectives and goals of AC and AO?
   ● Does each organization individually establish their own objectives and goals?

8. How does AC and AO monitor their relationship?
   ● Is there a system or process in place that AC uses that allows for the monitoring of AO to ensure that AC's objectives and/or goals are being met?

9. What are the agency costs (cost of managing the relationship) in the relationship between AC and AO managed?
   ● What are the human and financial costs incurred in the creation, implementation and enforcement of managing this relationship?
   ● Are there currently any strategies in place to deal with the cost of managing this relationship?

Conclusion

10. Is there anything that relates to the collaborative relationship between AC and AO that you feel I did not touch on that you would care to comment on?
   ● Are you aware of any documents that would be helpful?

Thank you for your time. It is greatly appreciated.

If participant requested opportunity to review transcript, read the following

Over the next few weeks I will transcribe this interview and forward you a copy for your review and approval. Following completion of your review, please email or mail your approval, edits, comments, and any other information that you feel pertinent to this study by (future date… fourteen working days from receipt of transcript). Failure to respond within the time allotted will be deemed an acceptance of the transcript as provided. Thus, if a response is not received by the date specified you shall be deemed to have accepted the interview transcript in the form provided. A follow up phone call after the transcript has been sent to you will be made to ensure you have received the transcript.
APPENDIX D

Interview Contribution Review

Of the five interviewees and their contributions, each individual offered responses to the questionnaire found in Appendix C. The interview questions were designed to connect Agency Theory to the collaborative relationship between Athletics Canada and Athletics Ontario, with the intention of gaining insight to how both organizations viewed each other. Within this appendix, a brief overview of each interviewee’s contribution has been summarized below.

**Athletics Canada**

Bill MacMackin – Chair of Athletics Board of Directors

As the Chair of the AC BOD, MacMackin was situated in a position that allowed him to understand the scope of work within areas of governance, operations and communication between PSO Branches. With AO being the largest PSO within Canada, MacMackin knew a great deal about the relationship between AC and AO from an organizational perspective. The decision making process and how that is tied to goal congruency is directly related to his position as Chair due to the fact that the BOD for AC creates, in partnership with the PSO’s, a majority of the long term goals and objectives for the organization.

In terms of Agency Costs and if AC and AO were achieving a collaborative advantage, MacMackin believed that the costs of this relationship were very low and that AC and AO were working together in a very meaningful and positive manner.

Mathieu Gentes - Chief Operating Officer
A critical role of Gentes within AC is to prepare the SFAF application on behalf of AC to Sport Canada. Since the SFAF is a contract between AC and Sport Canada, this experience and knowledge was viewed as vital to understanding the relationship between AC and AO. Contracts, reporting and communication are embedded in the SFAF document and directly connect to Agency Theory. Understanding how AC and AO connected to those themes was evident in Gentes responses. Since Gentes is primarily on the operations side of AC, his involvement in the relationship between AC and AO was less evident but due to his position within AC he processed a great deal of knowledge into the relationship.

**Athletics Ontario**

Paul Osland – Chief Executive Officer

As the new CEO of AO, Osland did not have a great deal of past knowledge of how AO conducted their past relationship with AC but provided useful information in connection to how AC and AO now communicate and develop shared goals. Contracts between AC and AO were a topic area that Osland was not able to provide much insight on, but this may have been due to the fact that there were no contracts between AC and AO. However, he was able to provide an important perspective to how AO views AC and the importance of being able to leverage their resources to benefit AO.

Molly Killingbeck – AC East Hub Lead

As the Lead for the AC East Hub, a high performance training facility in Toronto, Killingbeck works closely with local stakeholder groups within Ontario like AO, York University and the Canadian Sports Institute Ontario to coordinate the training environment for national team members. Her position is an example of the collaboration between AC and AO but
since it is more of an outcome based position, her interview contributions were not well connected to the interview questions. Her role links her closely to the operations side of the collaboration between AC and AO but she is not associated with the management of this relationship.

Lisa Ferdinand – Former Chair of Athletics Ontario Board of Directors

Having served as the BOD Chair during the creation of the new AO strategic plan, Ferdinand was able to provide a great deal of information on how AO developed their plan and its connections to AC. As well, she is a long standing official within AO and has been a part of the AO BOD prior to being Chair. During her tenure as Chair, Ferdinand was able to answer in detail many of the interview questions with detail. Her experience with successful joint ventures with AC and shortcomings in relation to reporting, allowed for her contributions to have a strong connection to the relationship between AC and AO.
Canada’s National Sport Governing Body for Track & Field, Road Running and Cross Country

- Athletics is an integrated, foundational sport for all ages and all abilities, including para athletics, structured around skill development and competition associated with running, jumping, throwing walking and wheeling.

