NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation 2009

NCAA Academic Support Services Evaluation Committee Membership: Anthony Calamai, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences (chair); Susie Greene, Dean of Students; Neva Specht, Associate Professor of History; Peter Wachs, Associate Director of Assessment; Martha Wilson, Senior Associate Registrar

Overview:

In Fall 2009, the above-referenced evaluation committee evaluated the academic support services for student-athletes at Appalachian State University (ASU). Areas covered in this evaluation include the eight areas required in the NCAA and National Association for Academic Advisors for Athletics (N4A) Academic Support Services Evaluation Guide and six additional areas:

1. Academic Counseling and/or Advising Resources and Services
2. Tutoring
3. Academic Progress Monitoring and Reporting
4. Assistance for Student-Athletes with Special Academic Needs
5. Assistance for At-Risk Student-Athletes
6. Academic Support Services Facilities
7. Academic Evaluation of Prospective Student-Athletes
8. Student-Athlete Degree Selection
9. Learning Assessments
10. Success skills: study skills note and test taking, writing and grammar skills, time management skills
11. Study hall: availability, facilities, attendance policies
12. First Year/Transfer Orientations
13. Mentoring
14. Post-Eligibility Programs

The academic support services staff provides comprehensive support for all student-athletes. The type and level of programming, monitoring, and support provided to each student-athlete is dependent upon the individual needs of each student-athlete, based on the review of existing academic information and academic assessments administered by the academic support services staff and/or Learning Assistance Program (LAP). The academic support services staff encourages student-athletes to access existing university resources.

The academic counselors assist student-athletes with class selection, major selection, graduation planning, career planning, time management, goal setting, study skills, and learning strategies. The counselors work closely with the University faculty to monitor grades and class attendance. The academic staff also communicates with the staff and faculty to provide assistance with rescheduling class assignments and exams missed due to team travel.

While academic support services should be evaluated and approved once every four years, this was apparently not undertaken by the University during the preceding four years and this report will serve as a starting place for future evaluations. All teams were, and continue to be, above the minimum APR of 925 and no action items were requested of ASU by the NCAA as a result of the previous Certification Process. The current evaluation committee concludes that the academic support services for student-athletes at ASU represent a best practice in higher education.
1) Academic Counseling and/or Advising Resources and Services

Individuals interviewed: NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist; Director, Academic Services for Athletes; Director, Learning Assistance Program; Professor, History; Coach, Baseball; Senior Student-athlete, Football; Associate Athletic Director

Interview questions:

A. What support services are provided for student-athletes?
B. What are the policies or requirements for using these services?
C. Are the services available to all student-athletes?
D. How are student-athletes made aware of these services?
E. How is progress toward degree requirements monitored?
F. What are the responsibilities of the academic support services staff and campus academic advisors?
G. What methods are used each term to ensure student-athletes are taking courses that fulfill progress towards degree requirements?
H. Is there regularly scheduled communication each term between academic support services staff and campus academic advisors? If yes, describe the frequency and type of communication.
I. How regularly do coaches meet with academic support services staff?
J. Describe the orientation program presented by the academic support staff for all student-athletes.
K. How many full-time staff members are in academic support services?
L. What are the titles and job responsibilities of full-time staff?
M. What are the reporting lines of the staff in the academic support services?
N. What is the ratio of full-time athletics academic advisors to student-athletes?
O. What part-time staff does Academic Support Services use? Describe their roles and job responsibilities.
P. Are development opportunities provided for academic support services staff? If yes, please describe.
Q. Describe involvement with any institutional academic support program external to athletics where collaboration is significant (e.g., honors program, learning disabilities, minority student support, university orientation).

Observations and Commentary:

Academic Support Services reports to the Director of the Learning Assistance Program who reports directly to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. There are excellent lines of communication between this office and: other academic advisors; campus offices such as Orientation, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Counseling Center and the Registrar; and other academic offices such as the Deans of specific colleges are excellent.

Student-athletes (all students listed on a team roster) are eligible for the following services through this program: one-on-one advising each semester and on an as needed basis; referral for tutoring, career counseling, etc.; academic monitoring and compliance checks each semester via progress reports from professors; and support—both personal and academic—as needed. Compliance checks are done by both the individual advisors and a compliance officer each semester, both as student-athletes register and as they complete the term.

