

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE ATHLETIC COMMITTEE (USAC)

FY14

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Chair, Joy Ward, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

Phillip DeLaTorre, Law

Angela Lumpkin, Health, Sport, and Exercise Sciences

Catherine Shenoy, Business

Kathy Suprenant, Molecular Biosciences

Max Utsler, Journalism

Robert Pogorek, Public Safety

Amy Smith, Director of the Policy Office

Adam Smith, Student

Darby Evans, Student (scheduled for Study Abroad)

Ex-Officio (non-voting):

Paul Buskirk, Associate Athletics Director, Student Athlete Support Services

Susan Williams, Chemical & Petroleum Engineering, Faculty Athletic Representative to the NCAA

*Note: This report was written in response to the FY14 standing and specific charges. To facilitate the report's coherence, responses to specific charges have been incorporated into the discussion of standing charges, where appropriate.

STANDING CHARGES

Standing Charge #1. Review KU and Kansas Athletics Inc. (KAI) efforts to promote and maintain academic excellence, as they pertain to athletics. (Ongoing)

- a. Identify potential barriers to student athlete integration into curricular and extra-curricular activities, and recommend mechanisms to overcome such barriers
- b. Recommend campus initiatives to target academic success of student athletes, including collaboration with the on-going academic programs at the Student Athlete Support Center
- c. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to increase community awareness of issues such as Academic Progress Rate (APR), progress towards degree and similar regulations as well as academic honors and awards to student-athletes
- d. Review current-year data on missed class days due to competition and travel
- e. Review the following KAI academic reports: Spring and Fall Student-Athlete Grade Summary, NCAA Academic Progress Rate Institutional Report, and Graduation Rates
- f. Review the KAI report on academic majors for student-athletes and non-athletes

The committee reviewed the following indicators of academic progress: Graduation Rates, Spring and Fall 2013 overall and team grade point averages, NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) Institutional Reports (2011-12 and 2012-13) and graduation rates (Appendix A). Student-athlete graduation rates continue to exceed the rate for all KU students [2006-07 freshman-cohort graduation rate – all students (64%), student-athletes (70%) and 4-year class averages – all students (62%), student athletes (67%)]. The student-athlete graduation success rate for the 2006-07 freshman-cohort, calculated separately, was 84%, which was close to the 85% for the 2005-6 student-athlete cohort. Thus, high graduation success rates have been maintained in athletics during the past year.

In Fall 2013, the all-sports combined grade point average was 2.95, where 182 student-athletes on active rosters achieved a GPA of 3.0-3.99, and 26 student-athletes achieved a 4.0. Team GPA's ranged from a low of 2.55 (men's basketball) to a high of 3.37 (volleyball) for Fall 2013.

The committee noted that graduation success rates were maintained across the past year, women's basketball had shown improvement in their sports GPA (2.48 to 2.66), and the minimum sports GPA had increased from 2.48 to 2.95. These are overall indicators of continued academic progress in KU athletics.

The NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) is a measure intended to help universities stay attune to academics in the realm of athletics. The 2012--2013 multi-year rate APR ranged from 950 (Men's Track) to 1000 (Men's Basketball) resulting in no programs below the NCAA benchmark of 930 (new value put forth by NCAA, Appendix B) that would require a team improvement plan. **The committee does recommend continued review of the 2012-13 data in comparison with 2013-14, with specific emphasis on variability across sports, and determination of whether the new requirement of the 930 APR will be continuously met in the future.**

Specific Charge #1: Review the potential impact of implementation of the University's common core on the academic progress of student-athletes.

Findings (following meetings with Paul Buskirk, counselors and tutors in Academic Support Services in Athletics, Ann Cudd, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and Lucy Russell, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies):

- 1) The sentiment at KU Athletics is that the KU Core has generally been very positive for student-athletes. Specifically, Glenn Quick, Associate Athletics Director - Academic and Career Counseling, said the Core has been a great change for student-athletes because it offers more flexibility and therefore greater opportunity for exploration of coursework.
 - 2) Paul Buskirk said that initially his biggest concern was for athletes transferring into KU. However, the opt-in/out options that were written into the Core policy for transfer students largely addressed his concerns. While there have not been negative impacts for transferring student-athletes, he will still monitor how the opt-in/out process works for student-athletes who are transfers.
 - 3) Counseling staff in Athletics:
 - a) Students did not express any concern about following the core to any counselor.
 - b) A few students shared that they were glad to have several options to meet their goals.
 - 4) Tutoring staff feedback on the KU Core:
 - a) One student commented to a tutor that they were confused about which requirements they were to follow. The student was referred to a counselor and the matter was resolved.
 - 5) Overall view of Kansas Athletics Academic Support Services: there is no negative impact of the KU Core up to this point. The flexibility of the Core has been viewed as very positive. Within Athletics, the Core has been strongly supported and strongly praised. Athletics would like to see more Core approved-courses and more courses that meet multiple goals because they see this as creating more flexibility for all students. All members of the committee were also in agreement that the Core benefits all students, as well as student-athletes alike.
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Specific Charge #2: Collaborate with KAI on strategies to promote increased awareness of student-athlete academic honors and awards to the broader University community

