Faculty Athletics Representative Report to University Senate

Tim Gleason
Professor of Journalism
Faculty Athletics Representative
February 24, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to share information about intercollegiate athletics and the academic performance and well being of University of Oregon student athletes. This report briefly outlines the Faculty Athletics Representative’s (FAR) portfolio, provides data related to the academic performance of student athletes, and discusses current NCAA and PAC-12 policy issues related to the academic life of student athletes.

There are three key messages in this report:

• The academic performance of student athletes at the UO is consistent with the performance of the overall student body.
• The Athletic Department and Services for Student Athletes are committed to providing student athletes with a high quality experience on and off the field.
• The intercollegiate athletics landscape is changing. We face significant challenges in maintaining and enhancing the student experience for UO student athletes and the excellence of UO Athletics.

The Roll of the FAR

The Faculty Athletics Representative is an NCAA-mandated position. On this campus Professor Emeritus Jim O’Fallon held the position for more than 25 years. He was an advocate for student athletes on this campus and a greatly respected participant in the national conversations about intercollegiate athletics. During Jim’s last year in the office I had the opportunity to work with him and to begin to gain an understanding of the FAR position. I assumed full responsibility for the office on July 1, 2015.

The FAR is appointed by and reports to the University President. The portfolio includes the following:

• Certifying the eligibility of student-athletes each term
• Reviewing compliance with NCAA / PAC-12 rules and regulations
• Supporting student athlete academic performance and well being
• Representing the University at NCAA and PAC-12 Conference
• Serving as a liaison between UO Athletics and the Faculty

The FAR works closely with the Athletic department, Services for Student Athletes, the Registrar’s office, the Athletics Compliance Advisory Group, the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and the President’s Advisory Group on Intercollegiate Athletics.
Student Athlete Academic Performance
The NCAA provides two national measures of student athlete performance: The Academic Progress Report (APR) and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Along with the GSR, the NCAA provides Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) data. Detailed reports on both measures are available on the NCAA website: http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/graduation-success-rate http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/division-i-academic-progress-rate-apr

Graduation Success Rate (GSR)
The NCAA developed the GSR to include the performance of transfer students in this metric. The FGR measures the performance of students from the first to the sixth year, without accounting for transfer students. The GSR includes transfer students and thereby provides a more complete picture of the student-athlete experience.

In the November 2015 NCAA GSR report the UO had a GSR of 80% for the cohort entering college in 2004. The average for NCAA Division I schools was 82% and for Football Bowl Series schools it was 83%.

The graphs below show: (1) the 10-year GSR and FGR trends for the UO; and (2) the trend among PAC-12 schools (not including the 2014-15 data). The UO has maintained a GSR of 80 or above for several years. This places us in the middle cluster of PAC-12 schools.

It is important to note that most student athletes who transfer do so for athletic, not academic, reasons. For students who exhaust their athletic eligibility at the University of Oregon, the graduation rate is 90%.

(1) University of Oregon GSR and FGR 2004-05 / 2014-15
(2) GSR: PAC-12 schools (not including the 2014-15 data).

Academic Progress Rate
APR measures success in maintaining student athletes’ athletic and academic eligibility. It is calculated as follows:

- Each student-athlete receiving athletically related financial aid earns one point for staying in school and one point for being academically eligible.
- A team’s total points are divided by points possible and then multiplied by 1,000 to equal the team’s Academic Progress Rate.
- In addition to a team’s current-year APR, its rolling four-year APR is also used to determine accountability.

Teams must a four-year APR of 930 to compete in championships.

In the May 2015 report all UO teams are well above the required four-year APR, with a range among teams of 945 to 999. The one-year APR range was 905 (one team) to 1000 (7 teams), with an overall APR of 971 for all sports. There is a significant volatility in the one-year rate since many teams have rosters with fewer than 15 student athletes.
UO Student-Athlete GPA

UO Athletics is justifiably proud of the success of our best student athletes. We have added 30 Academic All-Americans in the last five years to a list that is approaching 100 UO student athletes. During the 2014-15 academic year over 100 UO student athletes were named to the Pac-12 Academic Honor Roll.

Taking a broader look at student athlete performance, in the fall 2015 term UO student athletes earned an average 3.00 GPA, with a median GPA of 2.99. In 2014-15, The University average undergraduate GPA was 3.27. Eighty percent of UO student athletes earned a 2.50 or better GPA for the term.
When GPA distribution is measured on a team basis, the average GPA for UO teams in Fall 2015 was 3.1, with a range of 2.6 to 3.4.

