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| A picture of a winding road and trees  An overview of Student-Athlete services  The types of academic and life skills development available to student-athletes in their academic community | Abstract  An overview of the impact of Academic Advising & Life Skills in an Intercollegiate Athletic department.  Jermaine Thomas  LDR 6615: Academic Advising & Life Skills with Dr. C.A. Tolchinsky at Northeastern University. Sunday November 2, 2014 |

The academic institution in which I have chosen to highlight for their available student-athlete services is Georgia Tech University. Georgia Tech University is a private institution whose home is Atlanta, Georgia and presently they are part of the Atlantic Coast Conference more commonly known as the ACC (About Georgia Tech University, 2014) (ACC Member: Georgia Tech, 2014). Georgia Tech is comprised of “six colleges” and they are: “Architecture, Computing, Engineering, Sciences, Scheller College of Business, and Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts (About Georgia Tech University, 2014). The services in which Georgia Tech provides for student-athletes in their experience are: 1) two academic centers; 2) an initiative for “Degree Continuation and Completion”; 3) Compliance; 4) a student-athlete advisory board; and 5) a developmental program called “The Total Person Program” (Student-Athlete Services, 2014).

Mike Bobinski who is Director of Athletics at Georgia Tech “has worked as a collegiate athletics administrator for more than 30 years” (Mike Bobinski, 2014). The Director for Compliance is Shoshanna Engel who has served prior to her current position with Georgia Tech University at Yale University, North Carolina State University, and Tulane University (Shoshanna Engle, 2014). The Assistant Athletic Director for Student Services is Phyllis LaBaw who has been with the “Georgia Tech Athletic Association” since 2005 (Phyllis Labaw, 2014). Leah Thomas is Director of Total Person Support Services and according to the Athletic Association’s website “Georgia Tech's Total Person program…provides student-athletes with enrichment sessions, community service projects, sports vision services, counseling services, physiology testing and sports nutrition” (Leah Tomas, 2014).

Academic services in which Georgia Tech provides are beneficial for the current student-athletes but is beneficial to student-athletes who have unfinished business in completing their degree program as well (Student-athlete services, 2014). It is an honor to cite the initiative of Georgia Tech to offer open doors of opportunities for student-athletes to graduate with a degree and become employable. Within the Athletic Association’s website I discovered some identity of Georgia Tech through the following mission and vision statements:

“**GTAA Mission Statement**

The Georgia Tech Athletic Association forms **the front porch** of the Institution and serves as a gathering place for students, alumni, fans, and friends. We provide our student-athletes with every opportunity for academic and athletic success and personal growth. We promote diversity and equity. The integrity of our mission is enhanced by our commitment to adherence to the rules of the Institute, the Atlantic Coast Conference and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. This environment allows our student-athletes to compete at the highest levels, and creates enjoyment and rewards for our supporters. Our proud traditions provide renewal and inspiration for the present and safeguard the future.

**Academic Support Mission Statement**

Our priority is to develop and advise student-athletes by teaching skills necessary for academics and for life. We will maintain an open and positive environment that fosters the student-athletes’ abilities to reach their goals while upholding rules and regulations of the Institute, the NCAA, the ACC and the Georgia Tech Athletic Association. We will fairly and ethically treat the student-athletes, faculty, and staff with whom we interact and be positive role models of integrity, honesty, and hard work as we encourage a holistic approach to college life for our student-athletes.

**Vision Statement**

The GTAA Academic Support Program seeks to ensure that all student-athletes who enroll at the Institute achieve academic success. We will continue to enhance our inclusive & non-threatening environment such that all students are free to pursue academic success, leadership opportunities, and career services. Overall, we seek to expand the human capacity for excellence” (Student-Athlete Services, 2014).

The two academic centers in which student-athletes are served through are “Tech Center” and “Hearn Center” (Student-Athlete Services, 2014). Tech Center interestingly is “modeled after the 2 West concept of the Award Winning Georgia Tech Library” (Tech Center, 2014). According to the profile of the Tech Center it features Wi-Fi, “a quiet reading room, individual study kiosks, a retractable screen for presentation facilitation, 4 person cubicles, and 26 computers that are kept up to date by the in house IT team” (Tech Center, 2014). According to the profile of Hearn Center “The staff of the Hearn Center assists with academic support which includes collaborative advising with campus, time management, coordination of support services, and other duties related to bolstering competitive students in the classroom” (Hearn Center, 2014).

