



School Counselor Education Work Group Proposal for Innovative School Counseling and Athletics Partnership

Initiative Research Objectives

- Identify innovative educator preparation practices supported by some predictive evidence of successful outcomes on identified metrics
 - Identify which innovative practices can be implemented with fidelity and rigor in Wyoming
 - Develop or adapt and refine highly effective innovative practices for implementation in Wyoming
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Initiative Research Work Group Name: Counselor Education

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Proposed Innovation

Why is this practice innovative?

Our state-of-the-art innovation provides UW school counseling students with the opportunity to serve, consult, and collaborate with UW student athletes, coaches and staff, as well as Physical Education pre-service teachers, to prepare counseling students to serve P-12 student athletes effectively. Nowhere in the country are school counseling students working as on-site interns and consultants in D1, D2 or D3 sports programs to obtain the knowledge and skills for effective work with P-12 student athletes. Our Wyoming P-12 student athletes experience the same stressors, anxiety, and performance issues that affect their academic achievements and social-emotional wellbeing as do college student athletes.

Our innovation provides opportunities for school counseling students to learn about the culture of athletics, unique needs of student athletes, NCAA rules pertaining to P-12 student athletes hoping to transition to collegiate sports, recruitment expectations for P-12 student athletes and their families, and practical application of knowledge and skills in successfully counseling student athletes. School counseling students will also explore the myriad of careers associated with sports (e.g., trainers, coaches) to share with P-12 student athletes



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which will better prepare them to discuss career and coursework paths for high school students.

In addition, Counseling students will have the opportunity to work with the Physical Education Department to gain skills and share knowledge of stress management and fostering development of the whole child. Counseling students will observe and assist as appropriate with interactions in the athletics involving social cohesion, navigation of the university environment, coordination of accommodations, and other issues pertaining to student athlete well-being. Interactions with coaches and staff will also inform the work of the counseling students. Staff of the Athletic Department have already been guest lecturers in several classes, and they look forward to offering knowledge to the school counselors in addition to the role plays and case studies that can lay the groundwork for effective collaboration, consultation and internship work. Physical Education faculty will also be invited to share their expertise for an interdisciplinary, innovative approach.

What is the proposed innovation?

School Counseling Master's students are required to perform 600 hours of internship experiences. This innovation allows students to perform up to 200 hours on campus, learning skills and information of significant concern to counselors working in schools. During this 200 hours, school counseling interns will learn knowledge, skills and application of prevention and intervention strategies in partnership with the UW athletic department. Weekly internship classes will allow students to integrate learnings and practical application. School counseling interns can transfer and apply their learning during the remaining 400 internship hours in placements in schools.

This proposal funds two 3-year (12 months each year) graduate assistant doctoral students from the UW Counselor Education program. One doctoral student will develop and implement a comprehensive program evaluation as well as collect data, analyze results, report effectiveness, and suggest modifications in a formative and summative process. The other doctoral student will supervise school counseling master's students, assist with the weekly class, work with coaches, and offer easily accessible individual/group counseling services located on-site in the UW Athletics Department. The doctoral students will be overseen by a faculty coordinator

School counseling interns, supervised by the doctoral student, can provide prevention/intervention services for student athletes' mental well-being and performance enhancement. Also, school counseling students will offer workshops to coaches and staff regarding evidence-based practices for reducing stress and enhancing well-being of student-athletes. During the 3-credit internship classes that meet weekly with their peers and the supervising faculty instructor, school counseling students will share and reflect upon their activities, experiences, challenges, and implications for their counseling work. Interns will receive faculty clinical supervision and input for improvement as well as discuss implications for P-12 students.

In addition, the weekly class meetings provide the opportunity for supervising faculty, the doctoral students, and personnel from the Athletic Department and the Physical Education Department to provide additional P-12 resources to the counseling students. These may include such topics as NCAA requirements, career opportunities in athletic fields, the provision of academic support, college recruitment, issues related to physical education classes, and family support, among others.

