

Academic Progress of UHM Student-Athletes

A Report presented to the Chancellor and the Faculty Senate Committee on Athletics

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Summary: APR scores – which measure eligibility and retention – have improved significantly, and the GSR – the most meaningful measure of the student-athlete graduation rate – also continues to rise. There has no significant change, however, in the student-athletes' GPAs, which have remained essentially flat for the last three semesters.

As in each of my previous reports, I present here the most recent results of the six available metrics for assessing our student-athlete academic performance:

- Three different ways of measuring graduation rates:
 - The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR)
 - The Exhausted Eligibility Graduation Rate (EEGR)
 - The NCAA's Graduation Success Rate (GSR)
- The NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR)
- Two traditional ways of presenting GPA data (among the many other ways in which GPA figures might be used):
 - The average GPA of all student-athletes
 - The percentage of student-athletes who achieve a GPA over 3.0.

The graduation rates that I present here are based on figures just released by the NCAA. The APR and GPA data are taken from the preliminary reports that I submitted late last spring, but these have been revised to incorporate some recent corrections.

Each of these metrics offers a slightly different perspective. They also fail to coincide precisely. The most recent graduation rate data that we have are for students who began as freshmen in 2002-03, most of whom had left UHM by the spring of 2008, and our most recent APR data is for students who were enrolled in 2008-09. And while graduation rates and the APR are calculated only for scholarship athletes, our GPA data includes all athletes, both those with athletics scholarships and those without.

1. The Federal Graduation Rate (FGR)

The FGR is simply the percentage of students who graduate within six years from the same institution at which they started as freshmen. For the FGR, a student who transfers to another school thus counts as not having graduated, and the FGR might better be considered a retention rate rather than a graduation rate. One calculation is made for student-athletes who receive athletics scholarships during their freshman year; another is made, for comparison purposes, for undergraduate students generally.¹ Two figures are presented: one for the most recent cohort to complete six years, the other a rolling four-class average, combining that figure with those for the three preceding years.

The most recent figures are for the class that entered as freshmen in the fall of 2002. (Students who enter in mid-year are not included in this calculation.) The FGR reports the percentage of these who graduated by the end of the summer of 2009. The four-class average is the combined FGR for those who entered between the fall of 1999 and the fall of 2002. The following table shows UHM's place among the nine WAC schools and with reference to the Division 1 and WAC averages. It is arranged in descending order of the 4-class average student-athlete FGR:

institution	2002 FGR		4-class average FGR	
	SAs	undergrads	SAs	undergrads
Idaho	76	57	66	55
<i>Div. 1 average</i>	64	62	63	62
Utah State	73	53	60	48
La. Tech	51	48	57	48
Nevada	63	48	54	49
<i>WAC average</i>	53	46.44	52.78	45.44
HAWAII	46	51	49	52
New Mexico State	45	44	49	42
Fresno State	45	48	47	47
Boise State	34	28	47	27
San Jose State	44	41	46	41

The following table shows the one-year FGRs for Division 1, the WAC, and UHM for each of the last four years. (These are the figures that make up the four-class average in the preceding table.)

	1999		2000		2001		2002	
	SAs	undergrads	SAs	undergrads	SAs	undergrads	SAs	undergrads
Div. 1 average	64	65	63	62	64	62	64	62
WAC average	54.2	45.9	51.77	44.55	53.77	45.11	53	46.44
HAWAII	51	51	48	51	53	55	46	51

¹ The most recent graduation rate data (including the FGR, the GSR, and the Exhausted Eligibility rate) for all Division 1 schools can be accessed at http://naaa.org/wps/naaa?key=/naaa/naaa/academics+and+athletes/education+and+research/academic+reform/gsr/2009/841gfw951_2009_d1_school_gsr_data.html.

There was obviously a decline in the FGR between 2001 and 2002, both for our undergraduates and for our student-athletes, and the decline for student-athletes was the steeper. While the WAC averages in both categories also declined, they did so only slightly. Not only does our student-athlete FGR remain below the average for the WAC, therefore, but the gap has widened; and the gap between our score and the NCAA D1 average is now greater than in any recent year. UHM also remains the only school in the WAC in which the four-class average FGR for student-athletes is lower than that for undergraduates as a whole.

Because of the way in which the FGR is calculated, however, the significance of these observations is not easy to assess. Some portion both of the student-athletes and of the undergraduates who are counted as not having graduated transferred to other institutions, and we have no way of determining how many. Nor do we have any way of knowing if the transfer rate (as opposed to the drop-out rate) of student-athletes is higher or lower than that of their undergraduate peers, or if there are any reasons why these rates at UHM might differ from those of other schools. For all these reasons, a more valuable measure of our success in graduating our student-athletes is provided by the Graduation Success Rate (see below).