Student-athletes are made aware of these services during recruitment (staff from this office are active members of the recruitment process), during orientation both for the general population and for student-athletes, by coaches, and by other student-athletes.
Both faculty members and coaches feel comfortable talking with members of this staff regarding student-athletes. Coaches, however, cannot speak directly to the faculty about a particular student athlete. This information is shared through the academic advisor to the student-athlete and the coach.

**Recommendations:**

Maintain this office in the heart of campus. Student-athletes, administrators, and coaches have all spoken to the value of having this location where it is accessible to all student-athletes.

If possible, consolidate the offices. Again, student-athletes and staff spoke of the value of a centralized office space for this group.

Continue support for this program, which from all accounts is highly valued by the campus community—faculty, student-athletes, coaches, and administrators.

**2) Tutoring**

**Individuals interviewed:** NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist; Director, Academic Services for Athletes; Director, Learning Assistance Program; Professor, History; Coach, Baseball; Senior Student-athlete, Football; Associate Athletic Director

**Interview questions:**

A. What support services regarding tutoring are provided for student-athletes?
B. What are the policies or requirements for using these services?
C. Are the services available for all student-athletes?
D. How are student-athletes made aware of these services?
E. How are tutors recruited, selected, trained and evaluated?
F. Is there a tutoring handbook? If yes, please describe how often it is reviewed and updated. Also identify who is responsible.
G. What training occurs to assure that tutors are knowledgeable of applicable NCAA, conference and/or institutional compliance rules and regulations?
H. What methods are in place to assure that tutors adhere to NCAA rules and regulations?
I. What programs are in place to provide ongoing training for tutors?
J. Is the tutorial program certified? If yes, by what association?
K. What are the methods by which a student-athlete is assigned to a tutor?
L. What strategies are used to ensure that you have enough tutors to meet the academic needs of student-athletes?
M. What type of collaboration, if any, exists between academic support services and tutoring services on campus?

**Observations and Commentary:**

The Director of University Tutorial Services reports to the Director of the Learning Assistance Program who reports directly to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. The Director of University Tutorial Services is a full time, benefitted university employee who is responsible for the recruitment, training, and evaluation of tutors. Part of this training includes ethical
and professional standards which includes both university and NCAA guidelines. A tutoring handbook has been created and maintained on ASULearn. This handbook is reviewed by the Director annually.

This tutoring program is open to all university students and includes both individual and small group options. Assignment for all students is based on subject need and scheduling. Student-athletes are often paired with students in the general population. Student-athletes learn about this program through their academic advisor, professors, other students, and campus advertisements.

All tutoring sessions through Learning Assistance (some departments also offer study sessions regarding specific subjects such as mathematics and biology) are held in D.D. Dougherty. This is also the location for academic advising.

**Recommendations:**

That the tutoring program continues to be given funding is a priority for the benefit of both student-athletes and the general population of students.

That the tutoring program retains its location, which is central to all students.

That the Tutoring Director continues to maintain vigilant training and evaluation standards for all tutors.

**3) Academic Progress Monitoring and Reporting**

**Individuals interviewed:** NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist; Director, Academic Services for Athletes; Director, Learning Assistance Program; Professor, History; Coach, Baseball; Senior Student-Athlete, Football; Associate Athletic Director

**Interview questions:**

A. What is the role of academic support series staff in monitoring the academic progress of student-athletes?

B. How does the academic support services staff interact with staff from the office of admissions and records and campus academic advisors to monitor progress?

C. May coaches communicate directly with faculty or campus academic advisors regarding student-athlete academic performance?

D. What is the procedure for informing coaches, administrator and student-athletes about the academic progress of student-athletes?

E. How are faculty involved in monitoring the academic progress of student-athletes?

F. How does the academic support services staff monitor the number of class absences due to athletics competition?

**Observations and Commentary:**

Academic advisors have specific team responsibilities and are responsible for monitoring all academic areas involved with the team including academic progress. This information is gathered from several reports by the students, progress reports sent once or twice each semester to faculty, and sometimes information from coaches. Only academic support advisors may make contact with faculty members. Coaches may not do so. This staff has great visibility, support and credibility with faculty and other members of the university community.
The NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist works each semester with other academic advisors as well as the Registrar and Admissions to check and double check all compliance areas. This person is also seen as a bridge and as a support for other areas of campus.

**Recommendations:**
Continue the positive efforts of meeting both the NCAA compliance requirements and meeting the ongoing needs of student-athletes.

Review methods of receiving input from progress reports so that they are both received and returned in a timely manner.