This innovation will also provide additional internship sites for school counseling students that are easily accessible on campus. In addition, as the project proceeds, school counseling students may share their knowledge and experiences with school counseling practitioners by means of conference presentations,



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workshops, and professional development sessions across Wyoming. In addition, school counseling students would be available to disseminate relevant information about guidance and emotional wellness to PE pre-service teachers. As indicated by the attached support letter from Tom Burman, UW Athletic Director, the UW Athletic Department is eager for this collaboration, is designating private counseling space in the Athletic Department, and looks forward to promoting the success of UW student-athletes in both their athletic and academic roles as well as our school counseling students.

The supervising doctoral graduate assistant will office in the Athletic Department for 18 hours per week, along with school counseling interns, initially planning to devote 13 hours to the student-athletes and 5 hours with the coaches and staff. The graduate assistant will supervise, plan and organize services to meet student athlete needs. Support for the student-athletes can include group and individual counseling sessions. Work with the coaches and staff of the entire Athletic Department may encompass requested consultations and workshops related to issues such as:

- Academic planning (including Major exploration)
- Career Development and Preparation (including Career Assessment via Myers Briggs Type Indicator [MBTI], Strong Interest Inventory, and Values Card Sort)
- Transitioning from high school to college
- Study habits and test taking skills
- Teamwork, leadership, and diversity
- Anxiety reduction and stress management skills
- Suicidality awareness and prevention
- Healthy coping strategies
- Post-surgical/medical procedure counseling

Additionally, the graduate assistant and school counseling students will work closely with other UW colleagues (e.g., University Counseling Center, Dean of Student Affairs, Physical Education) to provide appropriate referrals and coordinate times for them to come provide presentations on their services and specialty areas to student-athletes and/or staff. The doctoral student evaluating the program will office in the athletic department as space allows and will have an office in the Education Building too. A faculty member of the counselor education program will provide supervision of the doctoral student's weekly and offer any extra support needed to school counseling students as needed. Initially, the faculty supervisor will be Dr. Mary Alice Bruce, a former school counselor, a licensed professional counselor in Wyoming and full professor in the UW Counselor Education program.

Finally, in Year 2, there will be substantial outreach throughout Wyoming. There will be a one credit professional development enrichment course (15 hours) taught by UW faculty and the PhD student that will feature UW Athletic Department guest speakers. This will be video-conferenced throughout the state via zoom technology and will address topics to support P-12 student athletes. Also, there will be shorter workshop sessions video conferenced throughout the state, that will focus on providing important information to coaches, families, teachers, communities, and the athletes themselves.

No other university with a nationally accredited school counseling program is conducting any type of innovative project such as this one to prepare their school counselors to work with student athletes, their families, and coaches. Extensive searches of websites and a comprehensive literature review produced no such



collaborations (Austin, 2016). Only one university, Syracuse University, is just beginning a type of collaboration wherein counseling faculty are in initial discussions with the athletic department as to possible services that can be offered to collegiate athletes. During these tentative discussions, there is not any emphasis placed on supporting school counseling students to gain knowledge or practice in serving P-12 student athletes (Austin, 2016).

Documentation of Need

Because this program is innovative, current program data did not reveal a need. The Research Work Group instead relied on the literature to make a case for this need.

School counseling students need to understand how to help P-12 student-athletes who face particular stressors and complex challenges such as balance of time between rigorous athletic schedules and academic/personal demands, maintenance of eligibility, loss of the *star status* as they graduate from high school, fear of possible injuries and arduous rehabilitation, social challenges with outside relationships, and transitions with changing schools/teams.

Decreased athletic and academic performance may emerge for P-12 student athletes' due to resulting struggles with anxiety, depression, violence, substance abuse, and eating disorders. With the U.S. society emphasizing competitive sports, even very young P-12 students can feel the stressors and pressures related to sports performance (Scanlan, Babkes, & Scanlan, 2005; Simon & Martens, 1979). A mixed methods study conducted with more than 120 high school students as well as their teachers, school counselors, and administrators from several highly competitive schools evidenced students reporting significantly reduced academic performance, mental health issues, and resulting substance abuse due to chronic stress (Leonard et al., 2015). According to Beauchemin (2014), mental health concerns continue into higher education and beyond with up to 15% of collegiate student-athletes in-need of counseling services.

