

External Evaluation of Athletics Academic Support Services at Washington State University

Committee Report

February 2011

The NCAA requires that institutions must demonstrate all academic support services provided to student-athletes are subject to a comprehensive, written evaluation and approval once every four years by appropriate academic authorities outside athletics who do not have day-to-day responsibilities in the academic support services area (NCAA Bylaw 22.2.2.2 (d) and Operating Principle 2.2 – Measurable Standard 7 in the 2010-11 NCAA Division I Athletics Certification Handbook). During Academic Year 2010 – 2011 the external evaluation is being conducted in conjunction with the completion of the NCAA Cycle 3 Certification Self-Study currently in progress at Washington State University.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide recommendations if needed that can improve the overall effectiveness of the institution's academic support services for student-athletes. Areas reviewed in the evaluation include the eight required areas specified by the NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation Guide and six additional areas from Operating Principle 2.2, Measurable Standard 8. The following areas were evaluated:

1. Academic counseling/advising resources and services;
2. Tutoring;
3. Academic progress monitoring and reporting;
4. Assistance for student-athletes with special academic needs;
5. Assistance for at-risk student-athletes;
6. Academic support services facilities;
7. Academic evaluation of prospective student-athletes;
8. Student-athlete degree selection;
9. Learning assessments;
10. Success skills;
11. Study hall;
12. First-year/transfer orientation;
13. Mentoring;
14. Post eligibility programs.

In September 2010, Dr. Elson S. Floyd, President, Washington State University, appointed a committee to conduct the external evaluation of academic support services provided to student-athletes. The committee consisted of the following members:

- Mr. Kenneth R. Vreeland, Committee Chair (appointed January 24, 2011),
Special Assistant to the Provost and Executive Vice President

- Dr. Kenneth L. Casavant, Committee Chair (September 10, 2010 to January 24, 2011) , Faculty Athletic Representative and Professor, School of Economic Sciences
- Dr. Mary F. Wack, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean, University College
- Dr. Erich J. Lear, Professor of Music
- Dr. Susan L. Poch, Associate Dean, University College and Director, Center for Advising and Career Development

Sources of Information

During the review process the committee examined the following materials:

- 2009 Washington State University Self-Study Report for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, for Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- 2010-11 Student-Athlete Handbook
- NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation Guide
- University Admissions policies and procedures
- University reinstatement procedures
- Department of Intercollegiate Athletics Organizational Chart
- Student-athlete Development Organizational Chart
- Information provided by the Athletic Department including APR Recovery plan for football, graduation rates, Academic Progress Rate reports, semester grade summaries for each sport, and academic policies and procedures
- Student-Athlete Development budget 2010-11
- Senior Exit Interviews
- Academic Support Services Self Assessment
- Three years of Student-Athlete Attitude and Performance Surveys by the Athletic Council, coordinated by the Faculty Athletics Representative

Individuals and Groups Contacted/Interviewed

The evaluation committee conducted a survey and interviews with key individuals and groups to examine the existing policies and procedures of academic support services for student-athletes. Over 150 individuals were involved in these interviews. They were selected because of their knowledge and perspective concerning the academic support services provided to student-athletes. Questions used during the interview process were taken from the NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation Guide. Listed below are the names of individuals and groups interviewed. (Note: when more than one individual was interviewed, the total number for that group is shown in parentheses)

- Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (22)
- Academic Associate Deans from all colleges (12)
- Faculty Senate leadership (4)
- Faculty, includes some noted below (20)

- Athletic Council (18) including the following faculty: Dr. Barry Swanson, Professor/Scientist, School of Food Science, Dr. Nick Lovrich, Regents Professor of Political Science, Dr. Tom Brigham, Professor of Psychology, and Dr. Monica Johnson, Associate Professor of Sociology
- University Compliance Committee (21)
- Senior Athletics Department staff (6)
- Head Coaches (Baseball, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Football, Men's Golf, Women's Golf, Rowing, Soccer, Swimming, Tennis, Men's and Women's Track and Field, Cross Country, and Volleyball (13)
- Assistant Coaches (13)
- Mr. Chris Cook, Associate Director of Athletics, Student-athlete Development and staff (9)
- Mr. Steve Robertello, Associate Director of Athletics, Compliance
- Ms. Terese King, Director, New Student Programs
- Ms. Ruth Ryan, Academic Advisor, Center for Advising and Career Development
- Dr. Milton Lang, Associate Vice President, Student Life and Development
- Mr. Manual Acevedo, Director, Multicultural Student Services
- Dr. Judy Schultz, Clinical Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology
- Ms. Sharon Ericsson, Academic Advisor, Center for Advising and Career Development
- Mr. Robert Crawley, Disability Specialist, Disability Resource Center
- Dr. William Dougherty, Clinical Associate Professor, Psychology
- Dr. Patricia Ericsson, Associate Professor, English
- Dr. Selena Castro, Program Director, University College
- Mr. Patrick Johnson, Co-coordinator, Undergraduate Writing Center

It should be noted that throughout the process, Athletic Department staff members were very responsive and cooperative in providing requested information while respecting the independence required by the overall review process.

Overview of Academic Support Services

It was evident in the committee's interactions with the Academic Support Services staff that they were focused on accomplishing the unit's stated mission as provided below:

"Washington State University and Cougar Athletics are committed to helping all student-athletes identify and meet their academic goals leading to graduation and career development. Our student-athlete development staff is committed to providing each student-athlete with a structured learning environment that encourages each individual to develop independence and to mature mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially."

Washington State University provides academic support and advising to student-athletes through the WSU Athletics Student-Athlete Development office. Under the auspices of Director of Athletics Bill Moos, Senior Associate Director Pam Bradetich and

Associate Director Chris Cook, the eight-member staff works hand-in-hand with WSU's student-athletes on a daily basis. The staff includes a Senior Learning Specialist, a Learning Specialist, an Assistant Director for Retention and Graduation, an Assistant Director for Education Curriculum Development, the Academic Resource Center and Tutoring Coordinator, an administration manager/advisor and a Coordinator for Career and Personal Development. These staff members also function as academic advisors/counselors for student-athletes. Organizational charts for the Athletic Department and the Student-Athlete Development Group are provided at Appendices A and B.

The Academic Support Services staff provides comprehensive support for all student-athletes. The type and level of programming, monitoring and support provided to each student-athlete is dependent upon the individual needs of the student-athlete, based on a review of existing academic information and academic assessments administered by the academic support services staff and/or University Testing Services. The Academic Support Services staff also encourages student-athletes to access existing university resources available to all students. The academic counselors assist student-athletes with class selection, major selection, graduation planning, career planning, time management, goal setting, study skills and learning strategies. The counselors work closely with University faculty to monitor grades and class attendance. The academic staff also communicates with staff and faculty to provide assistance with rescheduling class assignments and exams missed due to team travel.

The Student-Athlete Development (SAD) unit (which includes the Academic Support Services unit) initiates support for academic and personal success early on during on campus recruiting visits with prospective student-athletes, and continues providing support and services until student-athletes graduate from WSU. The Student-Athlete Development staff is committed to developing and implementing comprehensive and effective programs to assist student-athletes in identifying and meeting their academic and career goals, ultimately leading to graduation and employment after graduation. The unit utilizes a "life skills" approach when assisting student-athletes.

The unit's focus is the student-athlete and his or her personal development. Staff reinforces the value of maximizing the educational and career opportunities at WSU and, most importantly, emphasizes the importance of student-athletes taking personal responsibility and ownership in developing their academic and career plans. The 93 percent graduation rate for those seniors who have exhausted their eligibility over the past 10 years, second among all Pacific-10 Conference institutions, reflects the unit's commitment to academic success and maintaining a balance between academics and athletics.

The Academic Resource Center (ARC), a unit within the SAD, is equipped with desktop computers for use by student-athletes. Each student-athlete is provided with a personal account for this facility. The ARC is staffed with trained learning facilitators who provide academic assistance and assist students with learning through technology, while reinforcing a positive, disciplined learning environment.