- Athletics in Canada includes sport participants, coaches, officials, clubs, schools, event organizers, provincial/territorial branches, associations and other stakeholders associated with the delivery of athletics programming in Canada.

- As partners, we create opportunities for Canadians of all ages and ability to participate recreationally or competitively in all disciplines of Athletics.

Vision 2020

To provide world leading programs and services in Athletics and to be recognized domestically and internationally for its commitment to:

- providing a positive experience through sport which develops physical literacy and a love of athletics
- systematically developing world class athletes who achieve podium success internationally
- providing opportunities for participants to remain active and competitive through all stages of life.

Mission

Through collective leadership we drive growth in participation; enable improved athletic performance; and provide a positive experience for all in athletics
Athletics in Canada - Core Values

Integrity

• We conduct ourselves with integrity, through ethical decision making, honesty and fairness to earn the trust of participants.

• We create a fun, safe, inclusive and positive environment for all, in line with the principles of Canadian Sport for Life and True Sport Canada.

• We accept responsibility for our actions and hold others accountable to act in accordance with our core values.

Excellence

• We enable individuals to achieve their own level of personal and sporting excellence by offering a diverse range of events and opportunities that fit all range of interests, goals and physical ability.

• We embrace the athletic journey as much as the outcome, recognizing and celebrating excellence at every level of the sport.

Innovation

• We are committed to being creative, innovative and to continuous improvement, ensuring we provide world leading programs to all in our sport.

• We engage with and respond to our members, actively seeking new partnerships that advance the sport and help keep our athletes on the leading edge.
Critical Success Factors

- Continue being a strong, trusted and valued member in the IAAF
- Ensure a collective commitment to athlete, coach and officials’ development
- Ensure united leadership at Athletics Canada & the provincial branches that leads to improved cooperation and alignment toward our common goals
- Develop partnerships with stakeholders outside of traditional base
- Win medals at international championships
- Increase the capacity of athletics organizations to deliver programming
- Ensure effective internal and external marketing and communications making positive use of new digital media platforms and analytical tools
- Create high quality events that improve brand recognition, generate revenue and build support for athletes in Canada
- Increased revenue, particularly from non-government sources, through vehicles like merchandise sales, sponsorship and the Athletics Canada Foundation
- Ensure a regular measurement and evaluation of results against our strategic objectives

Our Mission is supported by three key pillars:

Participation – Performance - Positive Experiences
Participation:

Objective: By 2020, 1) increase membership in core programming and 2) connect with more than 1 million Canadians annually

1. Through continued improvement of our programs, increase the number of associates, including athletes (13,600 to 22,000), coaches (1,500 to 2,500) and officials (900 to 1,200) from a total of 15,000 to at least 25,000 annually.

2. Increase first contact participation to 350,000 annually, primarily through Run, Jump, Throw, Walk, Wheel.

3. Develop partnerships to reach at least 125,000 coaches & athletes in schools annually.

4. Build on existing and develop new partnerships to reach at least 500,000 off track athletes annually

5. Increase the visibility & recognition of our AC brand, programs, teams and events and reach at least 500,000 people who engage with AC through digital activities.

Performance:

Objective: Develop an integrated performance pathway which will enable sustainable success at the Olympic / Paralympic Games and World Championships

6. Improve the quality of coaches, officials and sport science and medicine practitioners through world class training & professional development.

7. Help clubs and schools produce coaches & athletes capable of achieving baseline talent identification standards and create daily training environments which support optimal athlete development.
8. Increase the number of athletes, in all event groups, achieving performance standards that predict a progression to future podium finishes.

9. Consistently field teams which win 5 or more medals at IAAF World Championships & Olympic Games and place Canada among the top 10 nations at the World Championships and Olympic / Paralympics.

Positive Experience:

Objective: 80% of participants consistently confirm having a positive experience with ‘Athletics in Canada’ activities

10. Making use of our feedback & evaluation systems, continuously improve the quality of AC teams & events.

11. Ensure transparent, effective policy development and implementation practices that instill confidence of our membership and all other stakeholders.
APPENDIX F

Athletics Ontario Strategic Plan 2018-2021

2018 – 2021 Strategic Priorities
Message from the President and CEO

Athletics Ontario engaged its member clubs, athletes, coaches, technical officials, and other key stakeholders to create these strategic priorities in order to lead and guide the sport of athletics in Ontario. In developing these priorities, we have reviewed and discussed the feedback and input received, reaffirmed our direction as an organization and identified areas from the previous plan (2014 - 2018) that we needed to amend in order to make these priorities relevant for this four-year cycle.