Meanwhile, P-12 student athletes also need help to meet National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requirements academically, to respond appropriately when recruited for collegiate sports, and to negotiate scholarship offers. School counselors must know how to help families be a resource to their student athletes, to realize the implications of stress and pressure, and to facilitate families to take advantage of mental health services as a protective measure for their children. As a result, the stigma often associated with counseling or substance abuse treatment may decrease (Leonard et al., 2015). Also, school counselors can support P-12 students and their families to consider the many careers in athletics that are available including equipment manager, performance coach, and athletic trainer.

The American School Counselor Association Ethical Code states that counselors have a duty to: "Provide students with a comprehensive school counseling program that ensures equitable academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities for all students" (ASCA, 2016, A.3.b.). However, an often-overlooked group of P-12 students are student-athletes. While school counselors have basic knowledge to offer general counseling support, they need specific knowledge and practical experiences in supporting the unique needs of student athletes, coaches, and families. This innovative project with the UW Athletic Department provides a welcome opportunity for school counseling students to learn needed knowledge and practical application skills during their hands-on internship.



To learn prevention and intervention counseling strategies with various client populations, school counseling students must complete a supervised internship of at least 600 hours with 240 of these as direct client contact, according to national accreditation standards (Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2016). School counseling students must learn how to work with systems of support for P-12 students in the manner that practicing school counselors collaborate and consult with teachers, coaches, administrators, parents and families who support student athletes. Knowledge and practical experience related to NCAA requirements, recruitment strategies, and available resources can be extremely helpful for school counselors as they play an integral role in the system of support. In addition, school counseling students must challenge themselves as to any biases or stereotypes they may hold regarding student athletes.

As for school counseling master's students:

- School counseling students must find approved internship sites. This innovation continues the same requirements for accreditation within the same timeline for school counseling student graduation and is of great benefit in providing additional internship sites.
- Annually, the UW Counselor Education on-campus program admits up to 24 master's students and 6 doctoral students. About half the master's students are interested in school counseling.
- While 400 hours of the 600 total internship hours must be completed in a school system, the other 200 and more can be met by counseling work on campus with the Athletic Department under the supervision of the doctoral graduate assistant. Certainly, with this expertise and experience, UW school counseling graduates will be even more marketable and qualified to serve P-12 students.

As for UW Athletics:

- UW has between 400-450 student-athletes in any given academic year.
- Athletics has created the "student-athlete wellbeing team" which tracks student-athletes with potential wellness issues (student-athletes on this list include ones struggling with injury related emotional issues, typical mental wellness issues related to depression/anxiety/etc...., substance abuse, academic stress, and other issues...). At any one time, this list averages 77 names on it.
- The counseling students can work with UW student-athletes that have run afoul of the UW code of conduct policy and require some level of counseling. In the last calendar year, UW had over 40 student-athletes who presented with a code of conduct issue.

At the same time, the school counseling students will learn about NCAA rules pertaining to P-12 student athletes hoping to transition to collegiate sports, recruitment expectations for P-12 student athletes and their families, the unique culture of athletics, and practical application of knowledge and skills in successfully counseling student athletes. Counseling students will observe and assist as appropriate with interactions in the athletics involving social cohesion, navigation of the university environment, coordination of accommodations, and other issues pertaining to student athlete well-being. Interactions with coaches and staff will also inform the work of the counseling students. Staff of the Athletic Department have already been guest lecturers in several classes, and they look forward to offering knowledge to the school counselors in addition to the role plays and case studies that can lay the groundwork for effective collaboration, consultation and internship work.

This innovation also will provide a benefit of additional internship sites easily accessible on campus for the school counseling master's students, not all of whom have convenient transportation for their internship work.