The committee discussed potential avenues for enhancing awareness of student-athlete achievements in academics at KU and in the broader Lawrence community. This was weighed with the notion that student-athletes already receive notoriety for their athletic achievements, and that student-athletes are a part of the broader student body, and therefore this cannot become inequitable pushing of the achievements of student-athletes above other students. In light of these considerations, the committee recommended the

following ideas to Paul Buskirk who will present these to the Athletics Director:

- Present student-athlete academic achievements on athletic boards at games- this would involve adding personalization beyond just the GPA (e.g., student(s) getting an award for performance in the classroom, anecdotes of mentorship/engagement with faculty through the faculty mentor program)
- Extend information of student-athlete accomplishments beyond the faculty mentors in athletics through the following venues:
 - KU Today or Public Affairs publications and videos
 - Endowment videos and publications
 - KUJH TV have faculty profiles, consider profiles for student-athletes
 - Include features in Rock Chalk Report on public radio that is meant to be about Athletics
 - Channel 6 news
 - Highlight students chosen for Honor societies and honor roll selection (Phi Kappa Phi chapter on campus has an afternoon recognition ceremony)
 - Self Engineering Leadership Fellows Program: several student-athletes have been selected to be fellows and this represents the top students in Engineering, this can be highlighted in the media
 - Videos played at games, something analogous to the Williams Fund videos that highlight why those funds are so important to student-athletes, especially in the classroom
 - Find a time in the season to highlight the scholars that are also athletes
 - Pop-up videos at basketball games: enhance academics and interactions with faculty and other students in these videos

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Charges FY15:

Continue to review the potential impact of implementation of the University's common core on the academic progress of student-athletes, particularly on how this is impacting student-athletes that are transfer students.

Monitor the effects of the new NCAA eligibility requirements (e.g., high school course requirements and timing of courses, new GPA and SAT/ACT requirements) and the impacts this may have in 2016 when they go into effect.

Continue to collaborate with KAI on strategies to promote increased awareness of student-athlete academic honors and awards to the broader University and Lawrence community.

Standing Charge #2. Review KU and KAI efforts to provide a premiere student-athlete experience. (Ongoing)

- a. Recommend mechanisms to enable broader discussions of opportunities to improve the student-athlete experience
- b. Provide review of programs designed to ensure the academic success, personal development, and personal welfare of student athletes
- c. Review, summarize and disseminate KAI reports identifying student wellness parameters including but not limited to drug testing practices and policies, nutrition and physical health, psychological and emotional well being, and social integration
- d. Review data resulting from KAI exit-interview and KAI survey questions regarding participation in the broader campus community

Social integration of student-athletes within the broader campus community continued as a charge to the committee, particularly with respect to the "monitoring of data resulting from KAI exit-interview and KAI survey questions regarding participation in the broader campus community and

review of Student Senate/SAAC task force recommendations” (*Specific Charge 3*). Below is the report of the USAC break-out group that investigated this specific charge:

Specific Charge #3: Continue to monitor data resulting from KAI exit-interview and KAI survey questions regarding participation in the broader campus community and review Student Senate/SAAC task force recommendations.

Kansas Athletics, Inc. (KAI) provided the following information regarding student-athlete perceptions of opportunities to integrate into campus activities. KAI administered first and third year surveys, as well as, senior exit surveys. The web-based “Survey Monkey” was used to collect this data. All student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility are included in the senior surveys.

The Senior Exit Interview Instrument is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with the student-athletes academic and social experience. The second section inquires about the athletic experience. Over the past year, each Sport Supervisor conducted individual Senior Exit Interviews with the student-athletes who were exhausting their eligibility during the 2012-13 academic year.

Regarding the academic experience, when asked about the tutoring program, the overwhelming response was positive, as most student-athletes appreciated the assistance that academic support services provided. As for the academic counselors, all the comments were extremely positive. Overall, there were three areas where the majority of student-athletes felt that the support services provided by athletics improved their skills: time management, problem solving, and study skills.