2. The Exhausted Eligibility Graduation Rate (EEGR)

The EEGR offers an even narrower picture of just one slice of our FGR. It indicates the percentage of graduates, not among *all* of the scholarship athletes who began as freshman at the same institution but only among those who began as freshman and who stayed long enough to use up all of their athletics eligibility, normally by playing for four years. Since virtually all of the students included in this metric are in college for at least seven semesters (for fall sports) or eight semesters (for spring sports), this is the one measure for which a 100% rate might actually on occasion be an attainable goal.

The EEGR is reported as a rolling ten-year figure. The current results are for students who first enrolled as freshmen between 1993 and 2002. UHM's ten-year EEGR of 85 roughly half-way between the Division 1 average and the average for the WAC.

institution	1993-2003 EEGR
Idaho	91
La. Tech	88
<i>Div. 1 average</i>	87
New Mexico State	85
HAWAII	85
Boise State	84
<i>WAC average</i>	82.89
Utah State	80
Nevada	80
San Jose State	78
Fresno State	75

Our EEGR score has remained nearly constant for the last three years:

reporting year	UHM EEGR
2007	85
2008	84
2009	85

3. *The Graduation Success Rate (GSR)*

The NCAA's Graduation Success Rate was devised in order to overcome some of the deficiencies in the FGR, particularly in its handling of transfers. For the GSR, all students, including those who begin in mid-year, are counted in the initial cohort. Any student who leaves in good academic standing and who still has remaining playing time is removed from the cohort and does not count in the calculation, on the assumption that he or she did, or at least could, continue his or her education at another school. Students who transfer into the institution, moreover, are added to the cohort for the year in which they began school, and whether or not they graduate within the prescribed six years is included in the calculation. The resulting figure is a better measure of how many students with athletics scholarships actually end up with a degree, and because so many students do transfer, it is normally considerably higher than the FGR.

The GSR is reported as a rolling four-year average. The following table shows the four-year average GSR for each of the last four years, arranged in descending order for the most recent year. Since the GSR is calculated only for student-athletes, we have no comparable figures for undergraduates generally, either at UHM or elsewhere.

institution	4-yr SA GSR (freshman classes of 1996-97 to 1999-2000)	4-yr SA GSR (freshman classes of 1997-98 to 2000-01)	4-yr SA GSR (freshman classes of 1998-99 to 2001-02)	4-yr SA GSR (freshman classes of 1999-2000 to 2002-03)
Utah State	78	77	82	85
<i>Div. I average</i>	78	77	78	79
Idaho	73	75	78	79
Nevada	65	67	70	73
Boise State	71	73	73	70
<i>WAC average</i>	<i>65.6</i>	<i>66.44</i>	<i>67.88</i>	<i>69.11</i>
HAWAII	65	65	67	69
New Mexico State	57	61	63	68
La. Tech	67	67	65	66
Fresno State	58	63	61	60
San Jose State	56	50	52	52

As the table shows, UHM's GSR has improved during each of the last two years. A closer look at the data on which these figures are based reveals at least one other encouraging. In the past, we have been very concerned about the number of student-athletes who completed their eligibility, usually by playing for four years, and who then left school without a degree. There were 18 such students in the graduation rate cohort last year. In this year's cohort there are only 9.

4. *The APR*

The Academic Progress Rate (APR) was devised by the NCAA in order to give a better measure of the academic performance of currently enrolled students than is provided by graduation rates, which are necessarily based on the records of the students who have already left. It takes longer to compile the APR, however, and therefore it is usually not as current. The most recent complete APR figures that we have are for the 2007-08 academic year.² We also have preliminary figures for 2008-09 and I will include some reference to them below, but they are not complete, and we do not have any data from other schools to which to compare them.

The APR is calculated by deducting points for each scholarship athlete who is academically ineligible in a given semester and for each one with a GPA of less than 2.6 who leaves the institution without graduating, whether by transferring or by dropping out. (The 2.6 threshold is new. In previous years, each student who left without graduating without regard to GPA resulted in a lost point.) The students who leave and who would not have been academically eligible if they had stayed lose both the eligibility and the retention points; they are referred to as the “Oh-for-twos” (0/2s). In order for a team to get a perfect score in any semester, every scholarship athlete must both remain at the same institution (the retention point) and be academically eligible under NCAA rules (the eligibility point), or he or she must have at least a 2.6, or he or she must graduate (in which case he or she is given both points automatically). The APR score can be read as a percentage with the insertion of a decimal point before the final digit. A score of 948 means that the team or the institution received 94.8% of the maximum number of points that it could have earned.

