

In The SAAC

Volume III Issue I Fall 2005

The Voice of the D-I National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee

APR

– Michael Piscetelli,
Atlantic Coast Conference

The Academic Progress Rate (APR) initiative, to help boost student-athlete's graduation rate, is well underway. The intention of the APR is not to hurt or penalize a student-athlete, team or institution, but rather safeguard the path for success. The APR is a great tool for student-athletes to take a more conscious approach to academics, thus fulfilling the role of the student in student-athlete. The results of the APR are going to be assessed in real time, opposed to the old version which took years to compile data and unfairly penalized student-athletes who weren't responsible.

A team's APR is a point system based on how many of its student-athletes return to their institutions academically eligible each semester. A student-athlete can earn two points for their team every semester. If a student-athlete is not academically eligible based on the previous semester, one of those points is lost. If a student-athlete

does not return to their institution, whether it's because they have dropped out of school or transferred, another point is lost regardless of their academic standing. If a student-athlete does not return and was academically ineligible according to the NCAA's recently implemented standards, both points are forfeited. Every athlete's score is inserted into

a formula to reflect the team's expected graduation rate. Penalties are assessed if that rate falls below 50 percent.

It is worthy to note that teams with small rosters are given a small break with the implementation of a confidence boundary so that they

(See APR on page 4)



D-I SAAC members discuss the upcoming years agenda, concerns and goals for student-athletes in the upcoming year.

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Meghan McGrane and JJ Young have some best practices for getting through the books during the season.

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Molly McLaughlin gets you THINKING about how student-athletes can make all the difference in the world.

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Keeping up in class, On The Road

- Meghan McGrane, Big East

- JJ Young, Big West

A major dilemma that affects nearly all student-athletes is the occasional conflict between academic and athletic time demands. Student-athletes face issues such as missing class on a regular basis, having to complete make-up exams, and turning in assignments early or late. Thus, the problem arises as to how professors should treat student-athletes due to their athletic commitments compared to the rest of the student population on campus.

On the first day of each semester, student-athletes have already received their first assignment. It usually entails introducing themselves to each professor and engaging them in a conversation about their obligations as a student-athlete. This conversation is designed to be a gateway to a positive and functional relationship between student-athlete and professor. For many student-athletes, this initial conversation can take on one of two tones. One, the student-athlete may encounter a teacher that is flexible and willing to work with the varying schedule of the athlete to minimize the effects of missed class time. More often than not, this is what the student-athlete finds.

The second type of conversation involves a professor who may view student-athletes in a poor light due to prior experiences and is unwilling to work with the schedule the student-athlete presents to him or her. Working around an athlete's time demands may be looked upon as letting the student-athlete gain an unfair advantage and could disrupt the schedule already in place. Often, professors look negatively upon accommodating student-athletes due to a past athlete's abuse of the system or uncooperative attitude.

The critical avenue that student-athletes can take is communication and cooperation. The student-athlete should try to make sure that they are prompt in arriving to class with all coursework and are sitting in an area where the professor can see that they are attending each class. Also, make an effort to speak with the teacher frequently whether it is in class discussion, question clarification after class, or office hours held by the professor. By doing these three basics, the student-athlete can immediately send a message to the professor that he or she is serious about their class and is ready to give all that is necessary to succeed.

It is the job of the student-athlete to forge a plan of how to properly address the conflicts between

academia and athletics through taking tests early or with another section, turning in assignments before the due date, and doing extra work in order to make up missed participation points. In addition to these things, the student athlete can inform the professor if they are attending tutoring or study sessions for their respective class and what extra information or notes they should be covering in order to maximize their studying time due to missed class time. If the student-athlete does all in their power to make an extra effort and the professor is still not conducive to athletic obligations, then it is necessary for the student-athlete to meet with coaches, academic advisors, or their faculty athletic representative to establish a plan or pick up a new class.

University policies on how to treat student-athlete time demands and missed classes differ through each institution across the nation, so there is no standard procedure across the board. It is very important that student-athletes know who their faculty athletic representatives are in case he or she runs into a teacher that will not work with their schedule and mediation needs to occur. An athletic department and university may get involved by initiating programs where athletes and faculty interact with each other in order to foster healthy relationships. A number of universities have corrected this issue by enacting a professor "buddy program" where each team has a specific faculty representative that they can voice concerns to while building a relationship with the academic community on campus. The professor then gains the opportunity to come to all athletic events and get involved in the lives of students on their respective campuses. Ultimately it is the job of the student-athlete to proactively create a bridge between academia and athletics and create ways to improve upon this problem. ^{SAAC}

Corrections

There were no corrections from previous issue of "In The SAAC." If additions or subtractions need to be made, please contact the editor via e-mail. For any errors the editor sincerely apologizes. Please forward your concerns to Chas Davis:

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From the far right to left, Beth Waggoner, Big South conference, and Willie Brown of the Southeastern Conference, join NCAA staff and members of the Division I Management Council to discuss the best ways student-athletes can get their voice heard and be active on campus. This was the first time the SAAC had the opportunity to meet with the Management Council informally during the July meetings. The event was a great way to network with the Management Council, allowing them to get to know those who represent all Division I student-athletes better.

