UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Office of the Provost

Dear UO faculty,

This is an important reminder from the University of Oregon's Intercollegiate Athletic Advisory Committee (IAAC). The committee wants to remind all faculty about NCAA rules as they pertain to academic misconduct and academic extra benefits for student-athletes.

While most NCAA rules do not involve faculty members, the IAAC wants to ensure that each of you understands how these two areas can impact decisions you might make regarding the treatment of student-athletes.

Please take the time to read the important memo below. If you have any questions, please contact Joshua Gordon, the university's Faculty Athletics Representative, at jgordon9@uoregon.edu, or by phone at 541-346-1634.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
The Office of the Provost

Memo to UO Faculty

To: UO Faculty
From: Intercollegiate Athletic Advisory Committee (IAAC)
RE: NCAA Academic Misconduct and Academic Extra Benefit

Student-athletes at the University of Oregon (UO) and all other member universities in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) are required to follow a number of rules and regulations that may not apply to other students. While most NCAA rules do not involve faculty in any significant way, the current rules concerning "academic misconduct" and "academic extra benefits" create the real potential for faculty to unintentionally contribute to violations that could jeopardize a student-athlete's athletic career and result in sanctions against the university and athletic department coaches and staff.

In this memo, the IAAC briefly details these regulations and provides guidance concerning compliance with them. Please note that this information is shared with a full commitment to academic freedom and to the academic integrity of the University of Oregon. If you have questions now or later, please contact Joshua Gordon, the UO Faculty Athletics Representative.

Academic Extra Benefits
Under NCAA rules, an academic extra benefit is "[s]ubstantial assistance or the granting of an exception that is not generally available to an institution's students, which results in the certification of a student-athlete's eligibility to participate in intercollegiate athletics or receive financial aid." A recent rule change extended the application of this rule to all university faculty, staff, and student employees. It is now possible for a university employee with good intentions and no connection to the athletic department to provide a student-athlete with an impermissible academic extra benefit

There are two "bright lines" to keep in mind concerning academic extra benefits:

1. Student-athletes may not be given special treatment simply because they are student-athletes. If you are considering an accommodation for a student-athlete and you have not offered and would not offer the same or a similar accommodation to another student, you should not offer it to a student-athlete.
2. Athletic eligibility may never be a factor in any academic decision. If a student-athlete says that he or she needs to earn a certain grade to be eligible to compete, please inform the student-athlete that you cannot consider athletic eligibility in any decision.

Areas of Special Concern

Academic Misconduct
At the UO, "'Academic Misconduct' means the violation of university policies involving academic integrity." Examples include: intentional tampering with grades, resubmitting assignments for more than one class without the permission of the professor; intentionally taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a test that has not been administered; cheating; plagiarism; knowingly furnishing false information to a university official; and fabrication.

While academic misconduct at the UO primarily focuses on student behaviors, it is possible that an instructor of record who engaged in fraudulent behavior, such as intentionally awarding a false grade or giving credit to a student based on the work of others in order to protect athletic eligibility, would be in violation of university policy. Such behavior may also be viewed as academic misconduct under NCAA rules.

In addition, it is possible for an instructor of record to unintentionally violate the NCAA's impermissible academic extra benefits rules. There is a real potential for an NCAA violation that could result in sanctions for the university if, for example, an instructor of record knowingly or unknowingly failed to follow university policies concerning grading or believed that a student had violated the academic integrity provisions of the student conduct code and failed to follow university policies for reporting violations.

Student-athlete travel and class attendance/participation
Team travel will result in student-athletes missing classes in terms when their sport is in season. Because they are traveling for university-sponsored activities, faculty are strongly encouraged to make pedagogically sound and justifiable accommodations that will enable the student-athletes to be successful in the classroom, just as we would encourage such accommodations for other students traveling on university-sponsored activities. However, this request has limits and conditions:

- Student-athletes are given a letter to share with instructors at the beginning of every term that reports when they will be traveling. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to share this letter with his or her instructors and to discuss travel conflicts in time to arrange for appropriate accommodations
- In classes with substantial class participation, project or lab work, appropriate accommodations may not be possible. In those instances, the student-athlete should be informed that the course is not a good fit in a term with significant travel. Under no circumstances should the instructor offer an accommodation that is pedagogically unsound or that would be unavailable to other students.

Late Assignments
Student-athletes have very demanding schedules as they juggle athletic and academic demands. They are, of course, not unique on today's college campuses. Many students are juggling competing demands. Student-athletes should be held to the same standards as other students who have professional or family obligations or who are traveling on university business.

Grade Change

Any grade change for a student-athlete must be based on consistent criteria applied to all students in a class and should follow the guidelines and procedures for such grade changes published by the registrar.

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