

2015 Report to the Faculty Senate

*Alyson Hagy, Faculty Athletics Representative
Chair, Athletics Planning Committee*

2014-15 has been a year of significant change for college athletics and the NCAA. Though conference alignments have stabilized, the NCAA has completely retooled its administrative, governance, and enforcement structures. The NCAA is also preparing to investigate cases of on-campus academic fraud for the first time in its history.

At UW, student-athletes continue to meet benchmarks linked to academic eligibility and progress toward degree. This may be the result of refined recruiting (coaches understanding who is likely to be successful in the classroom at UW) and enhanced academic support (the targeted use of tutors, mentors, summer classes, etc.). Team GPAs are among the very highest in the Mountain West Conference. The national metric of APR (Academic Progress Rate), a measurement of retention and graduation, is at an all-time high for several UW squads. APR scores also remain well above the NCAA “red line” of 930. Further, the suspension/probation rates of student-athletes remain low. A spreadsheet outlining APR scores for all squads is attached, as is a current compilation of GPA data.

UW student-athletes continue to earn conference and regional recognition. In particular, distance runner Holly Page and women’s basketball player Kayla Woodward have won repeated accolades for both their athletic and academic achievements.

Student-athletes continue to major in a wide range of disciplines. A summary of that information is also attached. The number of UW student-athletes who major in engineering, professional programs, and math/science-centered fields remains notable, especially when compared with other Mountain West institutions.

There are areas of concern. If the NCAA passes legislation related to academic fraud, UW may wish to discuss institutional standards of academic dishonesty, particularly the distinctions between “formal” and “informal” charges levied by faculty members against students. The academic fraud scandal at the University of North Carolina and recent news from Syracuse University suggest Division 1 institutions must remain vigilant, particularly with regards to the behavior of academic personnel (faculty and staff). I am currently working with the staff of the Office of Academic Services to monitor student-athlete enrollments in independent study courses. I am also examining grade distribution in certain classes. If Senators have suggestions or concerns regarding student-athletes and academic coursework, I urge them to contact me.

The Division of Intercollegiate Athletics is developing an aggressive strategic plan. The plan emphasizes academic excellence and student-athlete well-being, but it also focuses on improved competitive excellence. The proposed High Altitude

Performance Center, an expanded academic center, and a full training table for all sports will require considerable new resources. A spreadsheet, developed at the request of Senate Chair Ed Janak, comparing UW's Athletics budget to that of other Division 1 institutions is attached. I urge Senators, and all faculty members, to familiarize themselves with the strategic plan and to share thoughts about that plan with me, Athletics Director Tom Burman, and President McGinity.

Finally, the Athletics Planning Committee remains very active. The committee meets several times a year to analyze financial, academic, and gender/diversity data related to the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. The committee also receives regular, detailed updates from AD Tom Burman and his staff. Each college has a representative on the APC, as do ASUW, UW staff, the student-athlete leadership committee, and the dean's council. If anyone has questions about the APC or its ongoing work, I would be more than happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

Alyson Hagy