**4) Assistance for Student-Athletes with Special Academic Needs**

**Individuals interviewed:** NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist; Director, Academic Services for Athletes; Director, Learning Assistance Program; Professor, History; Coach, Baseball; Senior Student-athlete, Football; Associate Athletic Director; Director, Office of Disability Services

**Interview questions:**
A. How are student-athletes with special academic needs identified?
B. What diagnostic testing is provided for students generally with special needs?
C. What diagnostic testing is provided for student-athletes with special needs?
D. Is comprehensive learning disability testing provided for student-athletes? Who performs the testing? Does this differ from the general student body? If not, how are the learning disabilities testing services provided to student-athletes?
E. What accommodations are available for the general student body if diagnosed with a learning disability?
F. What specific services or accommodations do you provide to meet the needs of student-athletes with special academic needs? Does this differ from those provided to the general student body? If so, how?
G. Is a learning specialist employed by the institution? If yes, what are his/her qualifications and duties?
H. What type of communication services occurs between academic support services staff and the office of disability services?

**Observations and Commentary:**
Academic Support Services has a full time learning specialist that is available to work with all students—including student-athletes—on such academic learning skills areas as note taking, test taking, etc. The University also has a Writing Center available to all students. This specialist reports to the Director of Learning Assistance who reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.
Graduate students are also used to help with study halls and to teach some of these learning skills. They are trained, supervised, and evaluated by the learning specialist.
The office of disability services provides to all students with proper documentation accommodations on an as needed basis. Students, however, must register for these services. These accommodations typically include note takers, extra time for tests, and distraction-free testing environments. Students and their parents learn about this office through written materials, orientation, and service personnel. Students, including student-athletes, are referred to this office by academic advisors and professors as well. Faculty members are notified at the beginning of each
semester of these specific needs. This office reports to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Compliance.

Testing services for documentation for services through the Office of Disability Services are not provided by the university. All students without current documentation are referred to either the Psychology Department Program or an off campus provider. These are fee based programs that must be paid by the individual.

There is an effective working relationship with the Office of Disability Services, academic advisors and professors. It is hoped that this working relationship will flourish.

5) Assistance for at-risk student-athletes

**Individuals Interviewed:** Director, Academic Services for Athletes

**Interview Questions:**

A. How are at-risk student-athletes identified?
B. What support services are provided for student-athletes determined to be at risk? What are the policies or requirements for using these services?
C. Are these services that are offered to at-risk students also available to all student-athletes?
D. How are students made aware of these services?
E. What diagnostic testing is provided for at-risk student athletes?
F. Does your institution offer a basic study skills class?
G. What is the ratio of learning assistants and mentors to student-athletes?
H. Are at-risk student-athletes required to log a specific amount of time in the learning center? What are the requirements?

**Observation and Commentary:**

Student transcripts are evaluated by Admissions. Student applications found to have a predicted GPA below 2.2 at the end of the first year are evaluated further by a university committee. Additional factors such as being a first-generation college student or coming from a lower-income situation are taken into account when considering such admissions.

It is required for all student-athletes to be in study hall for their first semester. More hours may be required for the at-risk student-athletes in study hall. Due to lack of space, there are a limited number of continuing students who can participate in the study hall program. There is a part-time academic coach and the most at-risk students must meet with the coach for one half hour every week their first semester. The students may also be put in study skills classes, such as electronic research skills, study skills, power reading class or time management skills class. They may also be required to meet one-on-one with one of the graduate students that work specifically with the study hall program; this is one way they are tracked. They have a little more individual help during their freshmen year.

All student-athletes have access to study hall. Sometimes students themselves request to continue in study hall because it makes them more disciplined. Once they opt to continue, they are held accountable.
Students and their coaches are informed of academic support services by e-mail or in person. Some at-risk student-athletes meet one-on-one with their athletic academic advisor each week.

Finances are not available to provide diagnostic testing. If their advisor suspects that a student may be at-risk, they can refer them to the psychology department and request they be tested. Once the report is returned, they can then be referred to the Student Disabilities Office.

There are basic study skills, time management and power reading classes offered. A syllabus for the basic study skills class is attached. *(See Appendix 5.1)*

Study hall ratio is 7 student-athletes to 1 graduate student. Study hall is required for the entire semester. It runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Student-athletes are placed in study hall based on their class schedule. In order to determine the best time for study hall, class schedule, and practice time of the student-athletes are taken into consideration. Study hall groups are typically comprised of student-athletes from different sports. Some of the graduate students do one-on-one sessions with student-athletes once a week. Because of its squad size, football has a Graduate Assistant assigned to work only with its student-athletes.