Dedicated to the Washington State University institutional goal of providing a premier education and transformative experience that prepares students to excel in a global society and the Athletic Department's mission of ensuring the optimal student-athlete experience, the P.R.O.W.L. student-athlete Personal Development Program is committed to promoting the student-athlete's life-long process of learning and development toward excellence through five areas of focus: New-Student-Athlete Seminar, Career Development, Student-Athlete Mentoring Program, Community Outreach and Services and the P.R.O.W.L. Resource and Referral Center. Emphasis is placed on the athlete's individual endeavors in academic, athletic, career, personal and community efforts while at WSU and later in life. The P.R.O.W.L. program strives to empower the student-athlete to:

- Explore options and identify resources to make informed decisions in an ever-changing environment.
- Identify personal strengths to achieve goals and fulfill potential.
- Remove obstacles to exploration, leadership, self-expression, and creativity toward value clarification, philosophical development, and personal growth.
- Promote individual responsibility and encourage self-determination.
- Foster interracial harmony, intercultural understanding, and recognition of our interdependence.
- Achieve a balanced sense of emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual well being.
- Participate fully in the life of both the collegiate community and the community at large.

The Student-Athlete Development unit works programmatically in coordination with the University's Center for Advising and Career Development (CACD), a unit within the University College, located in Lighty Student Services Building. Recently, due to the work of CACD and faculty who maintain close ties with private-sector partners, the Wall Street Journal published a survey of employers that listed Washington State University as one of the top 25 universities nationwide for companies seeking new hires. This accomplishment was noted by President Floyd in a Perspectives Column which can be found at <http://president.wsu.edu/perspectives/092910.html>. Resources and services provided by this unit are available to all students. During the student-athlete's first year, the Athletic Department begins the career development process with resume building in the New Student-Athlete Seminar. Throughout the student-athlete's tenure at WSU, career advising continues with their team academic counselors, in conjunction with the CACD.

Prior to discussion of the Academic Support Services Committee's observations and recommendations, an overall assessment of academic support services is merited. In general, the committee found a noteworthy list of academic support services including many implemented in recent years. The 2009 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Evaluation Committee Report that resulted in the reaffirmation of the University's accreditation had the following positive comments about intercollegiate

athletics and academic support services that validated that the interests of student-athletes are well served:

“Intercollegiate athletics fields more than 400 student-athletes in 17 sports with equitable access for males and females. The program maintains a philosophy for supporting students in pursuing their education while learning from the engagement in Division-I sports. Recent NCAA graduation rates may be the strongest evidence of their success with a 93 percent graduation rate for entering freshmen student-athletes exhausting eligibility over the past ten years. The most recent data indicates all WSU teams maintain a 2.73 or higher cumulative GPA. The program runs a daily eligibility report on its athletes to ensure accountability, compliance, and effective intervention. The faculty athletics representative tracks and certifies this. “

“The program complies with NCAA and federal regulations. There is appropriate institutional oversight for Cougar Athletics which also holds itself accountable for knowing and following all appropriate policies and procedures related to this level of education and athletic competition. An award winning program, they have been recognized nationally for department commitment to academic excellence, career development, community service, diversity, and personal development. “

“Admissions procedures are handled by the Admissions office. At times, students who are athletes are admitted under the Extraordinary Talent Policy. The policy was developed in 2003 by the Faculty Senate and Office of Admissions. Student-athletes admitted under this policy have additional support and attention paid to them. Student assessment of their experience is secured through the New Student-Athlete semester evaluation, Senior Exit survey, and personal interviews. These have led to revisions in academic support such as involvement in a summer bridge program for entering students and academic progress reports at the four-week, eight-week and twelve-week mark of the semester.”

Key improvements noted by the Academic Support Services Committee not previously mentioned include:

- Effective in 2009 all incoming and undecided student-athletes must be advised by Student-Athlete Development staff. All student-athletes certified in a major continue to receive advising support from athletic academic advisors/counselors in addition to their university academic advisor. Staff provide advising for student-athletes to ensure they understand university and NCAA requirements. Advising sessions also ensure that academic schedules meet NCAA Progress Toward Degree requirements. Athletic advisors focus on class selection, major selection, and tracking progress toward a chosen degree program, including the development of graduation plans with “time to graduate” as an important component. The Student-Athlete Development staff’s responsibilities include fostering, assisting, and informing the student-athlete of their best academic options. Athletic academic advisors provide pre and post advising support for certified student-athletes to ensure they understand university and NCAA

requirements, and to ensure academic schedules are realistic and meet NCAA requirements.

- All student-athletes listed on the daily eligibility report and student-athletes receiving athletics aid through the Athletic Department's degree completion program are provided registration times the morning of the first day of priority registration, enabling them to enroll in classes they need at times that facilitate their ability to meet their athletic commitments.
- Collaborative efforts between the Center for Advising and Career Development and Academic Support Services in 2009 led to the development of an individual tutoring program that better meets the needs of student-athletes and ensures those needs are met.
- The Soma Training Program, established in 2008, is funded through the Student Athlete Opportunity Fund, and discussed in detail later in this report, pairs the use of adaptive technology (Kurzweil 3000) with graduate level literacy education expertise to create a dual reading and educational assistance program focused on improving reading speed as well as comprehension, increasing expressive vocabulary, improving quality of writing and general compositional speed, and improving the overall student-athlete learning experience.
- Established in 2008, the Critical Literacies Achievement Program (CLASP) is a collaborative program involving the English Department, Athletic Academic Support Services, College Success Foundation Scholars, College Assistance Migrant Program, and Multicultural Student Services. CLASP serves low-income, first-generation, and students of color, who though capable of doing class work, need role models to familiarize themselves with the academic and social literacies necessary for college success. CLASP is specifically designed to engage this population with their instructors, retain them in post-secondary education and help them earn their four-year degrees.
- The Cougar Academic Monitoring Program (CAMP), established fall 2010, is a comprehensive web-based management and tracking system that provides enhanced early alerts, progress reporting, advising center management, tutor management, appointment scheduling, a communication center for e-mail and text messaging, assignment tracking, attendance monitoring, guided study monitoring, and robust reporting. Testing opportunities were enhanced in 2009 through arrangements with the Psychology Clinic on campus to provide a more efficient and timely testing process to determine if identified student-athletes have learning disabilities and allow a more timely response to implement measures to address these disabilities.
- A wireless network was established in all academic and tutoring suite spaces during fall 2010.
- The computer lab has been reconfigured and upgraded over the past several years to include new wiring, desktop computers, printers, net-books, and laptops.
- A transfer committee of senior Athletic Department staff, coordinated by the Faculty Athletics Representative was established in 2009 to address the recruiting of transfer student-athletes to WSU, particularly those with marginal academic records.

- Mentoring was given a high priority by senior Athletic Department leaders in 2008 with the intent to improve the existing student-athlete mentoring program.

These improvements, among others, have contributed to some notable academic accomplishments by Washington State University student-athletes. Key highlights, primarily from spring semester 2010, are noted below:

- Over the last ten years, the graduation rate of WSU student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility is 93%, which is second in the Pac-10, only behind Stanford's 97% rate, and well above the national Division I rate of 87%.
- On average, all student-athletes maintained a 3.00 cumulative GPA. This is the 12th consecutive semester that all student-athletes have averaged at least a 3.00 cumulative GPA (all university students average a 3.07 cumulative GPA).
- One hundred and ninety two student-athletes earned a 3.00 or better semester GPA, and 80 of them were named to the President's Honor Roll.
- Eight of 14 teams maintained a 3.00 or higher cumulative GPA and eight teams earned a 3.00 or higher semester GPA.
- Eighteen student-athletes earned a perfect 4.00 semester GPA.
- The 2009, WSU football freshmen student-athletes 4 class average graduated at a level (58%) that ranked the program third in the conference.
- Sixty-five percent of female student-athletes earned a 3.00 or higher semester GPA – they averaged a 3.19 semester GPA. This was the 21st consecutive semester women have earned at least a 3.00 semester GPA. All university women earned a 3.15 GPA.
- The 122 fall 2009 freshmen student-athletes averaged a 2.97 cumulative GPA with 54% earning over a 3.00 cumulative GPA.
- Fall 2009 new transfer student-athletes earned an average 2.97 cumulative GPA.
- Eighty-one percent of all student-athletes maintained at least a 2.50 cumulative GPA (73% of men and 89% of women).
- Only three percent of student-athletes have under a 2.00 cumulative GPA (13 out of 402), providing further evidence of the academic health of WSU student-athletes).
- In 2008, three student-athletes were selected to the 2008 first team Pacific-10 Conference All-Academic Men's Basketball team. Fifty percent of the first and second teams were WSU student-athletes.
- In fall 2010, WSU led all Pacific-10 Conference schools with seven student-athletes on the Pac-10 All-Academic First Team in football. Additionally, WSU had one second-team selection and four student-athletes named honorable mention.