The Association continues to evolve as we strengthen its leadership, financial position, services, programs and resources. We are confident in our abilities to tackle challenges as they arise and welcome new opportunities in 2018 - 2021.

The Board and management are mindful of its responsibilities at the provincial level to lead the sport from grassroots to the elite levels and beyond. To do so, we have identified four (4) pillars that form the basis of these Priorities: (1) Participation; (2) Sport Development; (3) Competition; and (4) Infrastructure.

Our Participation pillar, which forms an integral part of our overall Strategic Priorities, focuses on five (5) areas:

- Grassroots
- Masters athletes (30+)
- Road; Trail & other new athletic events
- Non-competitive
- Underrepresented groups

Within the Sport Development pillar we will improve upon our Coaching Development Program and focus on expanding the reach of our Technical Officials Development Program.
In partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (OMTCS), the Canadian Sport Institute of Ontario (CSI0) and Athletics Canada (AC), we have aligned closely to provide enhanced financial support and services for our talented athletes. Ontario athlete performances on the national and international stage demonstrate the importance of our development programs.

To ensure our athletes continue to develop and realize their goals, we will be enhancing our athlete development model and expanding it to encompass grassroots participation.

**Competition** is an essential part of our sport from youth programs and school meets through to our Provincial Championships and local, national and international events. We will continue to partner with or directly deliver enhanced competitions, which allow athletes at all levels to reach their full potential.

Under **Infrastructure**, we are developing and embarking on a multiyear plan to address club capacity, athlete training and competition venues, and effective business practices for long-term sustainability of our sport in Ontario.

As a not-for-profit AG is very cognizant of the need to adopt best-practice processes, manage our sport as effectively as possible, and undertake revenue diversification initiatives in order to deliver a healthy and sustainable sport; Above all, we must have a willingness to work together to achieve these ends.

Our vision is to make athletics the sport of choice in the province of Ontario. We look forward to working with our membership, our key stakeholders, and partners, in meeting our challenges and realizing the utmost value with new opportunities in this new cycle.

Lisa Ferdinand
President & Chair

Paul Osland
Chief Executive Officer
Athletics
Ontario

Athletics Ontario is the recognized sport governing body for athletics in Ontario. It is a not-for-profit organization that is athlete-centered, volunteer-based, club-structured and coach-driven. AO is a member of Athletics Canada and works in partnership with other provincial member associations across Canada.

Athletics Ontario provides competition structures and programs from grassroots to elite levels and beyond and operates under an affiliated member club system. Affiliate member clubs and several specialist groups and organizations provide services to registered participants, including access to training venues, coaching, development opportunities and social activities.

In addition, AO provides developmental opportunities for athletes, coaches and technical officials from beginners to high performance.

There is currently a membership base of:

- 4510 athletes in 128 clubs,
- 293 registered coaches,
- 78 associates,
- 174 technical officials, as well as hundreds of volunteers supporting our sport.

Additionally, we had approximately 175,000 participants in grassroots programming and 150,000 U14 participants in Ontario school competitions.
Introduction

In developing the 2018 - 2021 Priorities, Athletics Ontario is committed to providing leadership, as well as, working with its membership, key funding partners, and other stakeholders within and external to our sport.

As Athletics Ontario continues to move forward, we will need to:
+ engage and service new members,
+ develop and deliver new programming, and
+ provide or make available necessary infrastructure to support coaches and technical officials.

AO leadership will work with member clubs, the AO Officials Executive, and other athletics organizations and groups to provide a strong provincial participation strategy. At the same time it is necessary to break down any barriers in communication and information delivery, and to address and embrace the values and principles of a united sport.

Our Sport Development pillar will focus on developing talent and skills in athletes and coaches for the 2021 Canada Summer Games, with long term planning for elevating them to the national carding system and international competition arena (i.e., Pan Am, Commonwealth Games, and Olympics Games and world Championships).

With strong Board leadership, following clear operating plans, streamlined delivery of development and competition models, and minimal duplication among the athletics community in Ontario, we are confident that we can produce an inclusive and integrated system for athletes, coaches, technical officials, volunteers and administrators.

Athletics Ontario’s business model needs a structured revenue diversification plan and business development strategy, which reflects the true value of our assets, in order to provide tangible financial benefits and growth for the sport of athletics and the development of its members. These and other programs and initiatives undertaken by AO will be supported by an effective communications strategy and marketing plan.
Introduction

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Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values

“Athletics” is defined as “all athletics, including, but not restricted to, track and field, running, jumping, throwing, cross country, race walking, road running, ultra running, and competitive athletics held under the auspices of Athletics Canada.”