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With a number of school counseling students seeking internship sites, the Athletic Department as an approved site will lessen the stress for the students and allow them to choose carefully their internship work and goals.

Alignment to Key Performance Indicators

1. Statewide perceptions of the University of Wyoming college of Education
2. Continuous Improvement Protocols for field and clinical experiences

Evidence Supporting Proposed Innovation: Literature Review

Austin, J. A. (2016). *Exploration of the relationship between a counselor preparation program and a collegiate athletic program* (Order No. 10154310). Available from Dissertations & Theses @ University of Wyoming; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1836101120). Retrieved from <http://libproxy.uwyo.edu/login/?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.uwyo.edu/docview/1836101120?accountid=14793>

Fletcher, T. B., Benshoff, J. M., & Richburg, M. J. (2003). A systems approach to understanding and counseling college student- athletes. *Journal of College Counseling*, 6(1), 35-45.

Gill, E. L. (2014). Integrating collegiate sports into social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 50(2), 305-321.

Goldberg, A. D., & Chandler, T. (1995). Sports counseling: Enhancing the development of the high school student- athlete. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 74(1), 39-44.

Nejedlo, R. J., Arredondo, P. M., & Benjamin, L. (1985). *Imagine: A visionary model for the counselors of tomorrow*. Counselors of Tomorrow Interest Network, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Petitpas, A. J., Buntrock, C. L., Raalte, J. L., & Brewer, B. W. (1995). Counseling athletes: A new specialty in counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 34(3), 212-219.

Sabo, D., Miller, K. E., Melnick, M. J., Farrell, M. P., & Barnes, G. M. (2005). High school athletic participation and adolescent suicide: A nationwide US study. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 40(1), 5-23.

Scanlan, T. K., Babkes, M. L., & Scanlan, L. A. (2005). Participation in sport: A developmental glimpse at emotion. *Organized activities as contexts of development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs*, 275-309.

Simon, J. A., & Martens, R. (1979). Children's anxiety in sport and nonsport evaluative activities. *Journal of sport psychology*, 1(2), 160-169.

Smith, J. D., Pare, D., & Gravelle, F. (2002). Alternatives to School Suspension: An Intervention for At-Risk Students.

**Summary of Literature Review:**

Goldberg and Chandler (1995) made the case for the need for school counselors to recognize unique challenges for student athletes, collaborate with coaches, understand attitudes of parents, and realize how to support the healthy development of all those who participate in athletics. Gil (2014) wrote about the integration of social work education and collegiate sports. While no best practices were identified, social work students began working in the Athletic Departments of East Tennessee State University and North Carolina Central University. Both universities have since reported student athletes earning “national recognition for their academic achievement” (p. 314), Gil purported numerous benefits for social work students including realization of the particular risk factors for student athletes, enhancement of crisis management and counseling skills, understanding of substance use and abuse, consequences of social and economic injustices, effective interventions with groups/organizations, and successful instruction regarding time management skills. School counseling students can expect to reap similar benefits as expressed by Gil’s work with social work students.

Historically, beneficial connections between counselors and athletic departments have been encouraged to enhance counselors’ understanding of the athletic subculture (Fletcher, Benshoff, & Richburg, 2003). According to Nejedlo, Arredondo, & Benjamin (1985), as part of the Counselors of Tomorrow Project under the auspices of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, athletic counseling competencies were developed. Petitpas and Buntrock (1995) described an athletic counseling concentration and certification available within a master’s degree in psychology offered by Springfield College in Massachusetts. The focus of the Springfield College program is on the youth, collegiate, and professional levels. However, a paucity of empirical studies exists specifically related to preparing school counselors to support student athletes and their families throughout their P-12 schooling as well as possible transitions into collegiate sports.

Additionally, the literature explores the role of organized sports on the socio-emotional development of P-12 students, as participation in these activities is on the increase. Scanlan, Babkes, & Scanlan (2005) suggested the understanding of the interaction between emotion and sports can be used to better serve pre-puberty students, while Smith, Pare, & Gravelle (2002) suggest that sports participation can be used to remediate behavior problems. Sabo, Miller, Melnick, Farrell, & Barnes (2008) found that while sports participation was associated with lower rates of suicidal ideation in adolescents, that sports-related injuries, without the support of informed counseling, could lead to increased risks.

