

Report of the Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics to the University Council

April 18, 2013

Members (2012-2013): Mark Harrison (Chair), Spencer Baird, Alan Campbell, Peggy Kreshel, Lettie Lockhart, Rodney Mauricio, Adenola Osinubi, Annette Poulsen, Jennifer Samp, David Shipley, (Faculty Athletics Representative), Carla Williams (Athletic Director Representative Ex-Officio)

This is a summary report covering the committee meetings during the 2012-2013 academic year.

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.

The committee meetings for 2012-2013 were:

- October 3 – Elected Mark Harrison as Chair of the committee. Most of the committee members were new to the committee so the session was used to educate the new members about the committee's responsibilities and to introduce them to the academic workings of the Academic Support Group.
- October 31 – The committee met with Glada Horvat, Senior Associate AD for Academics & Eligibility and Rhonda Kilpatrick, Director of Academics & Eligibility. They reviewed the admissions process, eligibility rules, and progress rates for the student athletes in the program. They provided multi-year data for UGA student athletes and described what the data meant and how the UGA program compares with others in the nation. Overall, the committee was impressed with mechanisms to record and report these activities and was very impressed with the success rates that UGA student athletes achieve. The data supports the efforts of the staff in these functions.
- March 18 – The committee met with Ted White, Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services. He described how the UGA Athletic Association standards compare to the NCAA standards and how the staff provides the support services for student athletes to use as they try to meet and exceed these standards. He described the organization of the unit and the responsibilities of the tutors, mentors, class checker, and other staff activities. He also demonstrated the student athlete portal that the staff uses to track individual progress and to review the activities of the tutors and mentors. In a few cases, the staff has difficulties obtaining updated grading information from instructors. The committee was impressed with the efforts to track, advise, tutor, and mentor the student athletes.
- April 15 – The committee met with panels of student athletes (approx. 20 representing most of the sports), coaches (6 coaches), and academic staff (approx. 15) to discuss academic issues each group faces.
 - Overall the student athletes were very pleased with the academic support services provided by the Academic Support Group. A few individuals commented on the difficulty they had in making the transition from high school to college in the first year. There was awareness of the support system, but they admitted they were reluctant to utilize it initially. Some of the more senior students on the various teams offer useful suggestions to the first year students concerning the support services, but this varies from team to team. The coaches are willing to modify schedules to accommodate class commitments on a case-by-case basis. The tutoring support received high praise from the students. There was a feeling that some student athletes needed less mentoring than others and that the required mentoring system could be more flexible. At least 2 student athletes transferred into UGA from other Division 1 universities and noted that UGA's academic support was far superior to what they had experienced at the other institutions.

The primary problems experienced by the students centered on class scheduling and attendance policies in certain courses. This is not new, and the students found the vast majority of instructors willing to work out a solution. Two scheduling conflicts that do not seem to be as flexible in finding a reasonable resolution involve block scheduling of courses and attendance policies where there are no excused absences. A new system using block class schedules by some academic programs presents a relatively new problem in scheduling practices. The required attendance policy within certain first year courses presents a problem for meeting team travel commitments.

- The coaches also provided positive comments about the academic support staff and activities. They stated that they work practices around student athlete class commitments. They did have three concerns. One is a continuing concern that UGA's commitment to academic success by the student athlete can be used against programs during recruiting time. They were not asking for reduced academic emphasis, just stating the issue. A second concern was that with such great support, some students might be slow to develop certain levels of independence. This appears to vary greatly among the student athletes and is more of a case-by-case concern that might require some attention. The other main issue brought forward by the coaches concerned the expanded SEC membership and future TV contracts. This issue affects the various teams differently. Some are now required to play all the other teams in the conference in the regular season. This has eliminated some open dates that traditionally were scattered throughout the season. Future TV contracts may require teams to be available to play on varying days/nights of the week, which can complicate scheduling of classes around the team travel commitments. This is a relatively new issue that should be monitored. One of the coaches with relatively recent experiences at another Division 1 university commented that the UGA support program was much more expansive compared to the other institution.
- The Academic Support Group staff members are assigned to different teams and functions. The staff members find the coaches to be supportive, and the vast majority of teaching faculty responsive to the demands placed on the student athletes. They explained that the monitoring system used to insure tutor quality is composed of unannounced checks of the tutor sessions using a standardized checksheet coupled with feedback from the students and tutors. Two developing areas that might need more attention by the staff in the near future are in the areas of developing a strategy for on-line courses and investigating the further use of technology to address some of the tutoring and class schedule problems. The staff members seem aware of these items and are willing to investigate solutions. Some of the staff had similar positions with other Division 1 institutions and noted that the UGA program is much more inclusive of all student athletes and more comprehensive.

Overall, the committee was impressed with the Academic Support Group. UGA appears to be unique among major universities with large-scale athletic programs in providing this level of academic support to student athletes. The committee has no major recommended changes for the program to address. The staff appears aware of the continuing issues and is willing to address them in a positive manner.

Respectively submitted,



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