Observations

Academic Counseling/advising resources and services

The services available to the student-athletes at Washington State University are noted for their range and depth. Specific information on the services is available from the

current drafts of the Washington State University self study for Cycle 3 certification. Activities to produce the self study document also aided in generating the detail that is offered in this review report. It is an impressive array of services, supported by a pronounced level of resource commitment, which has experienced structured improvements over time. Staff size has been increased slightly over time. Recently there has been an addition of two learning specialists within the staff as a result of changing assignments. This change reflects the review of problem areas and the subsequent determination that learning difficulties were a source of concern. The committee received positive comments on this change, with comments that spoke to the new quantity of help that was available, the quality of that assistance, and the appreciation for the change within the services staff. Personal comments from students and coaches were all positive. It should be noted that this change has decreased the personnel available to work with regular and daily advising and mentoring for the rest of the student-athlete population.

The above reorganization highlights the benefits of routine assessment. Prior to arrival on campus, student-athletes are assisted with a formal transitioning program, followed, if necessary, by tutoring for incoming and undecided major students. The learning specialists work specifically with “at risk” students, identified either by admission information or personal information in interviews. The two new learning specialists work to connect campus units focused on learning disabled and also serve as evaluators of unknown but potential learning issues.

Based on the original assessments, psychological clinics are accessed across campus, with one on one time available throughout each student-athlete’s college career. The compliance unit works, as needed, to apply for Learning Disabled waiver requests with the NCAA in order to provide the needed educational opportunities.

Whether through personal interviews, group meetings of coaches and/or students, the committee heard positive responses regarding the services available to student-athletes. “Superb.....outstanding.....professional.....personal” were common themes. Regardless of the providers of academic services, including departmental counselors/advisors, tutors, mentors and the detailed assistance from the new learning specialists, the sentiment was the same. Both coaches and student-athletes emphasized the productivity associated with receiving assistance and the continued interaction with the advisors up to and through when majors had been selected.

The Athletic Department makes available to student-athletes two courses that are designed to help during the first year. FH 496 is a new student athletic seminar, discussed later in this report. UCOLL 104, Pathways to Academic Success Seminar, is housed in the University College and is focused towards retention and graduation goals. In addition, there is a curriculum that has been developed to provide personal development for first year student-athletes. Further, the P.R.O.W.L Center, the “hangout and stay in school” home for the students, provides a positive learning environment and is almost continually staffed by trained and interested personnel.

A management audit of the Academic Support Services would, from the committee's viewpoint, find a well structured, organized and enthusiastic body of personnel. Each academic advisor/counselor focuses on the individual student-athlete in a specific sport, allowing personal relationships to develop as well as an understanding of each particular sport's needs, which creates a team environment. The committee found no preference being given to major revenue producing sports in the amount of assistance or resources being delivered; any difference is reflected in the size of the sport and the number of athletes, not an unreasonable approach since the desire is to be as personal as possible with the individuals. Results from the committee's surveys and interviews included concern about access to counseling and academic facilities, and the need for increased resources in the academic services units.

The above activities relate heavily to the effort to aid the students in their transition year or two as they acclimate to the challenges of a "university level" education. The interaction continues all the way to successful graduation in a major desired by the student. Utilization of University College UCOLL 304 as an information source on how to complete the college degree, and the "advisor for career counseling" in the Career Resources Center, along with the resume and interview techniques provided to graduating seniors, indicate the broad and continuing effort to help student-athletes throughout the length of their time at Washington State University.

"I have had the opportunity to work with the Athletic Department Academic Support Services personnel on numerous occasions over the past year. My role is to supervise advanced graduate students in the performance of psychological assessments. I have met with Chris Cook, Andy Dephtereos and Gail Gleason. Gail has been our primary point of contact. I have found Gail to be extremely knowledgeable in the areas of academic and intellectual assessment and the factors that may contribute to the academic problems student-athletes may be experiencing and how appropriate accommodations can help remediate these. I have been amazed given the number of student-athletes on campus, the student-athletes overwhelming schedules, how the staff have been able to stay on top of problems while forming positive relations that increase the probability that the student-athletes will take advantage of the services offered. I have been extremely impressed with both the staff involvement and the student-athletes level of participation."

"I work closely with the athletics academic advisors and generally I think people do a pretty good job. Sometimes students are given "easy" classes like Soc 102 which don't count toward our kinesiology requirements. Also I am concerned about the lack of individual contact during summer ALIVE - academic advisors are not seeing the athletes and sometimes I don't think they get enough information about our programs."

Tutoring

Tutoring has been an ongoing effort of the Academic Support Services unit over the past years and it has not been decreased, but did need to be reevaluated. In the past, the Center for Advising and Career Development (CACD) offered one-to-one tutoring for

all students, and student-athletes participated in that program. Due to budget cuts the one-to-one tutoring program was eliminated and instead, a free drop-in tutoring to all students is provided. The Athletic Department, with the Academic Support Services unit leading the effort, negotiated a relationship where the Athletic Department now funds one-to-one tutors to support student-athletes. This relationship seems to have provided the numbers and quality of tutors desired by the student-athletes and requested by the Athletic Department. The CACD is still responsible for hiring, training and evaluating tutors and maintains a list of tutors who can be hired for one-to-one tutoring, in addition to the list provided by the Athletic Department.

All current student-athletes have access to tutoring opportunities during both the academic year and summer sessions. Students noted they were encouraged to meet with their tutors very often, sometimes several times a week if necessary, to allow them to achieve the best academic performance possible. Tutor training incorporates the College Reading and Language Association (CRLA) and provides certification for the CACD program. The summer months receive the attention of the Academic Support Services unit since university tutors are often not available at that time so additional tutors must be hired. All respondents to the surveys and interviews commented favorably on the overall availability of the tutors, though two coaches expressed frustration at having to wait for the tutors to be assigned, again an indication of a resource question noted by the committee.

The committee noted the commitment of the Athletic Department to the tutoring program in a very challenging budget environment. The structure in place seems to be responding to the needs and changing composition of the student-athlete body in terms of majors and academic areas of weakness. The committee commends the Academic Support Services unit, and its sponsors, for the continued and enhanced support for this effort.

“As an instructor/As a Writing Center administrator: There are a lot of great tutoring options, but the one area that could be clearer is consistent information. There are too many places to look to find all the tutoring available. Our program meets with other tutoring services to share and promote each other, but without funds to build a better website/portal for information, the project is stalled. What we need is an iphone app that WSU students could download for free that tells them what tutoring is available for the subjects they are taking.”

“Tutoring seems to be run very well. The tutors are trained, the hours are convenient for athletes (evening), they have adequate space for tutoring, and cooperate with CACD on this.”

“It seems we are delayed several weeks at the start of the first semester in identifying and hiring tutors to work with our new students. Thus our students don’t have access to work the first few weeks of the semester with the tutors. Poor starts lead to poor finishes most of the time. Otherwise, great support and assistance by all departments is received.”

“The only thing that might help our students would be to have tutors available during the day. Sometimes it is hard with our practice schedule, the CFC hours, etc. to meet with the tutors only during the evening hours. If they could be available in between classes or before practice, it would help immensely.”

Academic progress monitoring and reporting

The Student Athlete Development office (SAD) has the responsibility for monitoring the academic progress of student-athletes and providing the information to the Faculty Athletics Representative who certifies individual eligibility. Washington State University has committed resources to fund a position in the Registrar’s office dedicated to helping with the continual and continuous evaluation of progress toward degree under NCAA standards and rules. Eligibility is certified twice a year and progress toward degree is the critical element in that certification. By the time a student is certified, at least four and sometimes five sets of eyes (coaches, academic services, registrar, compliance and the principal assistant to the Faculty Athletics Representative) have looked at the data for completeness and accuracy prior to the certification by the FAR of eligibility.

An automated system called Cougar Academic Monitoring Program (CAMP), based on Access software, is the backbone of the monitoring. CAMP is a comprehensive web based management and tracking system, recently established in the fall 2010 that provides the following functions: enhanced early alerts, progress reporting, advising center management, tutor management, appointment scheduling, a communication center for e-mail and text messaging, assignment tracking, attendance monitoring, Guided Study monitoring and robust reporting among other great features. The CAMP program currently allows for real time communication with CACD (Center for Advising and Career Development) as it relates to tutor acquisition, management, scheduling and reporting. Student-athletes directly benefit from improved communication via emailed and text reminders. The coaches as well as academic staff continue to benefit from the improved flow of information, and the faculty is enjoying a more seamless and consistent update instrument. The survey and interview results included many comments on the effectiveness of the new system.

A system is currently being introduced to monitor the use of the individual student-athlete’s use of the academic services office, especially the computer laden Academic Resource Center. That system will detail student-athlete usage, by name, by day, time of day and length of usage in each session.

A web-based program titled “GradesFirst” is one of the current mechanisms employed to monitor the academic performance of our student-athletes. This program allows the SAD to collect academic progress reports from faculty in the fifth, eighth and twelfth week of each semester. During the fifth and twelfth week SAD requests information on the classroom performance of a selected, sub-group of student-athletes. The system also allows weekly contact and monitoring of high risk and targeted students by SAD and coaches in the individual sports. This interaction results in a list of those targeted

and issue related situations being discussed among the graduate assistant assigned to the sport, the coaches and SAD personnel.

Throughout the individual interviews and surveys it was apparent to the committee that this system seemed to be working well. The certification of eligibility and progress toward degree was judged to be on solid ground and the new systems were a creative and productive addition to the process. Certification is monitored tightly throughout the student's academic career at Washington State University by the FAR's office and the other individuals crucial to avoiding any eligibility mistakes. The academic monitoring is heavier in the initial enrollment period but, as the student-athlete shows his or her abilities to handle a university academic program, less continual interaction occurs. But, in this process (even in the junior year) the interaction with the faculty in their courses provides a thorough flow of information back to the Athletic Department, supplemented by the coaching staff who are always looking at attendance issues in conjunction with the academic services staff.

The continuing progress of student-athletes is tightly monitored, as indicated above in discussing the system in place in the Academic Support Services unit. An individual in the Financial Aid office and another in the Registrar's office are tasked specifically with following and submitting current data to the Office of the Faculty Athletics Representative for certification. The Compliance staff work closely with the Principal Assistant to the FAR to determine current eligibility. Academic Support Services staff follows each student-athlete who is at risk to monitor potential problems and eligibility issues. They work not just with eligibility issues but serve in advising and mentoring roles to help the student-athlete achieve the best they can academically from their university learning experience. Each of the members of the university community surveyed who had experience in this area was very satisfied with the process and the outcome, feeling both the student-athlete and the university were being well served. Close and continuing interaction was appreciated by the staff in the Registrar and Financial Aid offices. Absolutely no pressure from coaches or the Athletic Department to affect progress or eligibility was found or mentioned in our review.

"I have been happy with monitoring of student-athlete academic progress. I have had student-athletes who need additional attention in regards to their academic needs and have been happy with the support provided."

Assistance for student-athletes with special academic needs and at-risk student-athletes

Areas four and five were combined in this section. The Student Athlete Development unit has a broad series of efforts underway to focus on at-risk students or those identified with special academic needs. These programs are varied but all seem effective in approach and productive in outcome and the success of the student-athletes over time attests to this fact. The focus is on the documented Learning Disabled (LD), the academically underprepared and those students who, for whatever reason did not attend school in the previous semester, each of which need and receive assistance to fit

their situation. The students surveyed did mention several times in the interviews that some of their fellow students should be tested earlier. Since testing for LD is a personal decision, the service unit works to educate the student in the benefits of determining the extent and type of disability, if one exists.

A new strength of the Academic Support Services is the availability and training of the two learning specialists. These are recent positions developed over the past four to five years. What is unique is that, rather than simply reassigning advisors, the Department has hired learning specialists with a specific learning specialty background. This generated broad comments of support in our survey, from students, faculty and administrative personnel throughout the university. The learning specialists have a very defined role in the center of the multiple services available to the student-athlete and they work closely with department and university advisors and tutors (faculty and staff) to work with the at risk and special need students. The professionalism of the current individuals holding these positions is evident and appreciated across the campus.

Another program receiving much attention by at-risk students or those with special academic needs is the athletic innovation, the Soma Training Program. The Soma Training Program (established 2008) pairs the use of adaptive technology (Kurzweil 300) with graduate level literacy education expertise to create a dual reading and educational assistance program. The program utilizes a networked based comprehensive reading, writing, and learning software geared towards the struggling readers/writers. Specifically, Kurzweil 3000 highlights and reads words aloud to the student in clear, human-like, synthetic speech. This dual highlighting feature adds visual reinforcement that allows the individual to operate at his/her cognitive level rather than his/her reading level. After students who could benefit from Soma programming are identified, the academic services personnel then select two courses where Soma would be most beneficial. Upon selection of two courses, the participant is paired with a graduate student from the College of Education and they meet twice a week for the duration of the semester. Word of this service has spread across campus to those who work with students, resulting in increased consideration and use of the service over time by personnel not in the department.

Student-athletes needing assistance receive it from and are involved with Multicultural Student Services (MSS) in a number of different ways. Peer mentoring is offered to all students of color when they matriculate; not all students or student-athletes take advantage of it. If student-athletes do participate in the peer mentoring program the level of engagement is dependent on the student-athlete. Student-athletes are actively involved in several student-led conferences offered by MSS. It has been proven that this type of active student-athlete involvement on campus results in increased retention of the involved individuals.

Two excellent examples of collaboration between Athletic Academic Support Services and MSS are the STAR (Strategic Team Approach to Retention) program and CLASP (Coordinated Literacy Achievement Support Program).

The STAR program links several student services offices (Center for Advising and Career Development (CACD), Student Support Services (SSS), College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP), Multicultural Student Services (MSS) and Athletic Academic Student Services) which review a list of students with a 2.2 or below grade point average (GPA) for the semester. Each office takes responsibility for its students, contacts the students and provides additional academic support to prevent academic deficiency and improve retention.

The Coordinated Literacy Achievement Support Program (CLASP) began in 2008 when an advisor from WSU's Athletics Department came to the Composition Program and explained her dilemma: some of her advisees—primarily the ones who had been identified as “at-risk” by Athletics—were not passing WSU's required introductory writing course. The problem was not that these students, the majority of whom were low-income, students of color, and first generation students, were incapable of learning the material, but that they were not familiar with the academic literacies necessary to succeed in college. The Composition Program met with other units on campus, specifically Achievers Scholars Program, CAMP, and MSS, and determined that they had similar needs. In response, CLASP was created, which focuses on strengthening the academic literacies of both students and teachers. To do this, students are required to meet with their teachers once a week and bring a question about their writing. In addition, teachers and the students' advisors communicate regularly to ensure that students receive the support they need. These seemingly simple acts help ensure that students learn how to ask their teacher for a conference, attend a regular appointment, ask their teacher questions, interpret their teacher's comments, and apply these comments to their own writing—all necessary skills for college success, and ones which can carry over to other courses to promote student retention and degree completion. CLASP has achieved initial success during these past two years: last year only one out of approximately 80 students failed English 101, while the remaining students earned a B+ average in the course.

A related program and activity that, while not focusing solely on at-risk and special academic needs student-athletes, does provide assistance to these students is mentoring. The mentor-mentee relationships and program will be discussed later in this report in more detail.

“The academic advisors make referrals to assess for possible learning disabilities, attention problems and mental health issues after screening evaluations and review of current progress in classes. They choose to err on the side of false positives so occasionally the student-athlete does not have a functional limitation which is interfering with his/her progress but the large majority of student-athletes referred do have functional limitations and benefit from the extra services made available.”

“Every semester we have athletes who are required to be part of programs we offer, but often we have complications because they are so used to their athletic advisors/tutors handling things, they sometimes struggle to understand what their requirements are. (Writing Center administrator)”

“I perceive the athletic counselors in Academic Support Services are diligent/conscientious with athletes in addressing academic issues in relation to their disabilities. I meet with athletes and their athletic counselors several times during the year--the athletic counselors are always respectful and engage their athletes to improve their academic performance.”

“Students with disabilities are always at risk in performing well in the classroom. I perceive the athletic counselors are aware/educated about the risk students with disabilities encounter in the classroom. I believe the athletic counselors use the appropriate resources to address students’ academic issues in order to improve their academic performance.”