Proposed Innovation: Program Evaluation**The impact of this proposed project may include:**

- School counseling students will realize stressors experienced by student athletes.
- School counseling students will be able to identify counseling needs of student athletes.
- School counseling students will learn prevention and intervention strategies to manage the unique needs of student athletes
- School counseling students will enhance their learning of substance abuse issues and treatment for student athletes
- School counseling students will be better equipped to support P-12 student athletes, their teachers/coaches, and families
- Knowledge, understanding, and experience related to counseling student-athletes will enhance career-preparation for counseling students
- Stigma related to mental health counseling will be reduced for student-athletes.



- Student athletes will request counseling services.
- Student athletes will be provided more resources for substance abuse counseling.
- Student athletes recovering from serious medical procedures will receive directed mental health care.
- Coaches and staff will realize specific steps they can take to help student-athletes manage and improve their wellbeing.
- Development of campus relationships between Athletics and the Counselors Education program, which will lead to further counseling resources for students and staff.
- Requests will emerge from school counselors as well as schools around Wyoming for professional development sessions, workshops, and delivery of knowledge from this program across the state.
- The success of this innovative project will lead to continuing funding by donors and foundations who are interested in effective support of school counseling students and student athletes.
- Dissemination of information at the Wyoming Counseling Association and the Wyoming School Counseling Association annual conferences.

Measuring Success:

Measurable goals and reporting related to the proposal:

- Pre/post tests will demonstrate school counseling students' transference of knowledge, skills and application of their learning experiences with collegiate athletes to P-12 student athletics.
- Pre/post tests will demonstrate school counseling students' increased knowledge regarding unique stressors of student-athletes.
- Pre/post tests will demonstrate school counseling students' increased knowledge related to NCAA rules pertaining to P-12 student athletes hoping to transition to collegiate sports, recruitment expectations for P-12 student athletes and their families, and the unique culture of athletics.
- Analysis of case studies will evidence school counseling students' skills for prevention and intervention strategies with student athletes.
- Overall stigma towards counseling will be significantly reduced.
- The number of student athletes seeking counseling services will increase.
- Pre/post student-athlete annual surveys (adding a section about wellness, mental health, and the GA position to the current survey) will evidence a positive change.
- An exit survey completed by those student-athletes receiving services will indicate a positive change.
- Staff and coach annual surveys (adding a section about wellness, mental health, and the GA position to the current survey) will evidence a positive change.
- Pre/post surveys of the staff including the Team Physician and other appropriate people will indicate a positive change.
- Mental health screening participation numbers for student-athletes will be documented, with the goal of achieving over a 90% participation rate.
- The student-athlete numbers on the wellbeing team list referenced above will likely increase initially and then will decrease after time.
- Adding items regarding eating health/eating disorders to the annual mental health screenings (required for ALL student-athletes) can indicate specific positive changes across time.

Proposed Budget

We seek a total investment of \$262,987.00 for this 3-year innovative project. Drawing upon the information from <http://www.uwyo.edu/research/proposal-development/proposal-tool-kit/graduate-assistantships.html> and



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calculating a 3% annual increase for the doctoral graduate assistant expenses (initial year GA cost of \$31,350 each).