The number of a student-athlete’s study hall hours is assigned as needed. They are not just checked off if a student has been in study hall. The Gas do not act as just a monitor; they make sure specific tasks are accomplished.

6) **Academic support facilities: Availability of study rooms, computers and labs**

**Individuals Interviewed:** Director, Academic Services for Athletes

**Interview Questions:**

A. Is a learning center (or other designated space or facility) available exclusively for student athletes.

B. Is there a policy for computers to be checked out for team travel?

**Observation and Commentary:**

The Learning Assistance Program is housed in an academic building, in the middle of campus. Two study hall rooms are devoted to student-athletes. The computer lab and tutoring lab are not designated for student-athletes; however, they have access to it. In the new facility (athletics center) that has just opened there is a computer lab with fourteen computers for the student-athletes. The computers are available to them all day during business hours from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. There is also a classroom in the building for academic space that can be used for large group tutoring, a class for student-athletes, or Champs Life Skills presentation. There are 2 smaller rooms that are designated for study rooms for the student-athletes.

Ten laptops have been purchased, which student-athletes can check out through LAP to use while traveling with their team or for special reasons. For example, a student broke his writing hand, so special software with voice recognition was downloaded onto one of the laptops. This allowed the student-athlete to dictate his papers. Five graphing calculators are also available for student-athletes who cannot afford one.
7) Academic Evaluation of Prospective Student-athletes

**Individuals interviewed:** Director of Academic Services for Athletes, Athletics Compliance Officer, NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist, Office of Admissions representative

**Interview Questions:**
A. How are high school transcripts evaluated to determine admissibility and eligibility?
B. Are there any differences in the admissions process for freshmen student-athletes and freshman non-student-athletes?
C. How are transfer student-athletes’ transcripts evaluated?
D. How are student-athletes who do not meet eligibility guidelines handled?
E. Do faculty members participate in the review of specially admitted prospective student-athletes?
F. How do the predictors of academic success of student-athletes at your institution compare to the general student body?

**Observation and Commentary**
In general a prospective student-athlete’s transcript is reviewed by the Director of Academic Services for Athletes to determine if the student-athlete is eligible to compete and if he/she is eligible for admission to Appalachian. To determine athletic eligibility the Director uses tools and information supplied by the NCAA eligibility clearinghouse. To determine academic eligibility for admission to Appalachian she uses a combination of SAT (or ACT) scores, high school GPA, and class rank. She enters these values into a predicted grade point average (PGPA) calculator which is a component of the Admission Pros system maintained by the Admission’s office. In addition she reviews the transcript to make sure the student has the minimum number of courses in English, Math, Science, Social Science, and Foreign Language as required by the State of North Carolina for admission to any state supported higher education institution. She completes a report with this information, maintains a copy for her files, and forwards a copy to the coach who requested the evaluation.

The sole difference in the admissions process between student-athletes and non-student-athletes is in the admissions notification process. Appalachian does not use a rolling admission process. The Admission’s office waits until January to inform students of their admission. Once student-athletes’ applications are complete, Admission’s sends admissible recruits a letter indicating that they are admissible if they complete their current high school studies satisfactorily. This letter is sent out by Admissions roughly one week after receiving a request from the Director of Academic Services for Athletes. In this way student-athletes are able to compare Appalachian to other institutions without the question of admissibility clouding the issue.

Transfer student-athletes’ transcripts are evaluated by the NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist in the office of Academic Services for Athletes. He uses the form below to structure his review. His review involves a determination of the student-athlete’s admissibility as a student and also her/her eligibility to compete. This determination of eligibility most often is related to the student-athlete’s potential satisfactory progress toward a completion of a major. The Eligibility Specialist uses his knowledge of the degree requirements for the various majors to suggest which Appalachian majors most closely meet the student-athlete’s needs and insure his/her eligibility. He then sends the coach a letter (see Appendices 7.1 and 7.2) summarizing his findings.

In general, if student-athletes’ PGPA are 2.00 or better and they have taken the required curriculum in high school they are considered admissible. Students whose PGPA fall below 2.00 are
referred to the Admissions Review Committee for a decision about their admission. This process is the same for student-athletes and non-student-athletes with one exception. When a student-athlete’s application is taken before this review committee the Director of Athletic Services for Athletes and the student-athlete’s coach prepare a “Gold Form” that reiterates that assistance that will be available to the student-athlete to insure his/her success in the classroom (see Appendix 7.3). The form is signed by the coach and the Athletics Director. The Members of that review committee are from the Admission’s Office, the faculty, the library, and one college dean.