SAAC Spotlight

Each issue we feature a campus SAAC that is making waves in their athletic department, on campus, and / or in the community. If you have a great SAAC that you would like featured in the next issue or would like further information regarding the programs in this piece, please send an email to: bd2928@albany.edu

- Brad Daniels, America East Conference

Back in the spring of 2004, while conducting one of their usual meetings, Elon University's SAAC invited a few members from the Students Against Sexual Assault committee to join them. The SASA members came to the SAAC because they felt that their message of sexual assault awareness was not being carried out effectively throughout the student body or in the community. Together they decided that they wanted to host an event that would raise awareness of sexual assault among college students. This meeting turned out to be the beginning of a yearlong planning process. Taking a page out of the University of North Carolina's book, Barbara Boyette, Assistant Director of Athletics, suggested a 5K run that would benefit both the SASA and Crossroads, a local sexual assault response and resource organization.

From the beginning of the preparation, two men's cross country members took the lead roles in planning this event. John Pumbleton and Danny Quinne "really spear headed this whole event," Boyette said. "They are both really great guys to work with and are the reason this event took place and had the success it did." Throughout the course of the year, arrangements were made with the Elon town police to donate their time to monitor the public roads the runners/walkers would cross. The organizations worked together to find local businesses that were willing to donate supplies and prizes that would be given away to participants. The SAAC members even involved their own teams, prearranging the men's basketball and men's tennis teams to serve as course volunteers on race day.

After twelve months of planning, the Inaugural Run for Respect took place on April 16, 2005. Overall, 130 runners/walkers, including Elon's men's soccer team, participated in the 5K. Both students and members of Elon's community came out to support this worthy cause. Around \$400 was raised and later donated to Crossroads for much needed funding. "We didn't know what to expect from this year's run," said Pumbleton. "But we are very pleased with the turn out; we didn't expect so many students to attend on an early Saturday morning..." The Elon SAAC and SASA have already begun planning for next year's event. So far they have three commitments from local businesses to be sponsors. More importantly, this event has sparked an interest in sexual assault prevention within both the school and the community. ^{SAAC}

THINK

-Molly McLaughlin, Big Ten

THINK. Take a minute and reflect on your summer - some of its most exciting and memorable experiences. The Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee thought about its summer, and the unanimous highlight was the annual July National SAAC meeting, held this year in sunny Anaheim, California. The four day meeting saw our committee engage in lively discussions, debate many challenging ideas, and become educated on various issues currently affecting the well-being of every student-athletes' collegiate experience.

While many people associate Southern California with *The O.C.* and *Laguna Beach*, the Division I SAAC experienced a different "reality." The commencement of July's meeting brought together the DI, DII, and DIII National SAACs to participate in a community service project serving young people living in Orange County. For the second year, the National SAACs joined with Teaching Helping Inspiring Nurturing Kids (THINK) in Santa Ana for an inspirational day of mentoring and bonding with youth in southern California. This experience opened our eyes to the sad reality of California, which is all too familiar for the children who live in this area - but which is almost always hidden.

Allow me to paint the scene in Santa Ana, where one of the twenty California THINK centers is located in Heninger Elementary School. Santa Ana is famous, however, not for the glitz and glamour for which California is most notable. Neither is it on the map for sight-seeing the homes of the stars, possessing the best beaches, or hosting the wildest parties. Santa Ana has hit No. 1 on a more unfortunate chart as the leading hardship city in America. This is where THINK enters the scene, exactly where the community needs direction and guidance. THINK Together is an after school program "dedicated to assisting educationally at-risk youth in low-income areas. THINK provides academic support and homework assistance in order for them to stay and succeed in school." The majority of its students are non-native, English speaking students.