Costs	Estimated Total Cost
First year total cost of each doctoral GA (31,350)	62,700.00 (2 GAs)
Tuition and Fees (7214.00)	
Health Insurance (1756.00)	
Stipend for PhD Students (22,380.00)	
Year 2: Assumed 3% increase (32290.50)	64,581.00
Year 3: Assumed 3% increase (34,227.94)	68,456.00
Faculty Stipend (3750 x 3 semesters = 11,250)	33,750 (3 years)
Outreach	33,500 (3 years)
Conference Travel for the GAs to present findings (3,500)	
Travel Expenses for guest speakers (10,000)	
Honoraria and Instructor fees for outreach (20,000)	
3-year TOTAL: \$ 262,987	

Evidence Supporting Proposed Innovation: Evaluation of Leading Programs

Programs Reviewed:

Traditional educator preparation programs in public and private universities across the United States



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Please list names and locations of traditional programs studied:

- Syracuse University, NY
- Louisiana State University, LA
- Idaho State University, ID
- East Tennessee State, TN
- North Carolina Central, NC
- Springfield College, MA

Alternative educator preparation programs

Please list names and locations of alternative programs studied:

- Capella University, MN
- Walden University, VA
- Saybrook University, CA

International educator preparation programs

Please list names and locations of international programs studied:

- University of Maryland Outreach to Puerto Rico
- Universidad del Valle de Guatemala
- Makrere University, Uganda

Summary of Evaluation of Other Programs:

In a brief examination of other programs across the country and internationally, The Research Work Group did not find any programs offering a similar program.

Contextual Constraint Analysis

Please identify and describe specific contextual constraints that could have an effect on the successful implementation of the innovation, e.g., fiscal; state, federal, or local policy; accreditation requirements; other

- Not all students will be able to participate
- The innovation relies on cooperation of various departments (athletics and PE)
- Long term funding will be required to maintain the program after three years

Risk Assessment

Please list all identified potential risks to College of Education Candidates:

While there is potential risk to students that comes from serving peers in a counseling capacity, strict supervision and confidentiality will be observed as specified in the American Counseling Association Ethics Code (2015) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs 2016 Standards (2016).

Please list all identified potential risks to the UW College of Education:



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Lack of appropriate counseling that leads to inappropriate or even potentially serious behaviors on the part of the athletes may involve the University in legal action. Strict supervision and oversight is essential as currently observed by all school counseling students and supervisors with absolutely no incidences of possible legal action during the more than 30 years of program accreditation.

Please list all identified potential risks to College of Education Partners, e.g. Wyoming School District Partners, Other Colleges at University of Wyoming:

None

Please list all identified potential risks to the UW Trustees Education Initiative:

Should the project not meet the intended outcomes, there is a risk that it will reflect poorly on the reputation of the TEI and its members. The strong evaluation program described above should identify concerns that may be addressed through changes in the intervention.

Please list all identified potential risks to other stakeholders:

Athletes receiving the services are at some risk of not having their needs met. Strong supervision and appropriate referrals to professionals will be critical.



Appendix A: Letter of Support from Athletic Department



Athletic Department
Dept. 3414 • 1000 E. University Ave. • Laramie, WY 82071
(307) 766-2292 • fax: (307) 766-5414 • www.wyomingathletics.com

To the Attention of the UW Trustees Educational Initiative and Colleagues:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Counselor Education program regarding the creation of Graduate Assistantship to address student-athlete mental health/wellbeing. Not only will this position address a significant need within our student-athlete population, but will help to further demonstrate the institution's great commitment to the mental wellbeing of all of its students. We are extremely excited and appreciative of this possibility!

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics is absolutely committed to the success of its student-athletes. To this end, programming designed to facilitate great academics, athletics, and a well-rounded collegiate experience are already in place for students. However, as national trends and statistics regarding mental health become more readily available, we have identified student-athlete mental health as an integral area of the student-athlete experience that has not been well addressed. Student-athlete surveys overwhelmingly identify mental health themes such as; anxiety, stress, career preparation, and depression as key themes that negatively impact their experience while a student-athlete.

On very few occasions are collegiate administrators provided with an ideal solution to a difficult issue. However here, I believe that this very opportunity has presented itself. The creation of this Graduate Assistantship will result in immediate mental health benefits to over 400 student-athletes as well as provide another teaching/learning avenue for the Counselor Education program. Both departments will stand to gain significant value from the position in a cost effective manner; and students will reap immeasurable benefits as a result.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important request and partnership and if I can be of any further assistance in your review, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Tom Burman
Director of Intercollegiate Athletics