Appalachian uses a student’s SAT scores, high school GPA, and high school rank in class in a mathematical formula to predict the first year GPA at the institution. This Predicted GPA (PGPA) is the primary indicator of admissibility for all students. The mathematical formula is developed by analyzing the success of students from previous years. A comparison of the PGPAs of student-athletes to the rest of the undergraduate student body who were enrolled in the fall of 2009 shows a slightly lower PGA for student-athletes as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean PGPA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Seeking</td>
<td>2.697</td>
<td>13181</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>2.460</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Athletes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.689</td>
<td>13658</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The system for assessing the admissibility and athletic eligibility of student-athletes that Appalachian has in place seems to be working well. There is good communication between the Athletic Department and the Academic Services for Student-athletes department. In all cases the best interest of the student-athletes are of foremost concern. The system for admitting student-athletes varies from that of regular students in small but necessary ways. Presently there is only a small difference between the incoming abilities (as measured by predicted GPAs) of student-athletes and regular students.

**Recommendations:**

The implementation of a more rigorous general education program should call for more intense academic engagement by students. Consequently, it would be best to keep the differential in incoming abilities between student-athletes and students-in-general as small as possible.

**8) Student-Athlete Degree Selection**

**Individuals interviewed:** Director of Academic Services for Athletes; NCAA Continuing Eligibility Specialist; Associate Director for Assessment, Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP)

**Interview Questions:**

A. What is the process for student-athletes to select a major at the institution?
B. Is there a selection of majors that do not have restricted admission?
C. Are student-athletes over-represented in some majors?

**Observation and Commentary**

Student-athletes work with their academic advisor in the in the Office of Academic Services for Student-athletes on selecting a major. The decision making process takes into account the aptitudes,
values, beliefs and experiences of each student-athlete along with their desire to remain eligible for competition. Sometimes the range of choices is limited by the NCAA requirement that “Students must complete 40% of the hours required for declared degree...” Some majors at Appalachian have significant numbers of required courses during their first and second years (such as teaching or business). Non-student-athletes are free to switch to such majors with the consequence that they may have to “go back” to take these required courses. Student-athletes are unable to switch to such majors without endangering their eligibility. This is because prior to declaring such a major they will not have earned a suitable number of applicable credits that are necessary to meet the 40% rule. These eligibility concerns make it much more important that student-athletes work closely with their advisors from the Office of Academic Services for Student-athletes throughout their academic career.

Most majors at Appalachian do not have restricted admission. To be accepted into a major in the College of Business students must have a cumulative Appalachian GPA of at least 2.5, and a 2.0 GPA in the business core courses. Other requirements are also in place. The new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (pre-licensure) program also has indicated that it will have a GPA requirement for admission.

Though student-athletes make up only 3.8% of the undergraduates at Appalachian, there are a small number of majors in which over 10% of the declared majors are athletes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Number of Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Training</td>
<td>8 of 82 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Education</td>
<td>12 of 103 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication: Organizational/Public</td>
<td>6 of 15 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Science</td>
<td>52 of 497 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>7 of 19 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Promotion</td>
<td>15 of 135 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>5 of 20 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education (K-12)</td>
<td>14 of 142 majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Education</td>
<td>2 of 20 majors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Athletes do not seem to gravitate toward a single major in any great degree. Exercise Science enrolls about 11% of all athletes and 13% have not yet declared a major.

Though student-athletes take a wide range of majors at Appalachian an analysis of the major declaration of undergraduates enrolled for the Fall semester of 2009-10 indicates that, in large part, student-athletes choices of majors are congruent with interests in health, wellness, and physical activity.

### Recommendations:

Because switching majors can be much more problematic for student-athletes than students-in-general, it may be advisable to encourage freshman athletes to make early use of the career development opportunities available through the Counseling Center, Peer Career, and the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling. These services can help them make a choice of major that is congruent with their interest, abilities, values, and experiences. Making an informed choice early may lessen the chances of needing to switch majors later.