Purpose

The objectives of Athletics Ontario are to:

- Promote physical, emotional and mental well-being;
- Promote athletics;
- Support and assist athletes in their development;
- Develop courses of instruction for certification of coaches and officials, and;
- Promote and ensure competent delivery of athlete-centre recreational and competitive athletics programs in Ontario through member clubs and athletics communities.

Values

Athletics Ontario values include:

- Health and fitness through sports and throughout life;
- Commitment to excellence and the highest standards of fair play;
- Integrity, loyalty, fair play, sportsmanship, honesty, commitment, dedication, patience, mutual respect and cooperation;
- Inclusiveness, accessibility and affordability in participation;
- Individual development and measurable achievement encouraged by administrators, coaches, officials and staff committed to AO values;
- High ethical and moral standards and practices in athletics and the governance of athletics;
- Prudent, transparent stewardship that demonstrates value for the investment of fiscal and human resources.

Vision

Athletics is the sport of choice in the province of Ontario.

Mission

Promote the sport of Athletics in the province of Ontario and contribute to the health and wellness of all participants through long term athlete-centered development.
Pillars & Foundation

**Vision**

*Athletics is the sport of choice in the Province of Ontario*

**Mission**

Promote the sport of *Athletics* in the Province of Ontario and contribute to the *health and wellness of all participants* through long-term athlete-centered development.

---

**Sport Development**
- Athlete Development
- Coaching Education
- Officials Development

**Participation**
- Masters Athletes
- Road, Trail & Other new athletic events
- Non-Competitive
- Under-represented groups

**Competition**
- Provincial Championships
- Elite Competitions
- Sanctioned Events

**Infrastructure**
- Organization Effectiveness
- Facilities
- Financial Stability

**Leadership**
- Governance
- Communication
- Culture
2018 – 2021 Strategic Priorities: Pillars

The four (4) pillars of the 2018 – 2021 Strategic Priorities summarise our direction for the next four-years. Leadership and a strong foundation (through governance, communications and organizational capacity) will facilitate the implementation of these Priorities.

The pillars are defined as follows:

• **Sport Development** - stable and unified programs for athletes, coaches and technical officials that provide opportunities for growth, technical and professional development; including talent identification for athletes, support and resources leading to the national carding system and international success.

• **Participation** - increase participation in athletics from grassroots, masters, road, trail & snowshoe groups as well as non-competitive and underrepresented groups through delivering of events and programs that support that encourage participation at every level across the sport.

• **Competition** - that enhance participation and performance opportunities for the development of athletes, coaches and technical officials at all levels of the sport.

• **Infrastructure** - a stable and viable organisation through effective business practices, adequate training and competition venues, and sound financial management to increase the value of the sport.
Leadership:

Foundation

Governance

- Provide sound governance and strong leadership in guiding the sport.
- Ensure a focus on strategic planning and policy development, and ensure alignment of the plans and policies of Athletics Ontario and Member Associations.
- Develop further the strategic relationships with other bodies and government agencies.
- Provide advocacy to Government (Federal, Provincial, Local) in areas such as health, community services and education, promoting the benefits of athletics and the need for engagement within their areas of influence.
- Successful delivery of the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, and alignment of Athletics Ontario and Member Clubs plans and policies.
- A provincial approach to strategic direction and policy development and implementation.

Communication

- Foster a strong working relationship among the stakeholders that will ensure buy-in by all to a shared vision in which the best interests of the sport define the key criteria in decision making.
- Enhance stakeholder relationships through effective communication and close engagement.
- Ensure effective engagement and regular two-way communication between Athletics Ontario, Member Associations and key stakeholders.