The NCAA calculates both a single-year APR and a multi-year APR. Calculation began in 2003-04, and for the first three years, the multi-year APR included only the available data. Beginning in 2006-07, the fourth year of the program, the multi-year APR became a rolling four-year figure, and thus beginning in 2007-08, as each new year’s data are added, an earlier year’s figures are dropped from the calculation.

The following table shows the progress of our institutional APR (which we must calculate ourselves; the NCAA releases calculations only for individual teams) since the program began. It shows that except for a setback in the second year, our single-year APR has risen consistently until it is now at its highest point since the APR was instituted, and our all-team multi-year APR has followed suit:

<i>year</i>	<i>points lost for eligibility</i>	<i>points lost for retention</i>	<i>bonus points*</i>	<i>single-year all-team APR</i>	<i>multi-year all-team APR</i>
2003-04	43	37	0	945	-
2004-05	34	76	9	929	937
2005-06	37	44	6	944	939
2006-07	29	26	6	961	944
2007-08	14	23	12	981	953

** Note to the table: Bonus points are awarded for students who lost points in previous years and who return to the institution and graduate.*

² Current APR data for all Division 1 schools as available at http://ncaa.org/wps/ncaa?key=/ncaa/ncaa/academics+and+athletes/education+and+research/academic+reform/apr/2009/2007-08_school_apr_data.html.

This table also reveals that there has generally been far more variation in points lost for retention than in points lost for eligibility, but that in 2007-08, while both numbers improved, the greatest improvement has been in eligibility.

All-team scores: UHM and Division 1

Our goal, as defined by Interim Chancellor Denise Konan in 2006, is to raise our APR scores until they are in the upper 50th percentile of Division 1 schools nationwide. While our 2007-08 one-year score does exceed the Division 1 average for the first time, our four-year average (the more significant number for the NCAA) still lags behind, and we are going to have to maintain our high one-year scores in order to meet our goal of raising our four-year score into the upper 50th percentile.

	2007-08 one-year all-team score	4-year all-team score (2004-08)
Division 1	971	964
UHM	981	950

Our first look at our preliminary 2008-09 data (which will not be officially released until next May) suggests that we may be able to do so. There will be a slight drop off in our one-year score, but since we will also be dropping 2004-05, our worst year, from the calculation, our four-year average will be very close to and perhaps even slightly higher than the Division 1 score.

Individual teams: UHM and Division 1

As the following table shows, in 2007-08 most of our teams exceeded the Division 1 average in their one-year score. The table is arranged in order of the difference between UHM's score and the Division 1 average.

2007-08 One-year APR			
team	UHM	Division 1	difference
Men's Basketball	1000	947	53
Women's Basketball	1000	967	33
Men's Tennis	1000	967	33
Men's Golf	1000	969	31
Men's Baseball	991	964	27
Women's Softball	1000	977	23
Women's Volleyball	1000	979	21
Women's Cross Country	1000	979	21
Women's Track and Field	988	970	12
Men's Football	956	948	8
Men's Swimming	978	973	5
Women's Soccer	977	978	-1
Women's Swimming	970	983	-13
Women's Golf	964	984	-20
Women's Tennis	923	982	-59
Women's Water Polo	1000	NA*	
Men's Volleyball	940	NA*	

* *Note to the table:* the NCAA does not provide one-year APR averages for sports with fewer than 50 teams in Division 1.

Our four-year averages for most teams, however, are still below the Division 1 average, and consequently most of our teams are still below the 50th percentile within Division 1. This table too is arranged in order of the difference between UHM's score and the Division 1 average.

Four-year APR (2004-08)				
team	UHM	Division 1	difference	UHM percentile ranking w/in D1
Women's Volleyball	996	972	24	90-100
Men's Tennis	982	964	18	70-80
Men's Golf	977	963	14	50-60
Women's Track and Field	976	965	11	50-60
Women's Basketball	971	962	9	50-60
Women's Softball	974	968	6	50-60
Men's Football	935	939	-6	40-50
Women's Swimming	973	979	-6	30-40
Women's Cross Country	962	971	-9	20-30
Women's Soccer	963	973	-10	20-30
Men's Basketball	922	933	-11	1-10
Women's Water Polo	952	970	-18	10-20
Men's Baseball	922	946	-24	10-20
Men's Swimming	938	967	-29	10-20
Women's Tennis	944	974	-30	1-10
Men's Volleyball	939	971	-32	10-20
Women's Golf	944	976	-32	1-10

Nonetheless, we are gaining ground, for a higher percentage of our scholarship athletes are on teams that are above the 50th percentile than in either of the two preceding years.