All subgroups of student-athletes were encouraged to participate in the surveys; however, response rates varied among groups. Specifically, the students *were asked whether they were given opportunities to integrate into campus activities*. Table 1 summarizes quantitative information that was self-reported by the athletes regarding opportunities to integrate into campus activities. Of particular importance is the steady increase in the percentage of senior athletes who participated in the survey, from 29% in 2011 to 51% in 2013 (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Responses

Were you given opportunities to integrate into campus activities?

Survey	Response Rate			% Yes			% No		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
1 st and 3 rd Year Survey	73(28%)	154 (53%)	71 (41 %)	64	52		36	49	
Senior Exit Survey	25 (29%)	27 (30%)	48 (51%)	55	68	63	45	32	37

Qualitative data were also collected regarding examples and barriers to student participation in campus activities (Table 2). Individual responses are separated by sports.

Table 2: 2013 Senior Exit Interviews

Sport	Comments
Baseball	Not enough time
Baseball	It is difficult with practice, classes and tutoring to be really involved in campus groups but I did do community outreach through SAAC
Baseball	Conflicted with training, traveling, games and class schedules
Baseball	Did not have time for campus activities, but did participate in SAAC
Football	Never found the time to take part in campus activities
Football	Yes, New Student Orientation and Student Body Elections
Football	Yes, but not interested
Football	Yes, not interested
Football	Yes, participated in SAAC

Sport	Comments
Football	No, not interested
M. Golf	Yes, but I chose to be on SAAC and become an officer
M. Golf	SAAC and other athletic activities but never did anything outside of athletic department functions
M. Golf	Yes, attended plays and concerts at music department and Lied Center
M. Track	Besides athletic activities, most campus activities conflicted with practice or tutoring . SAAC provided community outreach activities that worked with my schedule
M. Track	Had the opportunity but too busy with practice, class and homework
M. Track	Opportunities were available but didn't get involved as I already had a lot going on with school
Rowing	Being in a sorority is where I became involved with campus life. This is a huge barrier and our practice hours interfered with many campus activities
Rowing	There were opportunities but I never acted on them because of practices and classes. I did participate in SAAC community outreach activities
Rowing	No, always had tutoring or other activities with SAAC that I would rather be doing
Rowing	Yes, lots of opportunities, SAAC really helped get you involved. Also, there are plenty of activities on campus. Much easier to be involved when we are not in season
Rowing	Yes, coaches were supportive of joining campus organizations
Rowing	Yes, I was involved in a sorority and other activities. There is time in a student athlete's schedule to be involved in their activities of choice. SAAC does a great job of providing community outreach opportunities.
Soccer	I joined a health and science club and went to as many meetings that my schedule would allow. I also participated in SAAC community outreach activities
Soccer	I got involved on my own accord and volunteered at the art museum. Due to our schedules there is a disconnect with campus but our choice to be a student athlete
Soccer	I was involved in Phi Beta Phi Sorority and student mobilization
Soccer	Yes, Not really interested between training, schoolwork had a limited amount of time
Soccer	Being in law school already, I limited myself to functions within the law department. But I have been very active in student organizations within the law department; Sports and Entertainment and Law Society; Black Law Student Organization
Softball	Yes, Young Life, Jayhawk Sports Talk, FCA. Mostly in the fall due to my hectic spring schedule
Softball	Yes, Young Life, however, it was hard for me to get involved with anything besides that
Softball	No, I didn't really have the time
Softball	Yes, but I only participated in a couple due to time constraints from practice and school
Swimming	You can get involved, just have to manage time extremely well. Getting involved is easier in the offseason. I believe all athletes should get involved in at least one activity or group outside of their sport. It helps keep one sane and feel a greater connection to KU. I know some athletes are in fraternities and sororities. Involvement enhances one's college experience in number of ways and creates relationships with more students you otherwise wouldn't know.
Swimming	Involved with Alpha Psi for Accounting and SAAC
Swimming	Yes, there are opportunities to get involved across campus
Swimming	No, I didn't have extra time to commit to activities outside of school and swimming
Volleyball	Lots of campus groups meet when we have practice. SAAC was a good experience. Couldn't really join others because of time demands and conflicts
Volleyball	Fall - No Time. Spring a few.. Mostly focused on studies. SAAC participated with community outreach, JayRock and back to school barbeque
Volleyball	Yes and No... athletics provided a way to integrate with other student athletes and community outreach, however, my time was restricted and I was not able to get involved with campus organizations, that was expected when I chose to be a student athlete
W. Basketball	I was given the opportunity but didn't take advantage
W. Basketball	I was introduced to campus activities but never took advantage
W. Golf	Given opportunities but never worked out due to my intense major and golf schedule
W. Tennis	I did not feel as though I had a lot of time due to practice and class schedule to do anything outside of athletics and academics
W. Tennis	Pretty full schedule to do much of anything else. Sometime on weekends or evenings I would

