December 19, 2013

To: Scott Coltrane, Interim Provost

From: Lorraine Davis, Special Assistant to the Provost

The annual report of the Services for Student Athletes is attached. The University of Oregon is fortunate to have both an excellent staff and an excellent facility to provide our student athletes with support for their academic pursuits. The collaboration with other on-campus entities and the overall operation promote best practices in the field. The recent regional Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics conference hosted at the UO confirmed the high regard for the professional work being done for our student athletes.

When we meet, we can discuss the report further. Thank you for your continuing interest and support for this academic affairs endeavor.

Cc: Michael Gottfredson, President
    Rob Mullens, Athletics Director
Services for Student Athletes Report, November 2013

The John E Jaqua Academic Center for Student Athletes continues to be an incredible facility for the University of Oregon. A large classroom and other amenities on the first floor of the building are heavily used by the university community as well as the community at large. Additionally, many University events use the space for programs and events. The entire building provides the student athletes with a place to study, be tutored, and congregate apart from the demands of them as athletes. In a recent interaction with student athletes a remark was made about the valued connections student athletes made with other student athletes outside their own sport at the Jaqua.

In addition to being a great facility, it is important to have services delivered at an optimal level by personnel able and capable. This annual evaluation of the Services for Student Athletes (SSA) is compiled from information based on three sources:

1) The exit survey of the student athletes in the spring of 2013.
2) An on-line survey of all of the staff of the SSA and the Athletics Department directly involved with the Support Services.
3) Individual interviews with each of the 26 staff members referenced in #2.

A summary of the information from those sources and a compiled summary of findings and recommendations are provided in this report. Presented first is a description of the Component Support Services for Student Athletes offered at the University of Oregon.

COMPONENT SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

Academic Advising - Advising appointments are provided weekly to all at-risk and incoming student-athletes (freshman and transfers). In addition, all other student-athletes meet with an adviser no less than twice a term. Advisers’ track and monitor academic progress, plan term classes, explore majors and prepare long-term graduation outlines. SSA currently has five advisers for 20 sports. Advising loads are heavy, but the population is being adequately currently served.

Tutoring – SSA currently employs approximately 75 tutors, that include juniors and seniors who excel in their field of study, as well as retired teachers, graduate students, graduate teaching fellows, and law students. The scheduling and hiring of quality tutors continues to be a challenge.

Success Skills – The Student-Athlete Development Team offers many programs for student success. These include mentoring and career programs, community outreach, philanthropy, O-Heroe’s and leadership skills. Both the Student Development and the SSA units are housed in the Jaqua Center and weekly collaboration occurs to provide student-athletes with
information of mutual interest. A more deliberate sharing of the scheduling for the Jaqua Center would improve the general knowledge everyone has about the activities.

**Study Hall** – SSA provides a comprehensive set of structured academic support components. The study hall is task based and ensures that all student-athletes meet with tutors either one-on-one or in small groups. The program offered requires all freshman and transfers to have 8 hours per week of one-on-one and/or small group tutoring. All other student-athletes receive tutoring and structured study based on their GPA (2.29 and below = 8hrs/week, 2.3 to 2.59 = 6hrs/week, 2.6 to 3.0 = 4hrs/week, above 3.0 student-athletes can use the SSA services as desired).

**Freshman/Transfer Orientation** – Services for Student-Athletes offers a newcomer orientation for freshman and transfers the week prior to school starting as well as group orientation for those student-athletes that enter in the summer. The orientation format is informational and comprehensively presents the services provided and expectations of the university and the athletic department.

**Academic Progress Monitoring and Reporting** – Academic progress is monitored in several ways. For continuing eligibility, term reports are generated by advisers and reviewed by the FAR, Assistant Coordinator for Player Development (football), Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance, and Admissions Athletic Record Liaison. Annual completion of sign-offs on majors and progress are reviewed and signed by College Officials and Department Heads, the Registrar and Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). Weekly meetings by the SSA staff with compliance staff focus on academic and eligibility issues that arise with student-athletes.

**Assistance with Special Academic Needs** – Students with particular academic needs such as learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, and/or behavior issues meet with a qualified learning specialist who serves as a liaison with the Accessible Education Center, Athletic Medicine and outside specialists/doctors as required. Attempts are made to identify these students early on either in the recruiting process, or through an academic history intake form given to students upon arrival. If someone needs outside assessment for additional psycho-educational testing, this is contracted to a local psychologist who generates reports shared with the student and requisite SSA Staff.