	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08	
	Number of teams	% of athletes	Number of teams	% of athletes	Number of teams	% of athletes
Above the 50 th %ile	3	9.4%	2	6.6%	6	25.9%
Below the 50 th %ile	15	90.6%	16	93.3%	11	71.6%

Individual teams: UHM and the WAC

We aren't given the all-team scores for any other institutions, and therefore the only comparison that we can make to our counterparts in the WAC is team by team. And the only scores that we are given for other schools are their four-year averages, not their one-year scores.

Since the average WAC four-year APR in every sport in which UHM competes is lower than the Division 1 average, our standing within the WAC appears significantly better than our standing within Division 1. Only four of our teams, with 19.8% of our athletes, are below the WAC average.

This table is arranged in order of the rank of each UHM team within the WAC.

Four-year APR (2004-08)					
team	UHM	WAC average	Division 1 average	no. of teams in WAC	UHM rank w/in WAC
Women's Volleyball	996	969	972	9	1
Women's Basketball	971	945	962	9	1
Women's Track and Field	976	956	965	8	1
Women's Softball	974	955	968	7	1
Women's Water Polo	952	949	970	2	1
Men's Tennis	982	960	964	7	2
Women's Swimming	973	970	979	6	2
Men's Golf	977	947	963	9	3
Men's Basketball	922	906	933	9	3
Men's Football	935	929	939	9	4
Women's Soccer	963	961	973	8	4
Men's Baseball	922	924	946	7	5
Women's Cross Country	962	970	971	9	7
Women's Golf	944	972	976	7	7
Women's Tennis	944	961	974	9	8

Note to the table: Men's Swimming and Men's Volleyball are not included because there are no other teams in these sports in the WAC.

5. GPA

The metrics provided by the NCAA offer the best way of comparing our student-athletes' academic performance to that of student-athletes at other institutions, but not as good a way of comparing our athletes to their peers here at UHM. For that purpose, the best measure may simply be their GPAs. Student-Athlete Academic Services compiles a report each semester on the mean GPA by team and the percentage of athletes with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Adjusted results for 2008-09 are as follows:³

³ Data on student-athletes is derived from the report prepared by Student-Athlete Academic Services. Cheerleading, included by SAAS, is omitted here in order to make the SA cohort more like that of the other categories of data in the present report. Co-ed sailing is included in the figure for all SAs but not in those

	Fall 2008				Spring 2009			
	mean sem GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean cum GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean sem GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean cum GPA	% 3.0 or higher
All undergrads	3.02	57.7	2.94	49.9	3.04	58.6	2.95	50.4
All SAs	2.866	48.478	2.897	42.826	2.86	47.83	2.87	41.96
Male undergrads	2.91	51.9	2.83	42.2	2.94	52.6	2.84	42.4
Male SAs	2.709	38.618	2.775	30.081	2.69	39.84	2.75	31.87
Female undergrads	3.11	62.6	3.03	56.3	3.13	63.7	3.04	57
Female SAs	3.048	58.639	3.048	56.545	3.06	56.76	3.02	52.43

And for comparison, here are the results for the preceding year:

	Fall 2007				Spring 2008			
	mean sem GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean cum GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean sem GPA	% 3.0 or higher	mean cum GPA	% 3.0 or higher
All undergrads	2.98	57.5	2.94	50.1	3.02	59.7	2.95	50.8
All SAs	2.885	49.7	2.865	43.5	2.88	49.8	2.88	43.1
Male undergrads	2.86	50.7	2.83	41.7	2.9	52.9	2.85	41.9
Male SAs	2.78	42.4	2.74	33.1	2.64	35.9	2.72	30.7
Female undergrads	3.07	63.1	3.04	57.1	3.12	65.7	3.05	58.5
Female SAs	3.01	58.3	3.00	54.3	3.16	65.9	3.08	56.6

Taking a longer term view, after a steady increase between the Fall of 2005 and the Fall of 2007, both the mean semester GPA for all student-athletes and the number of student-athletes with semester GPAs of 3.0 or better have leveled off during the last four semesters.

<i>semester</i>	<i>mean semester SA GPA</i>	<i>SA semester GPA 3.0 or more: %</i>
Fall 2005	2.71	38.6
Spring 2006	2.77	43
Fall 2006	2.80	46.9
Spring 2007	2.84	49.7

for male SAs or female SAs. The mean GPAs for all SAs provided by SAAS have been recalculated in order to determine the mean individual GPA rather than the mean team GPA. Data on undergraduates generally was provided by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. I wish to express my gratitude to Tim Merrill, Interim Program Officer, for his generous assistance.

Fall 2007	2.885	49.7
Spring 2008	2.88	49.8
Fall 2008	2.866	48.48
Spring 2009	2.855	48.83

The patterns that we have observed in the past in the relationship between the student-athletes' grades and those of their undergraduate peers have remained fairly constant:

- Average GPAs for female undergraduates tend to be about .2 higher than for males.
- Average GPAs for SAs as a whole are lower than for undergraduates generally.
- Female student-athletes tend to match female undergraduates very closely in their academic performance, sometimes scoring a little higher, sometimes a little lower.
- Male student-athletes still tend to lag behind both male undergraduates and female student-athletes, particularly in the percentage with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and they are thus the lowest ranked group in every category.
- It is thus mainly because of low male student-athlete scores that the averages that student-athletes as a whole rank below those for undergraduates generally.

The comparison of average GPAs from year to year can, of course, be somewhat misleading because the cohort changes as students graduate or leave and as new freshmen enter. The turnover helps explain why the semester GPA for all student-athletes declined from Fall 07 to Fall 08 while their cumulative GPA increased. A better indication of whether the grades of a particular group of students have gone up or down is provided by comparing their grades for a particular semester to their own cumulative GPA at the end of the same semester (rather than to the semester grades of a slightly different group the year before). If their semester grades are higher than their cumulative GPA, they had a better than average semester; if their semester grades are lower than their cumulative GPA, they had a worse than average semester. By that measure, Fall 2007 was a better than average semester, Spring 2008 just average, and both Fall 2008 and Spring 2009 were worse than average for SAs overall.

The effect of turnover can be even greater on individual teams since the sample size is smaller and a single individual can have a greater impact on the whole. With that caveat in mind, the following two tables present the individual team GPAs for Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, both semester and cumulative. They are arranged in descending order of semester GPA, and the teams whose semester GPA was higher than their cumulative GPA (who thus had a better than average semester) are in **bold**.⁴

⁴ Women's Tennis presents a certain anomaly: the team with the highest GPA in each of the last two semesters (and in fact with the highest team GPA that some of us can ever remember seeing at UHM) had the lowest team APR score for 2009 (see page 7 above). The explanation is that a single student, who was still on scholarship but who had been dropped from the active roster, had a disastrous semester in the Spring of 2008 and she did not return in the fall. Since she still had a scholarship, she counted in the APR, and since the team is so small, the loss of both her eligibility point and her retention point brought the whole team's APR down to 923. But since this student was no longer on the team, her GPA was not included in the calculation of the team GPA average. (She has, incidentally, returned to school after a year's absence, and she is now on track, we hope, to graduate.)

Fall 2008

sport	size	semester GPA	cumulative GPA
Women's Tennis	8	3.38	3.49
Women's Volleyball	17	3.16	3.33
Women's Soccer	26	3.13	3.02
Women's Cross Country/Track	39	3.13	3.13
Softball	27	3.10	3.09
Sailing	23	3.04	2.95
Women's Swimming/Diving	26	3.01	3.04
Men's Tennis	9	3.00	3.03
Women's Basketball	16	2.92	2.91
Baseball	36	2.91	2.88
Men's Golf	10	2.87	2.64
Women's Water Polo	24	2.87	2.83
Men's Swimming/Diving	30	2.83	2.89
Football	121	2.70	2.77
Men's Volleyball	22	2.54	2.54
Women's Golf	8	2.54	2.51
Men's Basketball	18	2.27	2.52
ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES	460	2.866	2.897

Spring 2009

sport	size	semester GPA	cumulative GPA
Women's Tennis	9	3.489	3.406
Women's Soccer	25	3.232	3.108
Men's Swimming/Diving	31	3.207	2.997
Women's Swimming/Diving	27	3.170	3.104
Women's Cross Country/Track	39	3.105	3.061
Women's Volleyball	14	3.054	3.164
Sailing	24	3.019	3.022
Softball	23	2.993	3.053
Women's Water Polo	23	2.908	2.83
Women's Basketball	17	2.804	2.822
Baseball	35	2.754	2.828
Men's Golf	9	2.711	2.901

Men's Tennis	11	2.689	2.965
Men's Basketball	18	2.635	2.549
Women's Golf	8	2.618	2.563
Football	129	2.586	2.698
Men's Volleyball	17	2.581	2.648
ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES	460	2.855	2.874

In Spring 2009 it was especially noticeable that the teams already at the top tended to do better, and the teams at the bottom tended to do worse. The only teams whose grades increased in both semesters are Women's Soccer, Women's Cross Country/Track and Field, Women's Water Polo, and Women's Golf.