### 9) Learning Assessments

**Individuals interviewed:** Director of Testing, Director, Academic Services for Student-Athletes, Director, Student Orientation
Observation and Commentary:
Student-athletes take the same placement tests as non-student-athletes. The math placement test can be taken on-line before coming to summer orientation. If required, the students take the writing placement test at summer orientation. Foreign Language placement tests in French, Spanish and German can be taken on-line before coming to orientation. Placement tests in Latin are offered during orientation. Placement tests for other languages are offered at the beginning of fall or spring semesters. Students must take the Math Placement test if they score less than 520 on their MATH SAT (22 is the ACT equivalent). This score determines whether the student will need to take developmental math (MAT 0010) prior to the basic math/quantitative literacy requirement for their major/General Education. Students with AP or transfer equivalency credit for any quantitative literacy general education course are not required to take the Math Placement test.

Students must take the English Placement test if they score in the top 25% or the bottom 25% of the SAT/ACT verbal scores for the incoming freshman class. If they made a 6 or 7 on the SAT Essay, they are not required to test. Those scoring below 450 on the SAT Verbal have to test regardless of their essay score. [Top 25% SATV + (Bottom 25% SATV - 6 or 7 on SAT Essay) + all scoring <450] Students with AP or transfer equivalency credit for ENG 1000 do not need to take the English Placement test. The criteria are the same for both freshman and transfers.

Student-athletes test with the other new students during orientation. Currently, the English Placement test is a proctored essay. Currently the Math Placement test is an online test that can be taken prior to or during orientation. The Testing Center handles the testing during orientation with the help of the orientation leaders. During testing there is always one representative from the Testing Center (usually the Director or Assistant Director) proctoring the test, and the orientation leaders are there to assist with technical difficulties, test distribution, etc.

Recommendation:
The assessment expectations for student-athletes are identical to that of students-in-general. It would be good to reiterate to student-athletes (and all students for that matter) to take as many of their required assessments online before coming for student orientation. This allows a more flexible schedule during the actual orientation session.
10) Success skills: study skills, note and test taking, writing and grammar skills, time management skills

Individuals Interviewed: Director, Academic Services for Athletes

Interview Questions:
A. How is it determined which students need special help? By what means?
B. How are the student-athletes made aware of these services?
C. Are trained professional staff providing instruction in these various areas?
D. Are some or all of these sessions regarding special needs geared toward student-athletes or toward the overall student body?
E. Are coaches supportive of their student-athletes being involved in these programs?
F. How is the success of all of this assessed?

Observation and Commentary:
Prior to enrolling, the student athlete’s high school transcript is evaluated, as well as the predicted GPA. Other clear indications come from sitting down and talking with them, and from their progress reports from faculty.

They are talked to and emailed by their advisors. It is reinforced again during orientation and it is talked about during study hall. The study hall leader will take them across the hall after the students’ needs are evaluated. The services and appropriate study options are communicated to the student-athlete by their advisor. Since study hall is in the same building as LAP, the opportunity is there to see the student-athletes every day. Study hall leaders write up a summary of what was accomplished by the student-athlete that week during study hall, as well as any concerns the academic advisor may have. The academic advisors can follow up with the student-athlete.

Each one of the advisors has sat across their desk from a student-athlete and taught them how to get the most advantage out of a textbook. They teach them to be active when reading their textbook by highlighting or taking notes. Advisors frequently demonstrate or reinforce study hall techniques with their student-athletes.

All support programs are available to each member of the student body except for the athletics study halls. A weekly attendance report of study hall goes to each of the coaches and all the AD’s (assistant, associate and athletics director). If they are deficient an hour, they are required to have it made up by the end of the following week. If someone isn’t paying attention, the AD, if necessary, will meet with the student-athlete to reinforce the importance of study hall.

The students have an opportunity to evaluate study hall programs at the end of each semester. They turn in the survey with their opinions on how the program is going, what needs to be improved and their recommendations. How well they do in the classroom is the ultimate assessment. For an indirect assessment, study hall leaders are asked for feedback on the program. Each person who is tutored evaluates their tutor and the program, (all students, not just student-athletes). If they are in any study skills class, at the end of the semester, they have the opportunity to evaluate the instructor.

11) Study hall: availability, facilities, attendance policies
Individuals Interviewed: Director, Academic Services for Athletes

Interview Questions:

A. By what means are student-athletes singled out for attendance in study hall?
B. Is there anyway a student-athlete can opt out?
C. Do you think your staffing is adequate for study hall?
D. What are the requirements placed on students during study hall, i.e. cell phones. etc?
E. Are tutors available in co-ordination with study hall?
F. What are the penalties for lack of study hall attendance?
G. How are study halls coordinated with practice times, competitions, schedules and classes?
H. Is there enough financial support?
I. Is there any mentoring intervention in this?