**Learning Assessments** – Prior to the start of fall term, all new students are given several learning assessments by qualified SSA Staff. Included in the assessments are an academic history questionnaire, writing sample, and University math placement exam. Staff also reviews SAT/ACT test scores, and high school transcripts as needed. These assessments are used to gauge the level of academic support needed and subsequently provided to each individual student.

**Assistance for At-Risk Students** – “At-Risk Students” are identified by staff through assessments, academic performance and/or those known to have special academic needs (LD, ADHD/ADD, etc). These students are assigned to a learning specialist and meet with their advisor and learning specialist multiple times per week. Tutors assigned to meet with
these students are in frequent contact with advisers and learning specialist of said student, and form a support team tailored to the needs of each student. This collaborative process confirms the needs and the progress of the individual student athlete and provides opportunities to accommodate his/her needs.

**Post-Eligibility Programs** – SSA offers a variety of post-eligibility programs including athletic department sponsored scholarships, career training, networking and internship programs. Post eligible student-athletes are also tracked, monitored and contacted about options and plans for graduation if they have not completed requirements for their degree programs.

**Recruiting** – Advisers and other staff participate in on-campus recruiting as requested by coaches and other administrators. Minimal contact with football recruits currently occurs. This recruiting process includes, but is not limited to campus and facility tours, arranged meetings with faculty, explanation of University programs – including majors, requirements, and academic excellence. Families and potential student-athletes are also informally presented with information about Eugene/Springfield and campus life.

Most of the comprehensive services provided by the SSA are being delivered very efficiently and effectively. All require the cooperation of the student-athletes, with support from the coaches and support staff. Regular and responsive communication is always continuously pursued.

**STUDENT ATHLETES**

Student athletes are regularly surveyed at the end of the year regarding their experiences. Additionally the administrative sport liaison in the Athletics Department interviews the individual students to gain perspective and receive feedback regarding their successes and disappointments. The academic support provided is one of the component areas queried in these interviews. In the spring of 2013, one hundred sixty nine student athletes completed surveys and provided information regarding the services received and the academic support staff at the Jaqua Center. Interviews with student athletes are also conducted by the sport liaison at the end of the season. A vast majority of the comments indicated that the services provided were assessed positively and in fact many were laudatory about the support and specific services received. Any concerns that were expressed were noted and shared with leadership and staff as appropriate.

In the comment section of the survey, it was stated by some that the support services as UO were the best in the country both in terms of facilities and personnel. The availability and caring attitude of the staff were often mentioned as positives. An occasional suggestion regarding the preparedness of tutors was made but overall, the responses stated the appreciation for the support and services received.
STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES

Each staff member from the Support Services for Student Athletes and those staff from the Athletics Department directly involved in programs related to the support services were surveyed to rate the expected areas of service. In addition they were asked to rate questions about the work environment, their colleagues and their general satisfaction as employees. Below are the results from the 19 useable responses. Comparisons to the results from 2012 are presented for the areas of service. A different survey was used for “workplace climate” in 2012 so direct comparisons are not presented.

SSA STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2013

Of those who responded, three were advisors, five were learning specialists, seven were “other staff” and four were athletics department employees. Eight had been at the university for more than ten years, either between four and nine years, and three for less than three years. Two-thirds of the respondents were female. Although not all eligible participants responded, more than 75 percent of those eligible to complete the survey did so and the demographic profile is representative of the support staff as a whole.

SECTION A Ratings of Areas of Services (5 point scale)  A (1) indicates the least acceptable rating and a (5) is the highest rating possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance for At-Risk Students</td>
<td>4.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
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<td>Academic Progress Monitoring</td>
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<td>Learning Assessments</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.26</td>
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<td>Freshman/Transfer Orientation</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.08</td>
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<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistance with Special Academic Needs</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
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<td>Study Hall</td>
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<td>Post-Eligibility Programs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Skills</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION B Questions (5 point scale) (5 was positive and 1 was negative)

How comfortable is your place to work? 4.37
How approachable is supervisor? 4.26
Overall, how satisfied are you with your work? 4.26
How meaningful do you feel your work is? 4.11
How realistic are the expectations of you at your work? 4.11
Overall, the ratings are very positive and reflect a staff that is very engaged with their work and satisfied with the services provided to the student athletes. A reasonable goal might be to have all ratings above 3.50. That was achieved in 10 of the 11 Areas of Service and 11 of the 13 workplace questions. It is worthwhile to note that the rating of Learning Assessments, an area identified as less than acceptable in 2012 has improved to an acceptable rating this year. Procedures and personnel in this area were adjusted after last year’s assessment. An area with a lower rating is Study Hall. The management of this area is always undergoing evaluation. This is an area that will be discussed with the staff and supervisors.