**Average GPA of UO Athletic Teams – Fall 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Average GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W Basketball (13)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Basketball (16)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Cross Country (64)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Cross Country (18)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Track &amp; Field (9)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Track &amp; Field (38)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Tennis (9)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Tennis (8)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Golf (8)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Golf (11)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Softball (22)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Softball (29)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Baseball (19)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Baseball (16)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Lacrosse (30)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Lacrosse (39)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Volleyball / Beach VB (18)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Acrobatic &amp; Tumbling (26)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Football (17)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Distribution of Majors**

In Fall 2015 student athletes enrolled in 50 different majors, with the 10 or more students in only eight majors. The eight most popular majors for student athletes are consistent with overall University enrollment patterns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Majors: 10 or more student athletes enrolled</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Social Sci.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Business</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Phys</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Journalism</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Science</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 or fewer student athletes enrolled:

EC, MATH, PPPM, BIC, CDS, CIS, ENV, FHS, PEN, PS, CINE, ENG, ESCI, MPS PED, PHYS, PINS, ANTH, CRES, EDF, MPA, NPM, P3PM, SPED, ARCH, ARDG, ARH, CFHS, CLAS, FR, GB, HIST, HUM, IIP, MACS, PFHS, SPAN, TA, UNCL
“Special Admission”
The FAR is not directly involved in the admissions process. However, since a small number of student athletes are admitted through the University’s special admission process, it may be useful to outline the process.

The Vice President for Enrollment Management oversees the review of all student files where the student does not meet one of more of the standard admission criteria. In the case of student athletes an advisory group that includes a faculty member reviews the files and makes a recommendation.

In the 2015 class 14 student-athlete special admits were 13% of the 104 special admits to the University, 11.7% of the 119 student athletes in the class, and .003% of the total number of students admitted to the UO. Over the last 5 years, the percentage of student athletes admitted through this program is 11% of all admitted student athletes.

NCAA Secondary violations
The Compliance office has an aggressive and effective education program in place to make sure that everyone involved in UO Athletics has knowledge of the complex sets of regulations governing intercollegiate sports and of all relevant University policies and practices. Even so, given the complexity of the regulatory environment it is highly unlikely that any athletic department can completely avoid minor NCAA rule violations. It is the University’s obligation to self-report violations as they are discovered.

Athletics reported 10 level III violations in 2014-15 and five violations to date in 2015-16. While the compliance office is concerned with any violation, the number of reported violations is not out of the ordinary. Most of the minor violations concern communication with prospective student athletes.

For Example:
- A coach mistakenly returned a phone call to a prospective student athlete.
- A coach mistakenly returned a text to a prospective student athlete.
- A coach tweeted to a prospective student athlete when he thought he was direct messaging.
- A student athlete tweeted congratulations to a prospective student athlete for a verbal commitment.

Other reported violations in the period under review include a positive drug test at a post-season contest, failure to deliver a grant-in-aid by a deadline, and the holding of an alumni game one day before the permissible window for such contests.

NCAA – PAC-12 legislation related to well-being / student experience
In May 2014 PAC-12 Presidents released a letter in which they listed ten priority areas for reform:
- Permit institutions to make scholarship awards up to the full cost of attendance.
• Provide reasonable on-going medical or insurance assistance for student-athletes who suffer an incapacitating injury in competition or practice. Continue efforts to reduce the incidence of disabling injury.
• Guarantee scholarships for enough time to complete a bachelor’s degree, provided that the student remains in good academic standing.
• Decrease the time demands placed on the student-athlete in-season, and correspondingly enlarge the time available for studies and full engagement in campus life, by doing the following:
  • Prevent the abuse of organized "voluntary" practices to circumvent the limit of 20 hours per week.
  • More realistically assess the time away from campus and other commitments during the season, including travel time.
  • Similarly decrease time demands out of season by reducing out-of-season competition and practices, and by considering shorter seasons in specific sports.
  • Further strengthen the Academic Progress Rate requirements for post-season play.
  • Address the "one and done" phenomenon in men’s basketball. If the National Basketball Association and its Players Association are unable to agree on raising the age limit for players, consider restoring the freshman eligibility rule in men’s basketball.
• Provide student-athletes a meaningful role in governance at the conference and NCAA levels.
• Adjust existing restrictions so that student-athletes preparing for the next stage in their careers are not unnecessarily deprived of the advice and counsel of agents and other competent professionals, but without professionalizing intercollegiate athletics.
• Liberalize the current rules limiting the ability of student-athletes to transfer between institutions.

Progress has been made on the PAC-12 priorities and in other areas as well. In October 2014, the PAC-12 approved legislation instituting the following reforms:
• Athletic scholarships are now guaranteed for four years for student-athletes in all sports.
• Student-athletes who leave school before graduating are able to use the remainder of their educational expenses later to earn their degrees.
• Medical expenses for student-athletes who are injured during their college athletic careers are covered for up to four years after a student-athlete leaves the institution.
• Student-athletes who transfer between Pac-12 institutions may receive athletic scholarships immediately.
• Student-athletes are represented in the Conference governance structure.