Observation and Commentary:

Every new student-athlete, freshman or transfer, is required to attend study hall during his or her first semester. This does not include walk-ons, but only recruited scholarship, and recruited non-scholarship student athletes, mainly because there isn’t space or resources. The average number of student-athletes in study hall each fall semesters is 160 to 175 with 85 to 100 in the spring. Any student-athlete whose cumulative GPA is below 2.25 has to return to study hall the next semester.

If after first semester in study hall their GPA is over 2.25, they have completed requirements unless their coach requests they stay another semester.

Student athletes may bring food with them, but cannot check into study hall and then go and get the food. Food must be consumed in the first 10 minutes and they cannot drag it out. Student-athletes are required to bring academic work; if they do not bring anything they are counted absent. They cannot read a newspaper or magazine, cannot get on facebook, talk or text on cell phones. They are allowed to listen to their iPods as long as the person next to them cannot hear it (using headphones.) The work they bring in must be academic.

While tutors are not hired to work specifically during study hall, the University tutorial Services lab is located in the same building and is actually, across the hall from the two study hall rooms. Students can walk over to the lab and sign up for a tutor. Sometimes, the student uses one of their study hall time hours each week to receive tutoring.

Attendance is taken each day in study hall and an attendance report is sent each Friday to the coaches and athletic administration. If a student athlete misses an hour, they are given a week to make up the absence. Many coaches require 100% attendance each week and that is communicated to their athletes at the beginning of the semester. Penalties for missing study hall vary from coach to coach. Some coaches punish by requiring the athlete to run, others miss practice or a competition. If the Athletics Director thinks that a student is not giving the study hall program the respect and time required, he or she will meet with the student and impress upon he or she the importance of the program. If a student does not have 100% attendance at the end of the semester, he or she is required to attend study hall the next semester.
Study halls are held throughout the day and students are placed into a study hall that does not conflict with their classes or practice. Study hall meets Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday during the semester.

The challenge the study hall program has dealt with over the years is not as much financial support as the lack of space for the study halls. Currently, in the LAP, there are two small rooms devoted to study hall. /this is hope that additional space will be made available next year when another department vacates the building.

The graduate students who serve as study hall leaders act as informal mentors. Many of the leaders are previous student-athletes who are now in graduate school.

**Observations of a Study Hall**

On Wednesday, October 28, 2009, 1pm, I sat in on a study hall. A graduate student was leading the study hall. Seven students were in attendance. As each student entered the room, she acknowledged them. She was very involved and worked individually with each student. She asked several questions to each student, i.e., what are you working on, when is it due, and what were their test grades since last study hall. She asked each student how they were doing and was there anything specific they need help on. The atmosphere in the study hall was relaxed and each of the 7 students was working diligently on academic work. I was very impressed with Ms. Hawkins and all 7 of the students in this study hall.

**12) First Year/Transfer Orientations**

**Individuals interviewed:** Director, Orientation; Director Academic Services for Athletes; VC for Undergraduate Education (oversees LAP); Student-athlete, Women’s Basketball; Student-athlete, Wrestling; Career Development, Internship Coordinator; Career Counselor, (Student-athletes are one of her responsibilities).

**Interview questions:**

A. Is there a difference between academic orientation for first-year students compared with transfer students entering ASU for the first time? Please describe those differences.

B. What are the academic orientation procedures for a) first-year students b) transfer students? What questions are asked of these students in each group? What goals does orientation have concerning the academic piece of orientation?

C. How are orientation sessions made available to a) first year students b) transfer students? What is your percentage of each group a) first-year students b) transfer students who attend?

D. Are there attendance requirements for orientation? Please describe? Is there any mechanism for students who cannot attend orientation?

E. Is there any special orientation program through academic support services for student-athletes beyond those for the rest of first-year and transfer students? If so, please describe.

**Observation and Commentary:**

Academic Orientation for first year and transfer students is a two-day program for first-year students and 1-day program for transfers that occur throughout June. There are 10 sessions for new
first-year students and 3 for transfers. This is for all students who will be registering for courses in the fall semester. There are also orientation sessions in January for any students who enter the University second semester.