In terms of the workplace climate survey, most responses are within an acceptable range, although communication and staff development deserve additional attention. It is encouraging to note that staff is satisfied with their work, the expectations and their co-workers.

STAFF INTERVIEWS

Each staff member was interviewed to offer any additional information regarding the SSA both as it related to the student athletes and the staff. A discussion of individual professional goals was part of the process. Suggestions for improvement were solicited, particularly in regards to student athlete welfare.

Most of the staff believed the ratings of the surveys were indicative of the level of service provided and did not find any surprises. Comments regarding communication and collaboration revealed some concerns regarding the relationship between the SSA staff and AD staff. Respondents wanted more consistent feedback and open discussion about ways to optimize services. They also desired a team approach to problem solving and regular two-way communication. Some advisors felt the communication between some of the coaches was better than with others.

The staff was interested in how this year’s results compared to previous years evaluations. After completion of the interviews, the reports and results from the past two years were
examined. Most everything was rated similarly and mostly positive. Some positive shifts in ratings were noted in Learning Assessments. Communication is always one of the most important components of a successful operation and always can be improved although there have been some ups and downs in that regard.

The staff was very interested in sharing their ideas about staff development opportunities. Almost all of the staff was engaged in activities to grow professionally and to continue learning. They enjoyed the opportunity to participate in events together and clearly enjoy each other’s company. Regular discussions regarding operational improvements to enhance the academic experience for student athletes occur but could be more topically focused at times.

Given the continuous adjustments being made in NCAA rules and regulations, all persons affiliated with athletics must be fully informed. Most all of the SSA staff indicated they were comfortable with their level of understanding regarding the applicable rules. Regular updates are now occurring from the Compliance Office in the form of e-mails and case study scenarios that might be of interest. Additionally, the Director of Compliance will be making a presentation to the SSA staff related to deregulation, applicable Article 16 requirements, and any other rules changes or specific UO situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The collaboration between the SSA and the AD will be examined to be sure regular communication is shared. Adjustments in some reporting relationships and regularly scheduled open discussions have recently occurred.

2. Discussions with staff about opportunities for professional growth could be enhanced. Staff development opportunities that provide new ideas and efficiencies, both formally and informally have been offered but more focused activities are seemingly desired. The nurturing of each other is important and quick check-ins might also be advantageous. Regularly scheduled summer connections should be considered. Networking, both on campus and with other professionals, is worthwhile. Staff members want to be on a continual growth pattern and creative ways of connecting both personally and professionally were mentioned as desirable.

3. Although the ratings of tutors and study hall were in an acceptable range, mention of the need to monitor the productivity of each study/tutor session to be certain the student athletes are using this time optimally was made. A discussion of the potential means to accomplish this would be worthwhile.

4. Orientation for freshman student athletes is going well but with more transfers, attention to the requirements and expectations for these student athletes should be discussed to be sure the most efficient means to incorporate them at the UO is practiced. Both student athletes and staff might appropriately be involved.
MY OWN OBSERVATIONS:

The hosting of the Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics regional conference was a massive undertaking and accomplished with aplomb. SSA staff stepped forward to provide development opportunities and the sharing of best practices with colleagues in SSA on the west coast. The level of participation and professionalism displayed represented the UO well and many persons should be commended.

Interactions by SSA staff with faculty in order to provide student athletes with the best academic experience possible occurs on a regular basis. The care and shepherding by advisors, learning specialists and other staff is noted by the student athletes and does impact their ability to be successful. For the most part, the student athletes are receptive to the services provided. When they are less than receptive, the staff maintains patience and keeps the athletes on track to the extent possible. Although frustrations do understandably exist, the concentrated efforts are providing the student athletes support for now and in the future.

The connections with other entities on campus essential to success are strong and acknowledged. Cooperation with the development services, the academic units, and the services in Oregon Hall are critical to be providing the comprehensive education and service desired.

SUMMARY

The SSA is providing services equivalent to the quality of the Jaqua Center facility. The efforts to be student oriented and responsive are acknowledged and appreciated. Student athletes and SSA staff both indicated that the emphasis from all was for the benefit of the student athlete. Most of the student athletes indicated that the success they achieved academically was enhanced because of the support received from the staff, tutors, advisors and learning specialists. Continuous improvement by each individual and the collective support staff will continue the very positive student athlete experience reported at the University of Oregon. UO can be proud of the services for student athlete operation.

Revised as of 2/5/2014