Sport	Comments
	participate in SAAC community outreach. Didn't have a lot of time to do other things but I'm fine with that
W. Track	I could have participated in campus activities but I was at track meets or I just never had an interest, because track was the only activity I enjoyed doing
W. Track	No, Didn't really have time
W. Track	Yes, there were opportunities but I just felt like there wasn't enough time to participate in anything beside track and classes, especially when we are in season
W. Track	No, there really is not enough time to do so without feeling overwhelmed/stressed
W. Track	Yes, had opportunity- No I did not have the time, energy, or interest to be in clubs

From a social experience aspect, some of the student-athletes interviewed indicated that they were able to participate in campus activities. However, the majority indicated either no desire or felt there was not available time to devote to activities outside of the athletics department. Many of the seniors interviewed stated they were involved with SAAC throughout their academic career and participated in community service events initiated by the athletics department.

After analyzing the interview information, it was apparent that the student-athletes had an excellent experience in many areas of Kansas Athletics. One area that became apparent regarding the Seniors' observations of the athletic department was the number of positive comments regarding the focus placed on improving overall competitiveness of teams along with individual competitiveness. The other trend was the numerous comments regarding the athletic department heading in a positive direction in regards to coaching changes, accountability and facilities. Numerous seniors stated how much they appreciated their educational experience and the opportunities provided by their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Finally, seniors have an overwhelming sense of pride in being a Jayhawk and a University of Kansas graduate.

Conclusion:

After reviewing the data gathered from the Senior Exit Interviews, Senior Surveys and the First & Third Year Survey, it is apparent that the sub-groups of student-athletes surveyed are having a positive experience. The one area of possible concern, regardless of sport/cohort appears to be the lack of time available during the academic year to engage in other campus and external activities. This is likely to be a common factor in all sports programs throughout the country that compete at this level. However, the majority student-athletes participated in community service and social activities each year that were associated with their specific team. Furthermore, SAAC was referenced numerous times for its participation in community outreach activities as well as providing opportunities for socializing among student-athletes across a variety of teams. Finally, there are several opportunities throughout the year when all student-athletes gather together for a major event, such as the welcome back picnic, the all student-athlete assembly with the Athletics Director, the JayRock Talent Show, and the Rock Chalk Choice Awards.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Charges FY15:

Continue to monitor data resulting from KAI exit-interview and KAI survey questions regarding participation in the broader campus community and review Student Senate/SAAC task force recommendations.

Standing Charge #3. Help to ensure that KU maintains athletic compliance with University, Big XII and NCAA rules. (Ongoing)

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to ensure the KU community better understands our combined responsibility for compliance.
- b. Review and summarize KAI reports identifying athletic compliance parameters including but not limited to ten-day absence policies, academic screening practices and recruiting practices.

Specific Charge #4. Continue to work with KAI Compliance staff to identify strategies for disseminating information to faculty and appropriate staff regarding compliance issues and regulations that are affected by academic actions and decisions.

There were no compliance issues during the 2013-14 academic year that warranted concern by the Committee. The majority of the 2013-14 Athletics Committee had already met with Theresa Becker, past Associate Athletic Director for Compliance to better understand how NCAA changes impact compliance. The new 2013-14 committee reviewed and discussed this information, as well as updated information during a fall meeting in 2013. There was also information shared on current NCAA progress toward degree and continuing eligibility requirements. The committee noted that compliance information is provided to all faculty and academic advisors, with special emphasis on faculty mentors (who worked most with student-athletes). The committee noted that during the annual athletics mentor dinner (held in early fall), compliance issues are reviewed and information pamphlets are distributed to each faculty mentor and their guests.

The committee reviewed 2013-14 policies and procedures on missed class days, as well as data on missed class days due to competition, including related travel days (Appendix C). All sports were within the KAI policy requirement of a maximum of 10 with the exceptions of soccer with 12.5 missed class days (fall, approved), baseball with 12.5 missed class days (spring, approved), and softball with 13.5 missed class days (spring, approved). KAI administrators approved these exceptions through the existing review and exceptions process. It should be noted that the missed-class policies at KU are self-imposed policies and ones that are not required by the NCAA. In addition, missed class days represent total class days missed by any member of the team (1 or beyond) and do not represent the total missed by a single student. The committee concluded that the strategies and monitoring in place continue to effectively support student-athletes' academic progress. However, there were a number of specific concerns that stemmed from the committee regarding the number of missed class periods, particularly for softball and baseball. In addition, other members of the committee have heard verbal concerns from some faculty members about the impact of missed class days on student learning. The committee recommends continued monitoring of both the policy and data for missed class days in light of the recent expansion of the Big XII Conference to include schools requiring significantly greater travel distances. In addition, the increased success of some teams on the field has increased levels of post-season competition. If this trend continues, it may potentially have the effect of increasing missed class periods and the impacts of this factor should be closely monitored.

RECOMMENDATION

FY 14 Specific Charges:

Continue to dialogue with KAI Compliance staff to identify strategies for disseminating information to faculty and appropriate staff regarding compliance issues and regulations that are impacted by academic actions and decisions.

Monitor missed class day policies, as well as the impacts of these policies (and approved exceptions) on student-athlete performance in the classroom.

Standing Charge #4. Help to ensure that KU strategic goals pertaining to athletics are accomplished. (Ongoing)

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to enhance the balance between academics and athletics, as well as to promulgate broad understanding of the goals and priorities of each.
- b. Review KU and KAI practices and policies pertaining to diversity in athletics, including Title IX compliance.

The USAC did not specifically address the issue of diversity and Title IX. KAI has instituted a process of external consultant audits in each of these areas. Continued progress has occurred across the time of the initial review (2004) in roster management, financial assistance and facilities. Considerable funding has been required for progress in the area of facilities' improvements. The addition of facilities in Rock Chalk Park have significantly addressed discrepancies in this area (the USAC toured this facility in spring of 2014, as well as the other facilities supported by KU Athletics throughout the 2013-14 academic year).

Standing Charge #5. Help to facilitate systematic dialog between KU and KAI regarding items of mutual interest. (Ongoing)

- a. Recommend mechanisms for improved communication between KAI and faculty, staff and students.
- b. Work with KAI to avoid potentially divisive issues of interest to faculty, staff and students.
- c. Maintain regular communications with the NCAA/Big XII Faculty Representative, the
- d. Athletics Advisory Committee (AAC), KAI, and University Governance to ensure the needs of each are being served.

The committee's FY12 recommendation for the additional student member representing the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) was approved by University Senate and the Chancellor and is effective with the FY14 committee. This addition will add an important constituent voice to the committee's deliberations. This will be particularly important since we found student engagement on this committee to be sorely lacking. The student body president only attended one meeting, and only facilitated student attendance at this one meeting (despite great encouragement to attend our meetings). To our knowledge, Darby Evans was never fully replaced as a student representative after beginning Study Abroad despite the USAC request to do so. The committee is hoping that this can change in future years, since student involvement is critical for proper decision-making on this committee. The committee did, however, find the involvement of SAAC in these areas to be exemplary over the years, particularly their role in advising the Athletics Advisory Committee, the advisory committee to the Athletics Director (all faculty members on USAC are also on this committee).

As noted in previous committee reports, the structure of the USAC continues to work well to facilitate communication between University Senate and Kansas Athletics. The six faculty members of the USAC also serve on the Athletics Advisory Committee, the advisory committee to the Athletics Director. Athletic Director Zenger has initiated a model of supplementary quarterly meetings with each of the constituent groups represented on the Advisory Committee (i.e., faculty, students, alumni). The restructured format has provided more direct access to current issues and an opportunity for USAC

members to gain an increased understanding of the athletic enterprise. To ensure even broader constituent access and interaction, Dr. Zenger invited the USAC to a lunch meeting to discuss important issues in athletics in an informal setting. This was a well-received meeting, and the USAC is hoping that Dr. Zenger will again provide this opportunity for next year's committee. The ex-officio members of USAC (Associate AD for Student-Athlete Support Services, and the Faculty Athletics Representative) continued to play significant roles in providing context for the committee's deliberations and facilitating timely access to information. These people are critical to the success of this committee, as well as Amy Smith who provided critical perspectives from the Provost's Office. Her role was likewise critical to the committee, particularly as Core standards were being evaluated in light of student-athlete success.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Student-Athlete Academic Summaries
- B. New ARP NCAA Requirements
- C. 2013-14 Missed Class Days