When the National SAACs came by for the day, they first focused on tackling the students' academic projects: quizzing them on spelling words, listening to

them read stories aloud and helping them solve arithmetic problems. Then it was finally time to take the field and play. The future student-athletes rotated through various stations featuring fundamentals in basketball, soccer, football, and baseball. The children, ranging in ages from eight to eleven, experienced new sports and were challenged in their favorite sports by some of today's top collegiate athletes. Throughout the day, the students genuinely appreciated trying new sports and exhibited great sportsmanship while playing games or participating in contests and relays. Interestingly, watching the youth play with a pure sense of love and joy in these athletic activities rekindled a passion for athletics in the collegiate student-athletes.

As dusk crept up on the afternoon, the children heard one last message from the National SAACs: that their futures are full of exciting possibilities! The importance of academics was stressed as a key to success. While athletics may open doors for them, it is academics which will determine how successful they are in life. The National SAACs complimented the children on their diligence in tackling their homework before going out to play, as well as commending them for trying their hand at new games without fear or inhibition.

By the end of the day, the National SAACs had served the community of Santa Ana well by conveying to these children that they are just as important to society as the collegiate student-athletes. By taking the time to go beyond themselves, the National SAACs instilled in these young residents of Santa Ana a new sense of pride and empowerment.

Through the SAAC structure, student-athletes are enabled not only to discuss but to also take action with issues pertaining to student-athlete well-being along with their preparation for life after collegiate athletics. However, SAACs also have the power to make a difference in the lives of youth. Many SAACs have made lasting contributions by serving various communities; and after THINKing about it, that is the gift that continues to give back.

If your SAAC is looking for a community service project, the National SAAC's website provides a link with various organizations. ^{SAAC}

APR

Continued from Page 1

are held to the same standard as those with larger squads.

The NCAA realizes there are situations that are outside of our control as student-athletes as well as the control of the university or college we attend. With this in mind it is possible for modifications to occur. Circumstances such as an

institution dropping a student-athlete's major, or a student-athlete being drafted to a professional league would lead to a modified score. Other situations that would constitute modification would be a life threatening illness experienced by a student-athlete or someone in the family, or an unfortunate death in their family. In any of these cases, the point awarded for a student-athlete's return is not factored

into the final score.

Although some cases are worthy of adjustment, a number of scenarios have not been given relief due to the consensus that student-athletes and/or the institutions have the ability to make their own alterations, thus avoiding the loss of APR points. A student-athlete leaving because of a lack of playing time

(See *Counters* on page 5)

Q&A In The SAAC

- Corey Steven, Horizon League

Q: "What does the National Division I SAAC do for the average student-athlete?"

A: The National SAAC is comprised of one student-athlete from every Division I conference. We meet three times a year to discuss national issues that affect conferences, universities, and student-athletes. The SAAC generates a student-athlete voice within the NCAA structure while soliciting responses to proposed NCAA legislation. The SAAC's voice helps conferences and subcommittees consider potential NCAA legislation while actively participating in the administrative process of athletics programs and the NCAA. We also enhance the total student-athlete experience by promoting student-athlete well-being and fostering a positive student-athlete image.

Basically, we are your institutional SAAC on a larger scale. If a student-athlete comes to an NCAA SAAC representative with an issue concerning their welfare, it is our duty to represent you in the best possible way. A couple of examples highlighting how we have promoted student-athlete welfare this past year was our strong support for financial aid deregulation and opposition to the elimination of non-traditional playing seasons. Our voice was heard and we hopefully can help benefit all Division I student-athletes.

Q: If I am declared ineligible because of an honest mistake, is there any way I can regain my eligibility?

A: Yes, the Student-Athlete Reinstatement Committee will review your request and may do one of three things. They may reinstate eligibility without conditions, reinstate eligibility with conditions (withholding/repayment), or not reinstate eligibility at that institution or at any institution. It is important to understand that less than one percent of all cases processed by the reinstatement staff and / or committee result in permanent ineligibility. Often the student-athlete is given the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their circumstance. In any example, if the student-athlete is declared ineligible for a mistake made by someone else other than himself/herself, the committee will recognize that and keep it in mind when making their decision. The committee is only trying to determine the degree of fault that lies with the student-athlete or someone else involved.

An NCAA member institution must request reinstatement on behalf of a student-athlete. He or she cannot request reinstatement. Reinstatement requests are processed on behalf of member institutions since they are responsible for certifying the eligibility of student-athletes who compete on their individual campuses. There are many factors involved in deciding whether or not a student-athlete's eligibility will be returned. Please go to www.NCAA.org for more information or discuss with your Athletic Academic Advisors about your current situation. They ultimately are the ones who will be able to help you. ^{SAAC}



Ivy Group SAAC representative and Dartmouth basketball student-athlete, Johnathan Ball, gives a young THINK participant a lift and a hand in becoming the best he can be.