“The Composition Program plays a large role in this area. Athletic Support Services are part of the Critical Literacies Achievement Success Program (CLASP) that provides one-on-one support for at-risk student-athletes who are taking Composition courses. These students are required to meet with their teachers once a week. They must come prepared with a focused question to discuss with the teacher. Our teachers receive instruction in how to conduct these conferences and find them very valuable in helping students and teachers build a relationship that helps both succeed.”

“Very good assistance in this area: Kursweil 3000 is one program for reading comprehension assistance, tutoring, CLASP program for social literacy within higher education are all examples. They also have a class that helps students adapt to university life.”

“The assistance for student-athletes with special academic needs has been great. People in the department take time to help students understand the process and go over the results of tests taken to determine learning disabilities.”

“We would like to broaden the definition of “at-risk” students for men’s basketball. It seems as if these students get more monitoring, more time spent with advisors and tutors, reports from professors, etc. We feel we have a lot of our student-athletes that could use the benefits of being labeled “at-risk”. We understand the shortage of resources but feel this is critical.”

Academic support services facilities

The quantity of academic support facilities received strong support from the individuals surveyed in this review. The Academic Resources Center (ARC) now has a coordinator dedicated to providing a series of support functions. The Coordinator also manually keeps track of the students using the ARC, entering the data into an excel spread sheet, identifying daily and hourly averages as well identifying peak periods of congestion. This information is used to balance student usage by team in an attempt to lessen the lack of accessibility evidenced by waiting lines faced by student-athletes.

A common issue mentioned by coaches as well as student-athletes was the waiting lines at certain times, as well as the times when the ARC isn't open. The schedule below identifies the current operating times. Comments suggested that later hours would be useful as well as more services on Saturday and Sunday. In recent years budget concerns have constrained the opening of more hours of operation. ARC resources available include:

- 29 networked Vista desktop computers with Office 2007 (CD-RW/DVD-ROM)
- 1 high-speed black/white laser printer
- 1 color laser printer
- 14 laptop computers for team travel
- 1 Flatbed scanner
- 7.1 & 4.0 mega pixel digital cameras
- 1 35mm SLR camera
- Individual, personalized computer accounts for each student-athlete
- 2 Texas Instruments TI-83 calculators (graphing calculators)
- 4 Texas Instruments TI-30X IIS (scientific calculators)

Regular ARC Hours for Fall and Spring Semesters		
Monday	8 AM	10 PM
Tuesday	8 AM	10 PM
Wednesday	8 AM	10 PM
Thursday	8 AM	10 PM
Friday	8 AM	5 PM
Saturday	Closed	
Sunday	4PM	7PM

“– excellent – nice updates with computers and making that a priority to keep current, and as well as the new chairs...”

“Not a lot of rooms available for guided study and this is critical to my team”

Observations by committee members about Academic Support Services facilities and comments from student-athletes and Academic Support Services staff clearly indicate that the facilities are in high demand and are very crowded during peak utilization periods. A number of offices for support staff have dual functions other than office space. This shared space approach is not ideal. Up to eight rooms are available in the evening during non-peak periods to support Academic Support Services activities. Despite the space challenges the Academic Support Services unit faces, the staff maximizes the potential of the space available as evident in the broad scope and success of the programs for which they are responsible.

Academic evaluation of prospective student-athletes

The admission process and/or criteria used for the admission of student-athletes do not differ from the process for admitting students in general. The process is governed by institutional policies that apply to all students. The Office of Admissions is responsible for the evaluation of academic credentials in the admission process and for notifying applicants of their admission status.

The primary processes and criteria by which students are considered for admission to the university are the freshman and transfer admission processes.

Freshman Admission

In order to be considered for admission to Washington State University, all entering freshmen, including potential student-athletes, must provide a complete application package that includes the following items:

- Application
- Application fee
- Official high school transcripts showing work completed through grade 11, and
- Official SAT or ACT scores.

For freshman admission, Washington State University uses a combination of grade point average and standardized test scores, called a “Q-Value” score, to determine academic eligibility for admission. The “Q-Value” formula is calculated as follows:

$$(\text{GPA} \times 400) + \text{Best Score (Critical Reading and Math)} = \text{Q Value (QV)}$$

Students who meet the minimum “Q-Value” at the time of application are admitted to the university, provided they are on track toward meeting the core courses as required by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of Washington (College Academic Distribution Requirements, or CADRs), and provided their grades are not moving in a downward trend.

Transfer Admission

In order to be considered for admission to Washington State University, all entering transfer students must provide the following:

- Application
- Application fee and
- Official transcripts from all colleges attended
- Transfer students who have completed less than a year of college-level work may be asked to provide their official high school transcripts and test scores from the SAT or ACT in order to be considered for admission.

Transfer credit is determined by Transfer Credit Evaluators in the Admissions Office. Credit is granted for college-level work that is academic in nature, and all transfer credit decisions are made without regard for student athletic status. The Admissions Office determines applicable credit for the university's General Education Requirements and elective credits, while faculty in the academic departments are responsible for determining transfer credit equivalencies for departmental-specific academic courses.

Transfer students who have satisfactorily completed (2.0 GPA or better) the equivalent of a year of college level academic work are generally admitted, unless their more recent grades show a downward trend. Students who have not completed a year of college-level academic work must provide additional information for review, which may include their high school transcripts and scores from the SAT or ACT, letters of recommendation or other information that can assist in determining their overall academic preparation. Decisions are made based on a thorough review of all evidence of a student's academic preparation, including course rigor, grade trends, achievement in academic courses, and other academic factors.

Other Admission Procedures

There are seven ways in which students who do not meet WSU's standard or normal entrance requirements may be admitted, either at the request of the student, academic or athletic sponsor, or the normal decision process of the University. Students admitted through these processes are monitored carefully. Special admissions data is available in the NCAA Self-Study. The other admissions categories are:

1. SAT waived for special circumstances (GPAs range from 3.59-4.0.);
2. non-adult students (under age 25) who completed the GED rather than the HS diploma;
3. Students who present an AA degree in lieu of HS diploma.;
4. international students who meet the academic requirements but do not meet the English Proficiency requirement and who are extraordinary talent candidates and therefore Special Admits;
5. adult student (over 25 years of age) admission
6. home-schooled admission
7. For those students who do not achieve the Q Value for the respective year (the vast majority of students listed in the Special Admit data), can be admitted under the Extraordinary Talent program (see extraordinary talent at <http://catalog.wsu.edu/Catalog/Content/Admission.pdf> - page 6).

The Appeals Process:

The appeals process to the Faculty Admission Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee) is available to any students who are determined to not be eligible for admission, regardless of whether they have been nominated as an Extraordinary Talent candidate. The Faculty Admission Subcommittee's decisions are final.

Students whose cumulative high school GPAs are below 2.0, or who are more than 3 credits (a credit equals one year of study in a subject) deficient in the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADR) as set forth by the Higher Education Coordinating Board of the state of Washington, are not eligible to be admitted, even through the appeals process.

The academic evaluation process of student-athletes starts, in most cases, long before the prospective student-athlete comes for an official visit and certainly before his/her arrival on campus for enrollment. The academic services staff, usually the advisor to the sport of the prospective student-athlete, meets with the student during the initial campus visit and a detailed discussion takes place. It involves both the current status and needs of the student-athlete regarding admission requirements from the NCAA and Washington State University, possible academic areas of interest, various majors and the requirements of each, and other general information of potential use to the prospective student-athlete.

The Compliance staff does the initial review and academic evaluation relative to NCAA entrance standards so as to inform and work with the student-athlete regarding minimum standards. The NCAA eligibility process determines whether the student qualifies for admission under their standards. WSU, through the Registrar's Office, then determines whether the student meets the standards of the university. The survey by the review committee found general satisfaction with this process. Some coaches did feel it moved too slowly at times; the committee felt some of the process time for the students, and any perceived delay, arose from material not being submitted in a timely manner by the prospective student-athlete or the coaches.

Student-athlete degree selection

One of the challenging assignments to the Academic Services unit is to balance the desires of the student-athlete in choosing a major or an area of emphasis versus the reality of the requirements of the student-athlete's pursuing success in his/her sport. It is evident that the demands and scheduling of sport commitments (practice or competitions) may present challenges for a student-athlete as the search for a major is undertaken. Information on various majors, with attendant requirements, is made available to the students early in their career at WSU so personal interests and career goals could be melded into the decision about major area of study. A class on career exploration is also made available to the students early in their time at the University. Academic Services staff members appear to be very knowledgeable about major certification requirements and are successful in working with the students in being sensitive to such requirements. As colleges and department certification standards vary, it is important for the academic services staff to understand the details.

Students stated that at no time did they feel unwarranted pressure from the Academic Support Services personnel or from coaches to select or reject a major; instead, they commented favorably that the personnel were straightforward and honest in providing advice about the requirements of various majors relative to the athletic responsibilities.

The information may have affected the final major choice but coercion did not seem to exist. Gratitude to the student services personnel for this advice was evident. Counseling about the requirements of each major is carefully combined with eligibility requirements of the NCAA. It appears this counseling was welcomed by and helpful to non-athletic department advisors as well, based on the comments in our survey.

In recent years the academic counselors from the Athletics Department have been accepted as full academic advisors in the University. These academic counselors serve as advisors until a major is chosen, then the departmental or academic area is the lead but close communication continues. This allows the academic advisors to work in the area they know best, supplemented but not substituted by the athletic department's academic counseling, a balanced relationship that is appreciated and seems to be working. Instances of an academic department advisor working directly with the academic service personnel of the Athletic Department to counsel a student from attempting a certain major have occurred and the committee feels this is an appropriate and critical collaboration. The committee feels linking these two efforts will further enhance the student-athlete's academic performance and collegiate experience.

It is interesting and noteworthy that few students seem to change majors, once selected. No indication of "settling for the lowest common denominator below what could be done" as a cause of this phenomenon was indicated. Examples of difficulties in achieving some majors are the location of the nursing program being 75 miles from the Pullman campus, and the many student practicum hours required for commitment to the athletic training program.

The breadth in overall career services and academic support has increased over time, after being short in personnel in earlier years. These career services are now more comprehensive, including emphasis on job opportunities, interviewing, resume building--frankly anything that will aid the student-athlete in the transition from the campus to career. The emphasis on "life skills" under the NCAA CHAMPS program was well received by the student-athletes the committee spoke to in interviews.

These efforts were also well received by the Division 1A Athletic Directors Association, awarding and recognizing Washington State University as a Program of Excellence. The overall P.R.O.W.L Program (Providing Responsible Options with Life Skills) places emphasis on student-athlete's endeavors in academic, athletic, career, personal and community efforts while at Washington State University. The Program of Excellence award is bestowed annually to Division 1-A athletics departments to the University that has established student-athlete welfare as the cornerstone of their operating principles. The CHAMPS program was established to provide student-athletes with a comprehensive educational and training program to assist in their total personal development. The CHAMPS effort is an effort of the 1-A Athletic Directors Association, with a commitment to the "Preparation for Life" of each student-athlete.

"I have found the counseling and advising staff responsive and highly interested in student success. They have inquired about the Digital Technology and Culture major,

one advisor met with me about the major, and we are providing an informational session on the major for the staff. This kind of interest in new, innovative degree programs serves student-athletes well.”

“– excellent – especially helping people with the reality of balancing sport and academics; again, thinking outside the box, finding ways to be successful in both, and looking at big picture things past college into post-graduate to continue to specialize in academics past WSU.”

“We could use more education/seminars on all of the degrees offered at WSU. Too many times our students select a major based on their teammates, friends, etc. If we educated them on all of their options we might see more variety and happier people after graduation.”

Learning assessments

Teaching activities, by themselves, are not sufficient to be judged as a successful educational experience. The “learning” that occurs after “teaching” needs to be assessed and WSU is committed to that learning. It starts at general study body orientation and continues with coaches, guidance counselors, advisors and, as needed, sports medicine staff. During the initial campus process of orientation of all students in the University’s ALIVE! Program all students participate in placement assessment in English and Math.

Further assessment continues as students with documented learning disabilities work jointly with the Office of Student Athlete Development (SAD) learning specialists and a staff person from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in an effort to ensure that the student is accessing all available campus resources. Students who have not been previously identified as having additional academic needs are preliminarily assessed by the SAD, using the SDRT (Stanford Diagnostic Reading Tests) and the BETA 3 test. Students showing significant issues are referred to the Psychology Clinic on campus for a full psycho-educational evaluation.

SAD also targets specific incoming student-athletes by using traditional predictors and the results of personal interviews. In some cases, the student-athletes self identify problems when they are explained to them and after the extent of the help that is available on campus is detailed. Overall, the results of our committee’s survey and interviews speak to the adequacy of these services and that they are valued by the student-athletes, both for themselves and their team members. The initial assessment through the ALIVE! Program is blended nicely with the hands-on continual assessment by the academic advisors in the Athletics Department.

“The student-athletes who have been referred for assessment have all been appropriate referrals with specific questions addressing academic needs. The student-athletes are well informed about what is involved in the assessment and are aware of their possible academic deficiencies. They don’t always see the need for assessment but their

relationship with the academic advisors is generally strong and supportive and their effort on the assessment tasks is admirable.”

Success skills

The course on life skills made available to all student-athletes provides basic understanding of the new life the students are entering in while identifying the major differences from the life of K-12 experiences. Included in the introductory course and continuing education from the advisors are attention to study skills, note and test taking, grammar and writing skills, and especially time management. Aid in these issues includes help from the learning specialists and counselors, using the previously mentioned tests as appropriate. In addition, a University College (UCOL) course is available that prepares student-athletes for what to expect in their campus environment.

Discussions by the committee members with staff members and the student-athletes indicated that the members of the academic support staff are very sensitive to these basic success skills and provide additional help in these areas if needed and as budget allows. Tutors were mentioned as an active source of these study skills, even past the specific course or discipline that is the tutor's initial assignment. Students felt that there had been an increase in provision of these services over the years. The committee found that these basic skills are critical to the success of the student-athlete and deserve the broad and continuing effort provided by the Academic Services unit and should be considered for increased support in the future.

Study hall

The guided study program provides monitored, structured study sessions for students with guided study facilitators. Trained study skills facilitators and writing tutors are available to work with student-athletes Monday through Thursday nights. The facilitators serve as “learning strategy tutors” and help students with: 1) study skills in specific content areas, and 2) writing skills across all content areas. These sessions take place in the Academic Resource Center, as well as the adjacent Bohler suite of rooms, thus allowing students access to technology for their writing and research needs. High-risk student-athletes may be required to attend facilitated study sessions either in the evenings (Monday-Thursday, 6:30--9:30 p.m.) or during daytime hours (8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.).

A major component of the Guided Study Program is Study Teams. The coordinator of the Academic Resource Center (ARC) facilitates and schedules Study Teams each semester. The ARC assigns a facilitator to a Study Team of three to four students. Study Team facilitators are upper class or graduate-level students, or academic advisors who have been trained in study skill instruction and/or writing skills. The trained Study Team facilitators provide a monitored, structured study session for small, targeted groups of student-athletes organized by academic subject area or specific course. Study Teams provide a weekly focused time of subject review, as well as providing an opportunity to develop and reinforce study skills with special emphasis placed on

practical application of those skills specific to the subject matter of the individual Study Team. With the acquired learning strategies, students will be able to meet as a study group/team throughout the semester and study independently in preparation for exams, quizzes, and projects. Study teams are available for all student-athletes, although only some student-athletes are required to attend.

Comments from interviews suggested that this activity needs more financial support to increase the availability of the hall and teams for even the sophomore and junior students. Coaches in particular were consistent in desiring increased study options in this structured environment, especially for those that they identify that might be in need of this structured study environment, and praised the usefulness of the activity. Coaches supported mandatory participation in the study hall experience and supported the “attendance taking” for the student-athletes.

First-year/transfer orientation

Orientation for student-athletes is systematic and thorough. As indicated throughout this report, there are multiple avenues for first year and transfer student-athletes to adjust to campus life. In an effort to integrate student-athletes into the campus community and University life, all student-athletes participate in the campus ALIVE! Program. ALIVE! is a two-day orientation, registration and assessment program offered during the summer months designed to prepare the new student for the start of classes in the fall.

ALIVE! orientation, new courses for life skills from the Athletic Department, and continuing efforts by advisors all create a welcoming environment for new students. The program provides students an opportunity to meet with faculty, advisors, and other campus leaders, to create a course schedule and register for classes, to understand academic opportunities available, tour campus and attend workshops focused on helping them succeed. It helps them understand University expectations about academic and student conduct, policies, and procedures, review costs in terms of both dollars and personal commitment, and become familiar with valuable resources and campus support services aimed at student success, retention, and graduation.

Noteworthy is the strong collaborative effort between New Student Programs and Academic Support Services regarding student-athlete participation in ALIVE! Additionally, new student-athletes participate in an academic, personal development, and career services orientation during the first semester of enrollment. The orientation includes a survey of existing university and departmental resources that foster student success and tours of important university student support resources and facilities.

All new student-athletes are required to attend the New Student-Athlete Seminar in the department. The New Student-Athlete Seminar is a graded class for one academic credit. This seminar is designed to assist new student-athletes in managing their introduction into WSU Athletics and explore healthy life skills. Facilitators of the seminar focus on providing the information and skills needed for making a successful transition

to the role of WSU student-athlete in a new and unique environment. The seminar meets for one hour a week during the Fall Semester, and also in the Spring Semester for January enrollees. The curriculum covers a range of topics presented both by content experts and student-athlete peers. Typical topics include: Healthy Life Choices, Media Management, Career Development, Leadership, Diversity Topics, Substance Abuse, Relationships, Nutrition, Hazing, Transitions and Change, Money Management, Communication, WSU and community resources. The program director for career and personal development and the learning services coordinator facilitate the seminar.

It is evident that the academic services staff is concerned about and places emphasis on the new students and their needs, providing the assistance that will allow them to prepare for the academic challenges they will encounter, adjusting to the university life style, and the search for balance between academic and athletic demands.

Mentoring

Washington State University has made a commitment to a broad and increasingly active mentor program. It was originally started about 13 years ago as an opportunity for minority football students to meet, greet, eat and build mutual relationships with faculty and staff outside of the normal situations of college life. It now has a full time coordinator, and in Spring 2011 had over 130 identified mentees (67 male and 63 female) from all sports and 55 mentors (25 male and 30 female) in the program. Of the 25 male mentors, 18 work or are graduate students at WSU and seven are members of the community. Of the 30 female mentors, 21 work at WSU or are alumni and 9 are members of the community. Community members who are mentors either have a child who went to WSU or they work in differing positions in the city of Pullman.

Mentees are no longer just students of color since this program is available to all who request it. Activities include weekly meetings for some mentees, day outings as a group, social outings with mentors and attendance at cultural events on campus and in the community. A WSU Athletic Mentor Program Handbook is the guiding document for the program.

Some of the elements included in the Handbook speak to the mission statement, the program philosophy and process, goals and objectives, descriptions of mentors and mentees, and the expectations of the mentoring program. The WSU Student-Athlete Mentor Program is designed to assist student-athletes in acquiring skills to achieve personal development and professional career goals. The mentors in this program are chosen as people who care, who are good listeners and who want to help find and develop the strength of each student-athlete. Mentors help student-athletes define and achieve their goals.

Below are some of the guiding sections of the Handbook and the mentoring program:

Mission Statement

Foster a positive and supportive relationship with student-athletes in order to facilitate their educational, social and personal growth while providing guidance that helps them gain control over the responsibilities of time management and organization skills that face them in a new environment at Washington State University.

Mentor Program Philosophy

The Mentor Program is designed to create a comfortable campus lifestyle that promotes informal interaction and fosters conversations between student-athlete and Mentor, thus proving more opportunities for student-athletes to get together socially. It will help establish and enforce standards of conduct for all student-athletes and staff, so as to project a positive image for the student-athletes and campus population. This program will also help maintain an environment that fosters a positive relationship between the student-athlete and the university population. Our goal is to become a community that fosters and encourages academic and personal growth for student-athletes of color and create a cultural climate where diversity is a valued and natural part of the campus community infrastructure.

Student-athletes face various challenges. The Mentor Program understands that student-athletes have normal academic course loads and train many hours during the day. This program will help promote and reinforce skills necessary for high achievement and personal growth. The program will also provide a welcoming atmosphere, recognizing the value of all people regardless of differences and provide them with a meaningful and positive college experience.

Goals and Objectives

The Mentor Program understands that one must not only have a love for sports and a compassion for people, but also a respect for student-athletes and the various challenges they face. The Mentor Program will try to help others understand that student-athletes have a normal course load plus training demands and extra social pressures that may come with athletic status. This program will help promote and reinforce skills necessary for high academic achievement, focusing on time management, study and test-taking skills.

The program will provide a learning atmosphere, which recognizes the value of all people regardless of differences, and create for student-athletes a meaningful and positive college experience. This goal will be accomplished by the fulfillment of the following:

- 1. Improving minority retention and graduation rates by demonstrating an interest in the personal growth of the student-athlete.*
- 2. Formalizing support programs surrounding the Mentor Program.*

3. *Becoming a learning-centered community that fosters and encourages academic and personal growth for student-athletes and to creating a cultural climate where diversity is a valued and natural part of the campus community infrastructure.*
4. *Developing a program that provides an opportunity to exchange ideas and information so that student-athletes can learn other's experiences.*
5. *Developing a way for Washington State University to become a more welcoming community to our diverse population.*
6. *Acting as a resource for the coaching and support staff of the Athletic Department. It will work with coaches, on-campus student service providers, and faculty to help student-athletes meet the unique demands of the classroom, their sport, and the personal social challenges they face as young adults; it will also foster a commitment to supporting diversity within the campus community.*
7. *Letting student-athletes know that there is help dealing with interpersonal issues that may rise with tutors, professors, coaches, etc.*
8. *Establishing a guiding, enlightening relationship with the student-athletes.*

Discussions with coaches, student-athletes, staff and community members generally indicated strong support for the mentor program. Several of the student-athletes commented that the program aided them in deciding to remain in school and to pursue their goals and dreams, academically and athletically. There did not appear to be broad understanding of the program, the extent of the activities and the successes that have been achieved. Some concern about the activity level of some of the mentors was expressed. The committee commends the current activities and recommends that broader information about the program be circulated among student-athletes, campus administration, faculty and community members so as to make the benefits of the program available to other student-athletes and to recruit more active mentors.

"I have had the wonderful pleasure of participating in the Athletic Department's student mentor program over the past five years and have truly enjoyed my experience. The mentor program provides a necessary service to student-athletes of color as they make the transition to WSU. I know there are some organizational issues that are being adjusted, but overall it has been productive.

"One of the main comments that I hear from African American student athletes of color (football players) is that the department lacks staff who understand their cultural background. This makes it difficult to discuss personal issues. I have also heard that they feel the staff has low expectations for them, making them feel like they do not belong at WSU. How, then, can they comfortably ask for help? I have been told that the coaches in the football program do not have the cultural background necessary to deal with some of their students' issues. Therefore, there are no opportunities to

discuss personal issues or concerns. Coaches are so focused on winning that there are no relationships developed outside of what is being asked of them on the football field.”

Post Eligibility Programs

Washington State University is involved in most of the traditional post eligibility programs available at major universities. Scholarships, assistantships and career guidance continuing past eligibility are available for the student-athletes. Graduate funding in the final year of eligibility is an attractive part of that support. Those students considering graduate school are advanced and promulgated by the Athletic Department for all conference and NCAA awards, with some success. Students injured during their time here at WSU may qualify as a *Medical-Non Counter*, which results in continuing support to graduation, even if the athletic career is finished.

Degree completion programs require that eligibility be exhausted and a degree completion plan be in place. Students work for the Department at an assigned level of time commitment and are required to stay in touch with the academic services staff. This is an attractive program, indicating a solid commitment from admission to graduation as part of the contract between the Athletic Department and the individual. The committee commends this expression of commitment by the Department to its students. It is noteworthy that WSU has a 93 percent post eligibility graduation rate, second only to Stanford in the Pac-10.

The department does support graduate studies efforts, even paying for the GRE exams that are required at most institutions for admittance to graduate study. Preparation classes for the GRE are part of that support. Further, for the non-graduate-program-oriented student, efforts are underway to establish internships as a means of connecting to the post-graduate world and employers.

A new, focused effort by the SAD staff is a request for support for the annual costs to create, host, support and service a custom athletic career network through “Career Athletes”. The annual cost will be \$750. Since 1998, Career Athletes has been the major provider of NCAA-compliant, custom software tools and career development opportunities for leading college athletic departments and current and former student-athletes. The goal of Career Athletes is to provide athletic departments with the ability to accelerate student-athlete career development by providing:

- valuable and personal on-campus career development seminars to all student-athletes;

- custom career network software and marketing support services that can connect athletes, former athletes, Gray W members (the alumni group), and local employers in WSU’s branded, secure, closed community (i.e. webpage);

- valuable online mentor connections within our WSU’s extended athletic family; and-the ability to automatically extend the reach of valuable career opportunities for WSU’s current and former student-athletes by leveraging the collective power of other member-schools in the Career Athletes national network.

The Student-Athlete Development staff appear excited about this opportunity to provide not only provide information about available jobs with employers who are seeking qualities student-athletes possess, but also career development opportunities for underclassmen and a way to bring former student-athletes back to WSU.

Summary and Recommendations:

The committee has undertaken a thorough and comprehensive review of the academic support services programs and resources provided by the Athletics Department at Washington State University. The review encompassed the eight required areas specified in the NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation Guide and six additional areas from Operating Principle 2.2, Measurable Standard 8. The review included an assessment of the relationships between Academic Support Services office and coaches in various sports, and relationships between the office and other campus offices including the Registrar's Office, Office of Admissions, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship Services, University College, and other academic units.

The overall finding of our review is that the programs and services provided by the Academic Support Services unit are very strong with significant enhancements being implemented over the past several years in terms of the quality and quantity of programs and services focused on academic success. The overall program is strong in a number of ways including:

- The ability to prioritize programs and services and maximize the results attained with the personnel and fiscal resources provided as the university responds to unprecedented fiscal challenges.
- The collaborative and professional relationships established with other university units that further strengthen programs and services provided student-athletes.
- The focus on at-risk and special-need students, including the strengthening of the learning specialist program.
- The close relationship between Academic Support Services and the University College.
- The highly professional and dedicated leadership and staff within the Academic Support Services unit who are committed to providing meaningful and quality services focused on enabling student-athletes achieving their academic potential and earning a degree.
- The continuing development of the mentoring program greatly enhances and provides an important component to the overall set of services provided student-athletes.
- The services provided to student-athletes are not only strong at their time of initial enrollment, but are also strong as they complete both their eligibility and degree requirements.
- The Academic Support Services unit and senior staff within the Athletic Department have worked hard to instill in student-athletes and the coaches the importance of academics in the overall student-athlete experience at Washington

State University. It is evident that many coaches have internalized it within their programs.

The review committee also identified areas that provide opportunities to build upon the success already achieved and further strengthen the programs and services provided to student-athletes. The following recommendations reflect the committee's assessment that the accomplishments and strengths already evident in Academic Support Services provide a strong foundation for moving forward to a higher level of performance and service.

Recommendation 1: Space Concerns

As previously mentioned in this evaluation, Academic Support Services does an outstanding job maximizing the potential of the space they have to work in. The committee is aware that the Board of Regents gave approval to begin design work for additional improvements to Martin Stadium, which will include premium seating, a new press box, and a new football operations center. As plans for this initiative evolve, consideration should be given to provide additional space to Academic Support Services staff/functions. Space in either the football operations center or in the potentially available space in Bohler Gymnasium complex when football moves to the new operations center are possibilities.

Recommendation 2: Personnel Concerns

The only concern of note in our surveys and interviews was a core theme concerning access to advising, counseling and academic facilities and resources and therefore the desire for increased resources in the Academic Support Services unit. It should be noted that while the shift to two learning specialists was viewed favorably, it necessarily decreased the availability of staff to work with advising and other services to the rest of the student-athlete population. The committee recommends, as funds and space become available, consideration be given to the addition of several new advisory positions.

Recommendation 3: Academic Deficiency Concerns

In meetings with staff in both Academic Support Services and the Center for Advising and Career Development, there was considerable discussion of Academic Rule 39 as it applies to both student-athletes as well as students across the entire university. Academic Rule 39 is provided below:

“An undergraduate student, who, at the end of any two semesters at WSU, has failed to maintain a 2.00 or above cumulative or semester grade point average (GPA) will be dismissed from the university.”

At issue are students who face dismissal with a satisfactory cumulative GPA (and on track for graduation), but whose semester GPA is below 2.0 for the second time, regardless of when or under what circumstances the first instance occurred. Since university graduation requirements hinge on the cumulative GPA, the committee recommends that the Dean of the University College, in collaboration with the Academic

Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, review Academic Rule 39 to determine if the rule is in the best interests of all students and the university and whether the rule should be modified or eliminated.

Recommendation 4: Media Promotion for Academics

During the evaluation it became evident that many student-athletes were excelling academically. The committee recommends consideration should be given to increasing efforts and resources to promote the academic achievements of student-athletes in the media (both on and off campus) and public venues.

Recommendation 5: Access to Services

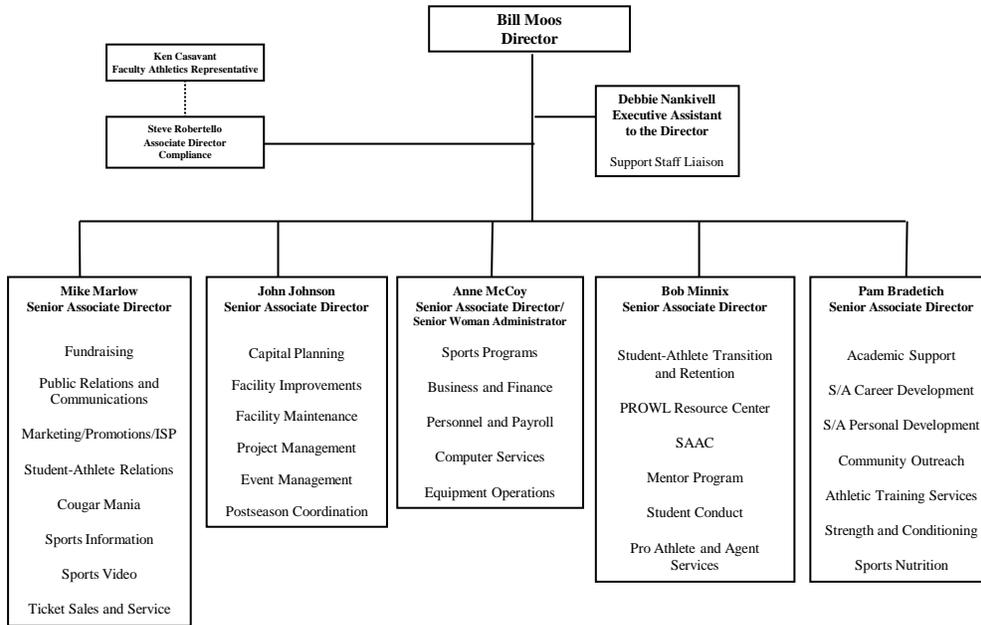
The evaluation identified a challenge in the lack of resources to meet the demand for the Academic Resource Center. The Center could be open later hours and more hours on Saturday and Sunday or earlier in the morning so students could use the resources prior to 8:00 classes. The committee recommends that Academic Support Services conduct a more detailed assessment of the utilization needs of the Academic Resource Center and implement any changes deemed necessary and appropriate, consistent with resources available in the unit or those that can be provided from other sources in the Athletic Department.

Recommendation 6: Instructor Participation in Student-Athlete Retention

As outlined previously, one mechanism employed to monitor the academic performance of student-athletes is the web-based GradesFirst program. The system works well if faculty respond to the inquiry and provide the feedback requested. However, during the fifth week of fall semester 2010, only 195 of the 423 (46%) faculty contacted completed reports. The Provost and Executive Vice President in his letter dated February 7, 2011 to Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Faculty encouraged a higher response rate from faculty. The committee recommends this important initiative be monitored closely with appropriate steps taken to increase the response rates.

Overall, it is evident to the evaluation committee that the achievements and strengths of the programs and services focused on academic success for student-athletes have been the result of a strong and sustained commitment on the part of the Athletic Department. In these fiscally challenging times, it is critical that the Athletic Department maintain its unqualified support and work to provide appropriate resources to foster student-athlete academic success at even higher levels of performance. The highly committed student-athletes deserve no less than the university's full commitment, not only to their success in competition but more importantly, in their academic endeavors.

**Washington State University
Department of Intercollegiate Athletics**



WSU Athletics Student-Athlete Development (3/11)