The **Student-Athlete Advisory Board** at Georgia Tech does their part to meet the needs of **student life services** and **support services**. The Student-Athlete Advisory Board is comprised of men and women student athletes who are active in the 17 sports within the Georgia Tech Athletic Association (Mike Bobinski, 2014). According to the Athletic Association’s the mission of the Student-Athlete Advisory Board is as follows:

“The Student-Athlete Advisory Board (SAAB) is a committee of student-athletes representing each sports team within the Georgia Tech Athletic Association. The SAAB is a bridge linking student-athlete concerns with the GTAA administration. Along with major **community service** projects involving multiple teams, the board is called upon to give input on improving **student-athlete welfare** at Georgia Tech. The SAAB provides vital input on **student-athlete support services** to all Georgia Tech student-athletes. SAAB meets monthly to discuss issues relating to Georgia Tech student-athletes, to bring forth concerns or suggestions for programming for student-athletes, and to plan community service projects” (Student-Athlete Advisory Board, 2014).

The “Total Person Program” of Georgia Tech is based upon “belief that excellence is a result of a balanced life that encompasses academic excellence, athletic achievement, and personal well-being” (The Total Person Program, 2014). For the student-athletes within the Georgia Tech Athletic program The Total Person Program meets the needs through: 1) a Student-Athlete Advisory Board; 2) Career Development and Placement; 3) A series of topics related to personal health and well-being are presented to student-athletes throughout the course of the year; and 4) Community Outreach. The Georgia Tech Athletic Association clearly defines what purpose each four elements of Total Person Program as follows:

“**Student-Athlete Advisory Board (SAAB)** - This board is comprised of student-athlete representatives from each team to be the leaders and spokesmen for that team. SAAB provides an effective means by which student-athletes can evaluate programs and provide feedback for the services offered. For more information on SAAB, minutes from their monthly meeting, and a complete list of the 2013-2014 SAAB representatives, please visit http://ramblinwreck.cstv.com/school-bio/geot-saab.html.

**Career Development and Placement** - This portion of the Total Person Program helps the student-athlete determine their career interests as well as helping them develop resumes, prepare for job interviews, learn how to market themselves in the work force, and assist with internship opportunities and potential full time employment upon completion of their degree. The GTAA has partnered with GT Career Services, sharing a resource to better service the student-athletes.

**A series of topics related to personal health and well-being are presented to student-athletes throughout the course of the year. Topics each year might include, but are not limited to:**

Stress/Time management

Financial planning/Wealth management

Sexual assault and violence prevention and awareness

Drug/Alcohol Use as it relates to health and athletic performance

Etiquette Training - business, classroom, dining, etc.

Sports Nutrition/Dietary Supplements

**Community Outreach** - Led by SAAB members, Georgia Tech student-athletes are involved in various community outreach projects each year. Despite their busy academic and athletic schedules, student-athletes realize the importance of being involved in their community by being role models/mentors for aspiring young students/student-athletes, lending a hand in various community events, and representing Georgia Tech Athletics in campus-wide community outreach projects” (The Total Person Program, 2014).

In conclusion, the NCAA reforms of the past two decades have inspired athletic programs to be proactive in the present and future success of student-athletes. In choosing Georgia Tech as a reference school I gained an understanding that some colleges and universities embrace the fact that revenue sports bring alumni and friends back home to campus in support of attendance, fundraising, and involvement in the alumni association (Student-Athlete Services, 2014). Within the culture of Georgia Tech athletics it is a priority that student-athletes reach their full potential in: earning a degree, personal care and etiquette, knowing what to do with time and resources, awareness of their rights and the rights of others in the actions of their lifestyle, and being service oriented toward their communities (The Total Person Program, 2014). In my professional development it is the athletic programs such as Georgia Tech which focus on life beyond the playing surface equally as much as success on it that serve as a model of how to lead an athletic program.

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