Howard University Department of Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Support Services
Tutoring

Prepared by the

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation
“Working together to create a culture of evidence-based decision making...”

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Intercollegiate Athletics Academic Support Services

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Persons Interviewed: academic support services staff, coaches, student-athletes, athletics administration and tutors.

Availability of Tutorial Services  (Questions 1-4)

The athletics academic support unit provides tutorial services to all student-athletes and for any subject (course of study) that they are enrolled in throughout the semester. The service is conducted through the study hall system and is designed to help maintain and improve the academic proficiency of student-athletics within Howard University. If there is a need for additional tutoring outside of that system, the athletics academic support unit works in cooperation with other support units on campus to address those needs.

All student athletes are made aware of the tutorial services beginning with their first official visit to the campus and during their initial and continued enrollment at the University. Availability of the tutorial services is also communicated during personal academic meetings with an athletic academic advisor, at team meetings, and through the Student-Athletic Handbook and the tutorial handbook.

There are policies and requirements for using the tutorial services. A student must be a current student-athlete in order to take advantage of the tutorial services. Tutorial services are provided to all student-athletes upon request or via an evaluation of need during a scheduled personal meeting with an athletic academic advisor. During that meeting, the student-athlete would need to provide a copy of his/her class schedule and academic scheme. Additionally, student-athletes with a GPA below 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) are required to participate in study hall for at least 8 hours per week. Furthermore, it is mandatory for all freshmen who are considered “at-risk” to attend study hall until a GPA of 2.5 is achieved. Finally, student-athletes with a GPA at or above 2.5 are not required to attend mandatory study hall, but are encouraged to use the tutorial services.

Quality Control Issues for the Tutoring Services for Student-Athletes  (Questions 5-10)

University athletic tutors are recruited, selected, trained and evaluated by the athletics academic support unit. Every tutor must be an upperclassman (junior or senior) with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Tutors are recommended by personnel in the University’s schools and colleges or student referrals and selected are selected based on their academic achievement.

A tutorial handbook was produced by Ms. Tonja Braxton, Assistant Director for Athletics/Academic Advising and is updated, as needed, on a yearly basis. The handbook is used to train tutors who interact with student-athletes. All tutors, including current student-athletes who serve as tutors, are continually advised that they are to assist the student-athlete with academic support tutorial services (only) in compliance with applicable
NCAA, conference and/or institutional compliance rules and regulations. Each year, specifications of tutorial responsibilities are articulated upon hire and re-hire of tutors. At present, the tutorial program is not certified by any external association.

**Tutorial Operations (Questions 11-12)**

A student-athlete is assigned a tutor either by personal request in order to maintain good academic standing or if it comes to the attention of the athletic department (coach) that the student is at risk of failing a course. In the latter case, the student-athlete is referred to the athletic academic who, in turn, schedules a meeting with the student-athlete and a tutor to discuss the course or courses in which student-athlete is struggling. If it is discovered that a student-athlete is failing a course after his or her mid-term grades are posted, then it becomes imperative for the coach to refer the student to the athletic academic advisor for tutoring.

To ensure that there are enough tutors to meet the academic needs of student-athletes, the athletic academic support unit will contact any school/college at the University to request a tutor for a specific course.

**Collaboration/Coordination with other Campus Academic Support Services (Question 13)**

The athletic academic support unit has established relationships with (1) the educational advisory center staffs in every school or college, (2) the Center for Academic Reinforcement (CAR), (3) the Howard University Counseling Center, and (4) the Office of Special Student Services.

The educational advisory centers are staffed with counselors and advisors who advise student-athletes about the various academic offerings in their respective schools and colleges. These counselors and advisors also have access to student-athletes’ academic records and work with the athletic department staff in minimizing the chances that student-athletes will fall through the proverbial “academic cracks.” The Center for Academic Reinforcement offers the course, “College Study Skills” to help students who may be at risk of academic underachievement or failure to increase their chances of success in college. The course is designed for students to develop or improve their learning and study skills. CAR also offers developmental verbal and mathematics courses for students who are not academically prepared for enrollment in regular college-level courses in English and mathematics.

The Howard University Counseling Center provides a variety of counseling and psychological services to students to help them meet challenges in learning and contribute to their total development. Services include individual consultations, group counseling, diagnostic testing, drug education, and information dissemination. The Office of Special Student Services provides special services for new students, accommodations for students with disabilities, and programs that support military students.