The main difference between first-year and transfer orientation is the length of the orientation. Transfer students receive the same academic orientation as first year students but they are not required to stay overnight, and much of the co-curricular aspects of the 2-day program are truncated. However, all students who take part in orientation (2-day or 1 day) participate in several types of activities to make them aware of Appalachian’s Curriculum, academic polices and resources. The Orientation program is in the process of creating an assessment plan that outlines a number of goals and learning outcomes for students going through orientation. Those learning outcomes include:

• Students will be able to identify resources that they need to consult in order to make informed academic decisions.
• Students will begin to be able to identify academic politics and the consequences of those policies for one’s academic planning, such as number of allowable academic drops, requirements to declare major and overall GPA needed to stay in good standing.
• Students will be able to make curriculum choices for entering semester and will be asked to develop their schedule of classes.
• The orientation process will help students begin to identify potential consequences of their personal and academic choices.

During orientation students break into small groups to discuss building their class schedules, issues of academic integrity, and other academic policies. University academic advisors lead these small group sessions. LAP student-athlete advisors conduct small groups sessions for student-athletes.

Orientation sessions are required of all students in order to register. The sessions are advertised through multiple e-mails and in information sent after acceptance.

Student-athletes also have a couple of additional orientation activities including a Welcome Back orientation in August where they have a variety of speakers discussing academic issues and academic resources for athletes such as study hall, Champs Life Skills and the Student Athlete Advisory Board. They also hear from the Athletics Director. Each team also has a required compliance meeting during first week of school to discuss NCAA compliance issues and academics. The football team also has a required “Academic Day” where the Dean of Students and other campus administrators discuss various requirements including academic integrity as well as other university policies.

13) Mentoring

Individuals interviewed: Director, Orientation; Director Academic Services for Athletes; Associate VC for Undergraduate Education; Student-athlete, Women’s Basketball; Student-athlete, Wrestling; Career Development, Internship Coordinator; and Career Counselor.
Interview questions:
A. Do you have an official mentoring program for student-athletes? Please describe.
B. If not, what other programs are in place where the goals and outcomes of a mentor/mentee relationship can be accomplished?
C. Has any planning for a mentoring program been undertaken? If yes, where is the process?

Observations and Commentary:
Currently there is no “official” mentoring program. However there are two programs in place for athletes that offer an opportunity for a mentor/mentee relationship. First, the CHAMPS Life Skills program for athletes is now located in the LAP. This program includes opportunities for a variety of programs including life skills, academic success, and post-graduate assistance (see below for more on this). 2009 was the first year the program was located in the LAP. This new placement is working well and Erin Justice is expanding the program and working closely with the Student-athlete Advisory Board (SAAB). In addition, student athletes deemed to be at risk are paired with a graduate student to work with them in a more intensive way. The graduate student serves as an academic “mentor.” The student-athletes also noted that they felt that teammates and coaches also served in an informal role as mentor. But more than anything, they felt that their academic advisor served as an important mentor.

14) Post-Eligibility Programs

Individuals interviewed: Director, Orientation; Director Academic Support Services for Athletes; VC for Undergraduate Education (oversees LAP); Student-athlete, Women’s Basketball; Student-athlete, Wrestling; Career Development, Internship Coordinator; and Career Counselor

Interview questions:
A. What role does academic support have in assisting your graduates in obtaining postgraduate scholarships, internships, and preparation to pursue postgraduate job opportunities?
B. When student-athletes are no longer eligible, does you office continue to offer academic support? If so, is there any difference between eligible and post-eligible support?

Observations and Commentary:
The professional staff in Academic Services for Athletes work with students throughout their academic career and beyond, when requested. This office is responsible for nominating students for post-graduate scholarships with the NCAA and the Southern Conference or any scholarship. Any student can request help with resumes, letters of recommendation for jobs, graduate school, or professional school. In many cases, former students contact their advisor years after they have left the University to seek help. The same staff has assisted many former athletes with receiving the NCAA’s Degree Completion Award. Formal presentations on résumé writing, interviews, etc., have been limited because of the small staff but since the CHAMPS/Life Skills Coordinator is now located in the LAP with the rest of the Academic Services for Athletes staff, a more concerted effort to
provide workshops have been planned. The Office of Career Development Center is currently conducting a survey to better understand the student athlete’s needs. The survey will be used to develop programs in the future.

**Appendix:** The attached documents have been referenced in this report and include

1. LAP.pdf
2. 5.1 syllabus.docx
3. 7.1 coach ltr.docx
4. 7.2 table.docx
5. 7.3 memo.docx