Counters

Continued from Page 4

or wanting to depart because of a coaching change will not warrant adjustment. In addition, modifications will not occur when a student-athlete has been suspended for academic or disciplinary issues by the institution. Student-athletes who leave their institution to avoid academic reform penalties or because financial aid has not been renewed will also count against their previous team's score.

Another question that might arise is the repercussions and rewards that will be in store for teams. The first year of poor performance would result in a warning. The second year would lead to restrictions on recruiting, loss of scholarships and if a subsequent third year were to follow, a loss of post-season play would be implemented. A fourth year of underperformance could result in the loss of post-season play for all of the university's teams. Some of these penalties might appear tough, but are not meant to be punitive as much as they are intended to draw attention to the university/team that may not be doing all it can to encourage its student athletes to graduate. It is a small price to pay if more student athletes earn what they are in college for – a degree. Scholarships cannot be taken away from current student-athletes, but must be forfeited for future recruits.

On the flip side of the penalties are the rewards. The final verdict on the rewards has not been decided, but there is potential for some fashion of public recognition or monetary incentive. Top performing universities/teams as well as those that have improved upon their previous standing will be awarded these honors. However, these will undergo further discussion in upcoming meetings with hopes of implementing the incentives for the 2006-2007 academic year. **SAAC**

The Top 10 Reasons YOU Want To Go To The NCAA Leadership Conference **-Beth Waggoner, Big South Conference**

#10 Learn to lead at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, FL... It's not called the "happiest place on earth" for no reason!!! Here's the chance to see Disney at its best and with some of the strongest student-athlete leaders the NCAA has.

#9 It's a Vacation with a Purpose... Being at Disney World is always fun, but adding a purpose to the equation only ups the level of your experience. That's why the NCAA brings in speakers, facilitators and of course YOU. They want to set you up for success by teaching you how to turn your goals into successes by placing purpose in everything that you do.

#8 The Chance to Spend Five Days with over 400 Student-Athletes Representing all Three Divisions... Ask anybody who has gone in previous years: YOU WILL MAKE TONS OF NEW FRIENDS and connections that will last a lifetime! You also get a look at the diversity of sports, ethnicities, personalities and backgrounds of the 360,000 student athletes represented from the NCAA.

#7 Scouting Opportunities... Just like your coaches do for every match, the NCAA Leadership Conference allows you to watch other leadership styles and skills and ask yourself some questions about your own tendencies. Are you a manager or somebody who inspires others with ideas? In which areas can you become stronger?

#6 Color Groups... This is your identity and your family while at Leadership Conference. There are approximately 30-40 people in each color group and it's with this group that you solve problems and act out challenges. Color groups are great places to identify your strengths and weaknesses and cultivate a plan of action to maximize your leadership back at campus. They are also awesome networking circles for the future!

#5 Inspiration From Those Who Have Struggled and Come Out on Top... The NCAA brings in fantastic speakers to motivate and inspire the athletes who attend Leadership Conference each year. These are members of the athletic community who have risen above challenges and done more than simply win championships; they've become champions by taking it a step further and making a direct impact on those who look up to them because of their athletic pursuits.

#4 Learn How to Take Action... At the Leadership Conference, each student-athlete is asked to identify one challenging area at their institution (e.g. gender discrimination) and then one particular instance of circumstance they can pinpoint for change (e.g. fans sexually harassing female student-athletes during a match). This is called an ACTION PLAN and it is composed of an idea to combat a challenge, steps that need to be taken and the people/resources that are necessary to get the goal accomplished. Each participant is asked to implement their action plan when they return to their institution and then submit the results back to the NCAA. From here, several of the most successful plans are brought back for display the next year.

#3 Being Chosen is an Honor. Attendance is a Privilege... Every school that has a Champs/Life Skills Program with a SAAC is eligible to nominate four student-athletes each year for Leadership Conference. Only one out of these four is chosen. If you are picked, it means that with diversity and equity in mind, the NCAA believes that you are the cream of the crop at your institution and wants to give you the training to be an effective leader at your school and in the world!

#2 This is a ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY... You can only attend Leadership Conference once, so strive to be your school's representative this year! Talk with last year's attendee and find out first hand about the magic that happens at Leadership Conference. Many remember the experience as one of their best from college!

#1 The Chance to Lead... Whether you were born to take charge or lead by quiet example—there is always more room for growth. The best way is to actively practice these skills, and for five days, NCAA Leadership Conference participants get this opportunity. If you are interested in growing for yourself and for your school as a leader, PLEASE ASK YOUR CHAMPS/LIFESKILLS COORDINATOR ABOUT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE!!! We want YOU! ^{SAAC}