

Bio

Jennifer Kulics was promoted to Assistant Athletic Director for Academic Services in the summer of 2004 after serving four years as an athletic academic counselor at Kent State. Her primary responsibilities include the supervision of the George L. Jenkins Athletic Academic Resource Center, academic support staff and academic support services for student-athletes. Kulics coordinates the tutoring program, evening study tables, advising and counseling, life skills programming and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). In addition, she has direct advising responsibilities for the women's volleyball, softball and men's and women's basketball teams. She is also a part-time instructor in the School of Exercise, Leisure and Sport.

Kulics joined the Kent State staff in 2000 as an academic counselor. She was no stranger to Kent State having served two years as the women's basketball graduate assistant from 1996-98. Before returning to Kent State, she held the position of Director of Athletics, Intramurals and Recreational Sports at Penn State Beaver from 1998-2000. She was a three-year letter-winner for the Bowling Green State University women's basketball team and a two-year letter-winner for the softball team. A native of Canfield, Ohio, Kulics graduated with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Bowling Green State University in 1996, a master's degree in Exercise Physiology from Kent State in 1998, and a doctoral degree in Educational Administration from Kent State in 2006.

Title

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS OF DIVISION I STUDENT-ATHLETES AND ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS: THE IMPACT OF THE INCREASED PERCENTAGE TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Abstract

The purpose of this study investigated to what extent the increased percentage toward degree requirements (40/60/80) of the Fall 2003 implementation of the NCAA's academic reform package impact the academic behaviors of student-athletes as well as the role of academic administrators in intercollegiate athletics. This study examined identified issues of concern with respect to athletic eligibility, retention, college major selection, and summer school enrollment among student-athlete subgroups (specific teams) and within the academic advising profession in athletics. Two different surveys were administered to student-athletes on seven predetermined athletic teams (men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball, softball, football, women's soccer, and women's track and field/cross country) and academic administrators at six Midwestern institutions with analogous conference membership.

Descriptive statistics reported frequencies and percentages and described the impact of the requirements on student-athletes (research question one) and academic administrators (research question two). Mean comparisons on several independent variables (e.g.,

gender, type of sport, type of team) were reported to answer the third research question. A chi-square analysis was used to analyze frequency data, and a one-way ANOVA for questions utilizing means to determine differences on independent variables. Results indicated how the identified reform issues impact one group more than another and determined if there were differences among groups. Qualitative responses of open-ended questions were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to report emerging themes from the data.

The results revealed that the increased percentage toward degree requirements have impacted the academic decisions of student-athletes and academic administrators. Student-athletes on all teams expressed positive and negative views of the requirements as well as increased anxiety or pressure when choosing or changing majors. Results showed that approximately one out of four student-athletes would change majors if ineligible based on percentage requirements, and over 11% stated that athletic eligibility was a primary reason for their major selection. The impact of the increased percentage toward degree requirements warrants concern for the psychosocial and career development of student-athletes. Increases in summer school enrollment due to the percentage requirements predict imminent financial distress for athletic departments as well as probable delays in the career maturity of student-athletes. Academic administrators expressed various unanticipated consequences of the increased percentage requirements as well as existing and impending challenges for at-risk, high-achieving, and transfer (two and four-year) student-athletes. Academic administrators identified how the percentage requirements impact student-athletes and exacerbate role conflict when advising student-athletes. Differences among gender, type of sport, and type of team indicated some statistically significant results for the third research question. Future research may include the impact of the percentage requirements on additional reform measures such as the Academic Progress Rate (APR) and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR) as well as on the psychosocial development and career maturity of student-athletes.