

Report of the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics to the University Council

April 23, 2014

Members (2013-2014): Mark Harrison (Chair), Luke Naeher (Chair-Elect), Peggy Kreshel, Lettie Lockhart (Ed Risler substitute), Annette Poulsen, Jennifer Samp, Gregg Rich, John Mativo, Louise Ashley, Neale Chumbler, David Shipley, (Faculty Athletics Representative), Carla Williams (Athletic Director Representative Ex-Officio)

This is a summary report covering the committee activities during the spring of 2014.

The Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics reviews the Academic Support Group of the Athletic Association and reports to the Council. During the course of the academic year, the committee met with various coaches, student athletics and academic staff to evaluate the facilities and policies of the Academic Support Group of the Athletic Association.

Committee activities:

- Council Chair Silvia Girauda asked the committee to review how concussions sustained by student athletes are addressed by the UGA sports medicine staff and respond to a questionnaire distributed by the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA; an alliance of faculty senates from NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision schools). We met with Ron Courson, Sr. Associate A.D.- Sports Medicine, and reviewed the University of Georgia Athletic Association's Concussion Management Guidelines, which the NCAA uses as an example for other institutions. The committee found the plan and activities of the sports medicine staff to be very comprehensive in attempting to address the concussion issue. The survey was completed and returned to the Coalition.
- The committee met on March 31st with panels of coaches (John Eason, Mark Fox, Chris Haack, Steve Holeman, Andy Landers, Lizzy Stemke), student athletes (approx. 20 representing most of the sports), and academic staff (approx. 15) to discuss academic issues each group faces.
 - Coaches comments of note:
 - The coaches provided positive comments about the academic support staff and activities.
 - They stated that they modify practices around student athlete class commitments.
 - Even though student athletes are allowed by the NCAA to take online courses, they are taking a wait and see approach to see how this develops at UGA.
 - They see the academic support as a recruiting asset when speaking with the parents of student athletics.
 - Team travel schedules and the university-wide 4-course drop policy limit the ability of at-risk student athletes to deal with conflicting responsibilities.
 - Coaches with experiences at other Division 1 universities commented that the UGA support program was more comprehensive than other institutions.
 - Student comments of note:
 - Overall the student athletes were very pleased with the academic services provided by the Academic Support Group.
 - While their daily schedules are highly structured, most see some advantage to this as a means to teach time management skills.

- The coaches are willing to modify schedules to accommodate class commitments on a case-by-case basis.
- The primary problems experienced by the students centered on class scheduling and attendance policies in certain courses. The students found the vast majority of instructors willing to work out a solution. As was mentioned in the past, the attendance policy within certain first year courses presents a problem for meeting team travel commitments.
- Some student athletes expressed concern that in courses where the lowest exam or assignment is dropped, they oftentimes have no choice in which item to drop if they had to miss class due to team travel commitments. This actually places them in a situation where they do not have the same flexibility as non-athletes in the course.
- They appreciate instructor use of technology such as eLC.
- While the staff provides support in career preparedness, there may be a need to make the student athletes more knowledgeable of the support.
- Academic Support Staff comments of note:
 - Staff members are assigned to different teams and functions. They find the coaches to be supportive, and the vast majority of teaching faculty responsive to the demands placed on the student athletes.
 - They also have some concern about online courses. While online courses would provide increased flexibility in class scheduling, an online course policy for student athletes and monitoring of online courses would be needed to prevent abuse.

The Academic Support Group provides a high level of support to UGA student athletes. The staff monitors issues and is willing to address them in a positive manner. The committee has no recommended changes for the program to address.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Mark A. Harrison, Ph.D.
Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics