

March 1, 2017

Sent via email

Prof. Karl Idsvoog, Dave Foster & Max Grubb
The Athletic Academic Integrity Project
AcademicIntegrity2017@gmail.com

Dear Professors Idsvoog, Foster, and Grubb:

I am writing in response to your December 22, 2016, public records request (PRR) directed to me in my capacity as Provost of the University of Arizona (UA). Your PRR seeks every analysis, either conducted or commissioned by my office, since January 1, 2011, on the topic of “academic corruption” in UA’s athletic department. It does not, however, define the term “academic corruption,” and I am not aware of any responsive documents that meet all of the criteria of your request as to source, timeframe, and subject matter. Nonetheless, because your PRR provides examples of what you apparently believe constitutes academic corruption, I am able to provide you with information about how UA addresses such matters. To be clear, UA regularly promotes and monitors academic success and integrity by its entire student body, not just by its student-athletes (SA). Indeed, doing so is at the core of our mission. Examples relevant to SAs are included below.

There are No Eligibility Courses at UA

UA’s dedicated program to promote SA academic success is called C.A.T.S. Academics. “C.A.T.S.” stands for “Commitment to Athlete’s Total Success.” As this name implies, UA’s approach is both comprehensive and holistic. To this end, the Director of C.A.T.S. Academics reviews SA attendance in and distribution across courses in conjunction with our Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), Senior Women’s Administrator (SWA), and Vice Provost. Such reviews are conducted each semester to track trends by course and instructor. Remedial actions are taken if warranted. To further prevent abuse, academic counselors are prohibited from having access to SA usernames and passwords, and cannot register SAs in classes. In addition, we are exploring the feasibility of monitoring overall SA grades relative to non-SAs, as well as the performance of SAs in particular classes relative to non-SA attendees.

UA Took Proactive Steps Following the Wainstein Report

Your PRR references Kenneth Wainstein’s “Investigation of Irregular Classes in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.” As you know, that report uncovered multiple abuses, many involving “independent study paper classes.” While only a small percentage of our SAs are enrolled in independent study classes, UA takes steps to prevent the sort of abuses uncovered at UNC through the Wainstein Report. For instance, UA requires instructors of such courses taken by SAs to disclose detailed information about their courses, including estimated

weekly hours of work, estimated length of instructor contact, project descriptions, etc. Such information is then shared with the FAR and Associate Director of Athletics for Compliance (AD for Compliance). Moreover, the instructors teaching such courses routinely rotate.

UA's SAs are Widely Spread Across Majors and Colleges

UA's SAs are spread across 87 majors and 16 colleges.

Other Proactive Measures

- Every Fall and Spring semester, C.A.T.S. Academics collaborates with other UA units to host an Academic Integrity Workshop for freshmen. It not only provides information about libraries, academic support services, and other resources aimed at educating freshmen on how to avoid academic integrity violations – e.g., proper source attribution, etc. – but also on the disciplinary consequences for failing to do so. This messaging is then reinforced for SAs at team meetings conducted twice each semester.
- The AD for Compliance meets with C.A.T.S. Academics staff members every other month to keep them current on NCAA legislation, eligibility certification, academic integrity policies, etc.
- C.A.T.S. Academics is certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. Its tutors receive ten hours of training as part of this certification, with a heavy focus on academic integrity issues.
- C.A.T.S. Academics coordinates regular Compliance, Eligibility, and Student-Athlete Well-being meetings, which are attended by the FAR, SWA, and representatives from Athletics Compliance and the Office of the Registrar. These meetings always end with a discussion of academic integrity and serve as an opportunity to discuss and fine tune UA's compliance with academic integrity best practices for SAs.

To conclude, we applaud the Drake Group for its leading role in policing academic integrity in college athletics. As outlined above, we are happy to report that UA is keenly aware of its responsibility to safeguard against abuses, and does so through a variety of proactive measures.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to this important issue, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Andrew C. Comrie, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

June 30, 2017

Sent via email

Prof. Karl Idsvoog
The Athletic Academic Integrity Project
AcademicIntegrity2017@gmail.com

Dear Professor Idsvoog:

Thank you for your email dated May 16, 2017, following up on my March 1 letter to you and Professors Foster and Grubb, on behalf of the University of Arizona. You have asked me to “provide the written analysis of what the Provost’s analysis found.” However, because my March 1 letter did not reference a “written analysis” prepared by my office, and I am not otherwise aware of one on the subject of “academic corruption,” I am unable to provide you with any materials.

Sincerely,



Andrew C. Comrie, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost