Invest In Success

Introduction

There are nearly 450 student-athletes at UHM. The Athletics Department is deeply committed to their success as students as well as to their performance in the field, the court, or the pool. Working with Student-Athlete Academic Services, we regularly monitor each student's academic performance, and using assessment tools provided by the NCAA, we monitor the students' overall performance in order to develop strategies to encourage their academic success.

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Program Outcomes

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Assessment Data

This table shows how UHM's performance ranks compared to the Division 1 average in the two key NCAA metrics during the last four years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Year</th>
<th>APR UHM</th>
<th>APR Div. aver.</th>
<th>GSR UHM</th>
<th>GSR Div. aver.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

Using APR and GSR scores, both overall and team-by-team, as a guide, we began a systematic study of the academic records of each student who failed to graduate or who was underperforming academically, looking for patterns that would provide suggestions for remedies, and we also consulted with the advisors in Student-Athlete Academic Services regarding the patterns that they observed. Among our findings, we discovered that:

- too many of our student-athletes competed for four years and then left UHM without a degree.
- our graduation record for junior college transfers, particularly those who had been NCAA non-qualifiers when they graduated from high school, was particularly poor.
- that a culture of low expectations pervaded some teams, and that there was more that we could do to encourage academic success.

Conclusions

During the five years that the APR and the GSR have been in place, we have instituted some important new policies to encourage academic success. As a result, we have seen the APR score rise until it is now above the Division 1 average, and in the GSR, we have considerably narrowed the gap between our score and Division 1’s. Since the GSR is a four-year average, the figures conceal how much progress we have made in our one-year score. Nonetheless, graduation remains our biggest challenge, and it will be the focus of our discussion in our next review of our improvement plans.

Use of Results/Action Plan

Using the data gained from our analysis of our APR and GSR scores, the Athletics Department has worked with Student-Athlete Academic Services and with key members of the faculty to develop and to keep current a comprehensive Department Improvement Plan and individual team improvement plans for the teams that have faced the greatest academic challenges. Some of the key elements of these plans are:

Better recruiting. Coaches are more aware than ever of the need to recruit with academic success in mind. Student-Athlete Academic Services is given an opportunity to assess the academic promise of every recruit. We are reducing the number of student-athletes that our recruit from junior colleges. And we are encouraging more students who enter with deficient backgrounds to take a redshirt year in order to become prepared for their academic work.

More summer session support. Funds have been secured to make it possible for more student-athletes than ever before to take courses during the summer, increasing the likelihood that they will graduate on time.

Focus on retention. Every student-athlete receives regular reminders of the importance of staying in school and of graduating. Those who have a serious possibility of a professional athletics career are given every opportunity to complete their requirements for graduation before they have used up their four years of collegiate eligibility.

Improved Academic Services. Tutors are provided to help student-athletes compensate for the classes they must miss when they travel. We are looking into means by which student-athletes can make up some classes or get recordings for the classes they must miss.

Incentives for success. We constantly examine how to use athletic eligibility as an incentive for academic success. Some coaches, for instance, set higher GPA standards for eligibility than those set by the NCAA. Student-athletes on academic probation are not allowed to go on road-trips unless they can demonstrate that their academic performance has significantly improved.

Getting everyone involved. The Athletics Department’s philosophy is that academic success is everyone’s business and everyone's most important goal. Coaches have taken an increasingly active role in setting high academic expectations and in monitoring their players’ academic progress, and academic success is now a key component of each head coach’s annual review.