Culture

- Unified leadership at all levels fostering and encouraging participation and promoting excellence in performance.
- Best practice management structures providing accountability.
- The overall Athletics brand to be regarded as strong, vibrant and as stewards of the sport Athletics Ontario and Member Clubs are to display strong leadership.
- To be inclusive of all stakeholders and respect the tradition and sport.
### Strategic Initiatives & 2021 Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Focus</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>2021 Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar #1 - Sport Development</strong></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="List of actions" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="List of outcomes" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Athlete Development</strong></td>
<td>Ensure communication with athletes is regular and transparent</td>
<td>Increased rate of transition to national ranking programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop Ontario Provincial Team program and High Performance Plan</td>
<td>Growth within U14 and U17 age groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide opportunities for elementary and secondary school kids to participate in AO events</td>
<td>Annual international high-performance event held in Ontario</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish an international high-performance competition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching Education</strong></td>
<td>Support coaching development in alignment with valued LTAD Model</td>
<td>Improved coordination and integration with NCCP Coaching and Mentorship program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offer a wide array of professional development opportunities in various delivery formats</td>
<td>Increased professional development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop partnerships with educational institutions both locally and regionally</td>
<td>Establish educational reach throughout province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officials Development</strong></td>
<td>Support officials development within LTAD (Long Term Officials Development) principles</td>
<td>Increased support provided for pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build strong mentorship program and professional development clinics for volunteers</td>
<td>Enhanced mentorship and development programs created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and pilot new methods of instruction, evaluation and integration</td>
<td>Implemented new methods for officials training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Pillar #2 - Participation** | ![List of actions](#) | ![List of outcomes](#) |
| **Grassroots** | Establish partnerships with Minor Track Association | Increased quality of and numbers within grassroots programs including clubs & school competitions |
| | Develop partnership with elementary schools | Increased dual membership % and transfer rates |
| | Increase quality of grassroots programs | Integrated athletics coaching education for school teachers |
| **Masters Athletics** | Establish formal partnership with Ontario Masters Athletics Association | Increased number of Master's membership |
| | Coordinate and deliver masters events | Successful delivery of Masters events and services |
| | Enhance services offered to Masters group | |
| **Road, Trail and Snowshoe** | Enhance sanction process for Road & establish Trail and other recreational events | Growth of membership within the Road & Trail category |
| | Partner with Snowshoe Canada for combined membership opportunity | New Snowshoe membership established |
| **Non-competitive** | Develop insurance program for non-competitive recreational athletes | Increased recreational membership |
| **Underrepresented Groups** | Provide opportunities for inclusion in AO events or assistance with special events | Increase in the number of underrepresented athletes and coaches participating in AO programs |
| | Development of Girls-in-sport program | |
### Strategic Initiatives & 2021 Outcomes (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Focus</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>2021 Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar #3: Competition</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial Championships</td>
<td>• Ensure competition programs support participation, growth and talent development for athletes, coaches and technical officials</td>
<td>• Delivered Championship competition program to meet the needs of athletes, coaches and officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite Competition</td>
<td>• Implement international elite competition opportunities within the Province of Ontario</td>
<td>• Implemented elite competition with AC &amp; member support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctioned events</td>
<td>• Sanction a range of competitions across ON that allow athletes to participate at their desired level</td>
<td>• Provided a competition structure to support athlete growth, talent ID and development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>Pillar #4: Infrastructure</strong> | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organizational Effectiveness | • Provide a quality management structure and support system for staff | • Effective and efficient staff with required skills in place | • Work structure identified and implemented |
| Facilities | • Develop a multiyear strategy for enhancing and upgrading existing ON athletic facilities | • Facility upgrade plan established and engagement began | • New facility plan developed and presented to Board for next stage |
| Financial Stability | • Develop and maintain sustainable budgets that support strategic &amp; operational planning | • Implemented sustainable year-over-year budgets | • Increased revenue diversification |
| | • Implement a revenue diversity plan | • Increased sponsorship and partnership opportunities | |
| | • Establish a marketing &amp; communication strategy | | |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Foundation - Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong policies and process in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effective board governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintained focus on strategic priorities and policy development, and ensured alignment of supporting plans and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensured successful delivery of the goals within the strategic priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve 2-way communication between members, stakeholders and partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure quality of social media is enhanced to improve our reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enhanced stakeholder relationships through effective engagement and regular communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality social media program implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culture of collaboration, cooperation and high integrity in everything we do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unified cooperation and collaboration at all levels</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Monitoring and Support

The 2016 - 2021 Strategic Priorities will be:

- monitored regularly as part of the agenda at each Board meeting; and
- formally reviewed annually and adjusted, if required, in response to a changing sport environment or new opportunities.

These Strategic Priorities are underpinned by detailed plans that will ensure accountability and a focus on successful outcomes. This includes an annual operational plan tied to our fiscal budget, an Ontario High Performance Plan, and Marketing and Communication Plans.

AO management and staff will develop the supporting operational plans outlining tasks and activities, timelines, key performance indicators and resources required.

Athletics Ontario will ensure its committees and working groups, operating structure and descriptions reflect the goals, priorities and success indicators of these Strategic Priorities.

In addition, Athletics Ontario will seek to develop partnerships with other athletics organizations and associations to better align AO’s goals, roles and responsibilities, resources and identify indicators for delivering these goals in key areas of our Strategic Priorities.
VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Austin E. Roth

PLACE OF BIRTH: London, ON

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1990

EDUCATION: Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, Strathroy, ON, 2008

University of Windsor, BHK., Windsor, ON, 2014