

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of January 16, 2019

STUDENT ATHLETES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This presentation will describe the student-athlete experience at the University of California, including graduation success rates and support services provided on the campuses. Student-athletes' personal experiences as undergraduates at UC will also be highlighted.

BACKGROUND

Regent Graves requested this discussion item following a meeting at UC Irvine with Regent Lansing, Regent-designate Weddle, and UC Irvine Track and Field athlete Evan Singletary. In September 2018, Student Affairs updated the Regents on campus efforts to implement Regents Policy 3501 on Student Athletes and the Guiding Principles to Enhance Student-Athlete Welfare, which the Regents adopted in May 2016. The September update focused primarily on the ways campus departments, programs, services, and personnel support the academic success and overall well-being of student-athletes, while this item aims to share the first-hand perspective of student-athletes.

Overview of Intercollegiate Teams and Sports

The University of California is home to almost 4,800 student-athletes across the nine undergraduate campuses, with a close balance between men and women (2,356 men to 2,423 women).¹ There are 20 intercollegiate sports across the campuses, ranging from Equestrian, Beach Volleyball, and Rowing, to the more often-cited sports such as Baseball, Basketball, and Football.

¹ Source: College Factual

Athletic Associations, Divisions, and Conferences

Most UC teams belong to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which is a member-led organization comprised of 1,117 colleges and universities and more than 500,000 student-athletes and almost 20,000 teams across the country.² The NCAA is the largest and most prestigious college athletic association, encompassing three divisions. Division I comprises the largest, most populous campuses, which also generally have the most robust athletics budgets and can provide the highest number of scholarships. Thus, approximately half of UC student-athletes have been awarded scholarships. Division I and II campuses are held to high academic performance standards, as well as highly competitive athletics. Campuses in Division III, the largest NCAA division, have lower-funded athletics programs and do not offer scholarships. UC Merced is governed by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), which oversees smaller athletics programs, describing itself as focused on “character-driven intercollegiate athletics.”³ Within each athletic division, there are separate conferences that are generally defined by region.

Academic Success of Student-Athletes

Regents Policy 3501, along with its Guiding Principles, reinforces the importance of ethical recruitment, academic support for success, and overall well-being of student-athletes.

The NCAA calculates Graduation Success Rates (GSR) for Division I campuses, based on six-year graduation rates for students who entered UC between 2008 and 2011, and graduated by 2017. UC’s overall Graduation Success Rates are robust across the system. For Division I campuses, female athletes have a 91 percent GSR, compared to male athletes at 79 percent. Systemwide success rates across racial categories are similarly strong: 79 percent for African Americans; 80 percent for Chicana/o and Latina/o; 90 percent for Whites; and 81.5 percent for all other students.

UC Campus Support for Student-Athletes

Campuses have a number of services, programs, and partnerships in place to help student-athletes negotiate their athletic, academic, and life goals and priorities. UCLA, for example, provides comprehensive health care through its Sports Medicine Department, as well as mental health services, nutrition, training facilities, educational programming on health and wellness, drug education and testing, and sexual violence prevention education in partnership with other units and offices across the campus. UC Berkeley has a comprehensive resource, the Athletic

² Source: NCAA

³ Source: NAIA

Study Center, which is focused on academic success and engagement in campus life. Regarding career preparation, Davis has innovated a new program, “Aggie EVO” (evolution) that provides mandatory career development training, including LinkedIn profile building, informational interviewing, emotional intelligence training, résumé workshops, and interview preparation, among other services.

UC student-athletes demonstrate excellence and sportsmanship that are a source of campus pride. Moreover, their athletic efforts contribute to the shared sense of community on our campuses and are much appreciated. For these reasons and more, UC continuously works to ensure that their academic success, career goals, and life experience all receive the highest levels of support and encouragement.

Key to Acronyms

GSR	Graduation Success Rates
NAIA	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association