In January 2015 the Autonomy conferences met for the first time. They enacted the first round of legislative reforms for the five conferences. Additional reforms were adopted in the 2016 Autonomy session.
Autonomy legislation (examples, not a full list)

January 2015

- **Concussion Safety Protocol**: Established NCAA requirements for all athletic departments.
- **Full Grant-In-Aid -- Up To Cost of Attendance**: Schools may now provide full cost of attendance scholarships.
- **Multi-year scholarships**: Schools may issue four-year scholarship agreements. Agreements may not be withdrawn for athletic reasons.

January 2016

- **Independent Medical Care**: Requires each institution to establish a system of independent medical care with the health care providers holding “unchallengeable autonomous authority…to determine medical management and return-to-play decisions related to student-athletes.
- **Self Employment Promotion of a Non-athletically Related Business**: A student-athlete may use his or her name, picture or likeness to promote his or her own business, provided the business is not athletically related and the promotion does not include any reference to the individual’s status as a student-athlete or affiliation with the institution’s department of athletics.

While several proposals from the PAC-12 were not acted on in January, the Autonomy conferences did approve a resolution committing the group to take action by January 2017 in the following areas:

- The establishment of a two-week period at the conclusion of seasons during which student-athletes have no mandatory athletic activities, allowing greater participation in academic, campus and personal activities;
- The establishment of a policy mandating a full eight-hour period during the night without athletically related activity; and
- The establishment of a full day off per week during the season that addresses the impact of travel time.

It also committed the group to “assess and consider proposals that address other time demand issues, including but not limited to:”

- The redefinition of types of athletically related activities, including "countable," "noncountable" and "exempt" to more accurately reflect the real demands made upon student-athletes;
- The incorporation of the most current research and best practices regarding physical and mental well-being;
- The provision of time opportunities for co-curricular activities, such as internships and international study; and
- The impact of athletic time demands on academically at-risk student-athletes.
Other areas under discussion:

**Academic Misconduct:** The NCAA Committee on Academics has proposed a bylaw revision to “To define and clarify post-enrollment academic misconduct activities, the individuals to whom the activities apply and violations of such activities.” The UO is among a substantial number of schools raising concerns about the impact of the proposed rule on the academic autonomy of faculty. A revision of the proposal was released this week.

**Graduate Transfer Rule:** This is an area where a number of concerns have been raised but there is no consensus on what, if anything, should be changed. The NCAA Committee on Academics is considering changes to the APR rules to address the fact that a significant percentage of graduate transfers do not complete graduate degrees. A member of the Football Oversight Committee has proposed that graduate transfers be required to be enrolled a full year before playing. Note that the PAC-12 presidents called for “Liberaliz[ing] the current rules limiting the ability of student-athletes to transfer between institutions.”

The graduate transfer experience on the UO campus illustrates that the effectiveness of the rule varies based on individual circumstances. Since 2010 we have enrolled 25 graduate transfers, with 60% of those student athletes in Track & Field. Men’s Basketball, Football, Volleyball and Women’s Basketball also have enrolled graduate transfer students. Six are currently enrolled. Forty-two% of the student athletes currently not enrolled completed a graduate degree or certificate program.

Graduate transfer student athletes have enrolled in 16 different graduate degree or certificate programs: Conflict and Dispute Resolution, Counseling, Family and Human Services, General Business, Geological Sciences, Graduate School UNDL, IS: Individualized Program (5), Nonprofit Management (6), Chemistry, Computer and Information Science, Curriculum and Teaching (2), General Business, Human Physiology, International Studies, Public Administration, and Special Education.

Student athletes transferred from the following institutions: Boston College, Columbia, Dartmouth (3), Detroit University, E. Washington University, Harvard, University of Illinois, Jacksonville State University, Jamestown College Louisiana Tech, Montana State University, University of Notre Dame, Oregon State University, Princeton (3), UC Irvine, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Villanova University, University of Virginia (3), and Willamette University.
Television and Travel Schedules: As a result of the current PAC-12 television contracts and the commitment of the PAC-12 Network to broadcast more than 800 events a year, the traditional conference travel patterns and game times are no longer the norm. The PAC-12 is watching this experience closely and coaches are working to minimize the impact of travel and mid-week contests on student athletes. We will have to manage this issue for a number of years given the multi-year length of the current television contract.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report. I hope that it contributes to our understanding of the performance and experience of UO student athletes and of the opportunities and challenges for the Athletics Department and the University.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gleason
Professor of Journalism
Faculty Athletics Representative