



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST
FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Bloomington

TO: President Michael McRobbie
FROM: G. Fred Glass, Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
C. Kurt Zorn, Faculty Athletics Representative
SUBJ: Safeguarding the Integrity of Academic Services for Student-Athletes
DATE: November 13, 2014

The investigation into alleged academic misconduct at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) recently culminated with the release of the Wainstein report.¹ This investigation, which stretched over a number of years, has generated significant discussion about the issue of the integrity of academic activities within universities, especially when they involve student-athletes.

Developments at UNC have prompted a review, by those responsible for the oversight and operation of academic services provided to student-athletes, of the measures in existence that guard against a similar situation occurring at Indiana University, Bloomington. This review focused on the processes and procedures that protect the integrity of the campus' academic mission and specifically the legitimacy of the courses our student-athletes enroll in and the degrees they pursue. Below is an overview of these processes, procedures, and safeguards.

Many components constitute the structure that is in place to monitor the legitimacy and integrity of the courses being offered to and the degrees being sought by students on the Bloomington campus, and specifically by student-athletes. The first component involves the university's faculty and the faculty's curricular processes and procedures. Faculty design the curriculum, manage it, and deliver the courses in the curriculum. In recognition of the fact that individual faculty may have different ideas on how best to deliver a particular course, checks and balances are in place to ensure the integrity of the curriculum. Curriculum committees, scheduling committees, department chairpersons, associate deans for academic affairs, and deans all play a role in ensuring the legitimacy and integrity of their units' academic offerings.

Academic advisors are a second component of the structure that ensures the legitimacy and integrity of courses and degrees offered on the Bloomington campus. Given the nature of their job – assisting students in the development of a plan to reach their academic goals and objectives – they must be familiar with the curriculum and courses offered in their academic unit. If they advise exploratory students, they need to have a general familiarity with degrees and courses offered by academic units across the campus.

Both formal and informal networks exist among campus academic advisors that promote the sharing of information about courses and degree programs offered on the campus. If the system

¹ Kenneth L. Wainstein, A. Joseph Jay III, and Colleen Depman Kukowski. *Investigation of Irregular Classes in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*. October 16, 2014.

of checks and balances is functioning properly, an advisor or group of advisors will notify their supervisors when they suspect a certain course or degree lacks the proper level of legitimacy and these supervisors will alert the department chairperson and others who have oversight responsibility for the course or degree.

The athletic academic services staff is part of the University Division group of academic advisors.² The staff has a dual reporting line to the Provost and the Athletic Director, receives the same training, and has access to the same continuing education as that offered to all academic advisors in University Division. Therefore members of the athletic academic services staff are part of the campus wide formal and informal advising networks mentioned above.

Student-athletes must satisfy the same academic expectations and requirements that the average student on campus must meet. Student-athletes who are still in the exploratory stage will have one academic advisor who is a member of the athletics academic services staff. When the student-athlete certifies into a degree program (formally declares a major), s/he will work both with their athletic academic advisor and a departmental academic advisor. Regular communication and collaboration among academic advisors on the athletic academic services staff and departmental advisors across the campus are paramount for the student-athlete's academic progress and success.

Student-athletes are required to meet certain progress to degree and academic performance metrics established by the NCAA in order to maintain their eligibility. Therefore the academic advisors and the athletics academic services staff work more closely with the student-athlete in monitoring academic performance and course selection than is the case with an advisor elsewhere on campus dealing with the typical student. Given these more frequent interactions with their advisees, advisors on the athletic student services staff are in a good position to inquire and determine what the demands are in particular courses being taken by their advisees.

A third component of the academic legitimacy and integrity monitoring structure is specific to student-athletes. The environment within the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is conducive to the promotion of academic legitimacy and integrity. The Vice President and Director of Athletics regularly espouses five tenets that are the guiding principles for every aspect of department's operations and activities. One of the tenets is specific to academics – “[to] achieve academically and graduate student-athletes.” This focus on academics establishes an expectation that the goal of academic integrity and legitimacy is a fundamental principle behind every decision and action taken by employees of the department and its student-athletes.

The Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services and the Excellence Academy fosters an ongoing environment of academic integrity and legitimacy among academic services staff members. The staff supports student-athletes as they work toward their academic goals and objectives while also maintaining their eligibility for competition. This support occurs without compromising the integrity and legitimacy of the academic process. Athletic advising services staff members are empowered to ask questions and to report anything that they feel may run counter to the ideals in the department's five tenets, especially the tenets that emphasize

² University Division is the academic home for students who have not yet certified into their major field of study. These students generally are referred to as exploratory students.

academic achievement and compliance with rules and regulations. Each member of the staff understands that they may raise any concerns with their immediate supervisor, the Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services and the Excellence Academy, the Athletics Director, and/or the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR).

A culture of academic integrity and legitimacy is promoted and continually fostered through presentations, educational materials, and enforcement. Athletic academic service staff provide education to student-athletes and hourly academic support staff members (tutors, mentors, lab monitors) regarding issues of academic honesty and ethical conduct. Staff regularly monitor activities within the Shuel Academic Center including tutoring sessions, the use of study rooms, and study tables to help detect and deter anything that may run counter to the principles of academic integrity and legitimacy.

When student-athletes desire to enroll in non-traditional coursework – independent study and online courses -- athletic academic service staff are trained to pay special attention to the content of these offerings to ensure they are degree applicable and substantive. The additional monitoring of non-traditional courses also provides a mechanism for the staff to identify offerings and/or instructors that are unusually popular among student-athletes. This can serve as an early warning regarding the legitimacy and integrity of that particular course offering.

Athletic academic services staff track and regularly review the distribution of majors being pursued by student-athletes. Degree monitoring enables the staff to determine whether clustering in specific majors is occurring among student-athletes. This information is shared with the Faculty Athletics Representative periodically and is available to the Faculty Athletics Committee.

Finally, the Registrar's Office, at the request of the FAR, generates a report of all classes that have fifteen percent or more student-athletes in them. These reports are generated every semester at the end of the first week of the term (after regular drop/add ends) and also after the early enrollment period (at the end of registration for the upcoming semester). The FAR shares these reports with the Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services and the Excellence Academy. They independently analyze the courses listed and flag any courses they believe deserve further explanation and discussion.³ The Associate Athletic Director and FAR then discuss the courses they independently have flagged to determine whether or not a reasonable explanation exists for the concentration of student-athletes in the course. If necessary, additional research and information gathering is performed to ensure that there is nothing untoward associated with this "clustering" of student-athletes in a course.

A fourth component of the academic legitimacy and integrity monitoring structure that is specific to student-athletes is the role and responsibilities of the FAR. In order to effectively monitor and

³ Not every course that exceeds the fifteen percent threshold (number of enrolled student-athletes divided by total number of enrolled students) may be of concern for a variety of reasons. These reasons may include: the number of total enrolled students is less than the available seats and when the number of student-athletes is divided by the number of available seats, the ratio is less than fifteen percent; the course is required for the major the student-athletes are working toward; and, practice times limit the options of available sections of a course, generally a course that is needed to meet general education requirements;

promote student-athlete academic success, the FAR has developed good working relationships with numerous individuals in the Department of Athletics and especially with academic service staff members. The FAR meets regularly with the Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services and the Excellence Academy to discuss academic issues associated with and affecting student-athletes. Periodically the FAR attends athletic academic service staff meetings. And he interacts regularly with members of the academic services staff on a more informal basis.

The FAR is invited to all, and attends many, of the academic and compliance orientation sessions that occur at the beginning of each academic semester. He also is invited to and attends many of the tutor orientation sessions that are held as each academic semester gets underway. By attending these sessions the FAR is able to verify that the appropriate information concerning academic honesty and integrity is being shared with and the correct expectations are being articulated to student-athletes, tutors, and other hourly staff members working for the department thereby creating a healthy academic environment throughout the department.

Because of the frequent formal and informal interactions among academic services staff members and the FAR, a good collaborative and cooperative working relationship has been established along with an environment of mutual trust and respect. Such an environment is important because it increases the likelihood that a staff member will feel comfortable talking with the FAR about any concerns whether they are large or small. It is important that this avenue of communication exists in addition to the more hierarchical avenues of informing one's supervisor and administrators in the department. In addition, it is understood that the FAR is willing and able to serve as a buffer or intermediary if member of the academic services staff is subjected to unreasonable or inappropriate pressure by a coach or other employee of the department with regard to any issue, but especially academically related issues.

A fifth component of the academic legitimacy and integrity monitoring structure that is specific to student-athletes involves the Faculty Athletics Committee of the Bloomington Faculty Council and specifically its Academic Issues Subcommittee. Members of the subcommittee meet regularly with the Associate Athletic Director for Academic Services and the Excellence Academy to discuss developments and trends with regard to the academic performance of student-athletes and any issues or concerns associated with student-athletes and their academic performance and success.

After reviewing the safeguards that are in place both at the campus level and within the Athletics Department, we are comfortable that the existing system of checks and balances is sufficient to ensure the academic integrity and legitimacy of the courses student-athletes are enrolled in and the degrees they are working toward. Clearly the monitoring system described above is predicated on the assumption that individuals perform their duties and responsibilities in good faith and with integrity. However, it is our belief that the existing safeguards should be able to identify problems quickly if an individual chooses not to operate responsibly and with integrity.

Cc:

Lauren Robel, Provost and Executive Vice President

John Applegate, Executive Vice President for University Academic Affairs



Karl Idsvoog <academicintegrity2017@gmail.com>

Checking for Academic Corruption in Athletics

Zorn, C. Kurt <zorn@indiana.edu>

Fri, Jul 28, 2017 at 12:40 PM

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Dear Mr. Idsvoog,

Before I provide the data you requested in your July 7th email, it is important to provide some context. Indiana University (IU) has a long standing "special" admissions program that is available to all incoming students. It was instituted by the IU Board of Trustees in June 1960 and is referred to as the faculty sponsorship program. Under the program if an IU faculty member certifies that "...in his judgment the applicant is capable of doing good work in college; or on the basis of any other evidence satisfactory to the [Admissions] Committee", a prospective student can gain admission despite not meeting the regularly specified university admission requirements.

Over the years the faculty sponsorship program has become more formalized with the formation of faculty sponsorship committees to assist the Office of Admissions in the review of requests for "special" admission under the faculty sponsorship program. The first such sponsorship committee was the Faculty Sponsorship Subcommittee of the Faculty Athletics Committee. Subsequently similar faculty sponsorship committees were formed by units on the campus to provide a systematic review of these requests. All of these committees work very closely with the IU Office of Admissions throughout the entire admissions process.

The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) serves as the chairperson of the Faculty Sponsorship Subcommittee of the Faculty Athletics Committee. The Committee consists of the FAR and three faculty members who also are members of the Faculty Athletics Committee. When a recruit falls short of IU's regular admission standards a coach can request that the Faculty Sponsorship Subcommittee approve sponsorship for that recruit. The coach works closely with the person who oversees initial eligibility for IU and with the FAR to ensure the case is worthy of consideration by the subcommittee. While NCAA eligibility is a necessary condition for consideration for sponsorship, eligibility alone is not sufficient.

The committee carefully reviews each case to determine whether it believes the student-athlete has a good probability of being academically successful at IU. It takes into consideration factors like the environment in which the student was raised, undiagnosed or late diagnoses of learning disabilities, etc. During its deliberations the subcommittee solicits input from the academic services staff regard the type and extent of accommodations that may be appropriate for the recruit. It also requires the coaching staff to carefully explain how it will work with the recruit to ensure she or he understands the importance of being successful academically and the type of environment it will create to help ensure success.

Once a student is approved for faculty sponsorship, the FAR matches the student with a faculty member who is willing to serve as a sponsor for a student-athlete. The faculty member serves as a mentor for the student for her or his freshman year and has the option to continue the relationship in subsequent years. The student and faculty member meet regularly during the year to discuss the student's academic progress, adjustment to university life, and any other topics that may come up.

The faculty sponsorship program for student-athletes has been very successful over the years. Analyses indicate that student-athletes admitted under this program perform similarly academically to the overall student-athlete population.

As you may suspect, students with an ACT score lower than 17 would not meet IU's regular admission standards and therefore must be admitted under the auspices of the faculty sponsorship program. You have asked for a "...breakdown of incoming freshmen admitted with ACT scores lower than 17 for both football and men's basketball..." during the last five years. These data appear in the table below:

**Football and Men's Basketball Incoming Freshmen
With ACT Score Below 17**

Academic Year	Football	Men's Basketball	Total
2012-13	1	1	2
2013-14	2	1	3
2014-15	1	0	1
2015-16	1	0	1
2016-17	1	1	2
2012-17 Totals	6	3	9

In sum, as a faculty member and now FAR, I am proud of the thoughtful system that exists for considering requests for "special" admissions at Indiana University in general and for student-athletes specifically.

Sincerely,

C. Kurt Zorn

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Sent: Friday, July 7, 2017 4:34 PM

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Subject: Checking for Academic Corruption in Athletics

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