



To: Academic Senate

Re: Athletic Advisory Committee Yearly Report

Date: April 18, 2008

From: Tracey Boncher, Ph.D., Chair of the University Athletic Advisory Committee

Dear Senate:

The athletic advisory committee started out the academic year brainstorming on ways the committee can actively serve the athletic department. We concluded that this may be achieved by working to establish a program to help our campus athletes, from various sports, which are in need of academic assistance. Ferris State University has many excellent athletes that maintain very high grade point averages despite their rigorous training schedules. The committee is trying to reach the athletes that don't fall into this category but ones that for some reason or another do not take advantage of the University tutor department. Throughout this process we were not seeking to reinvent the wheel but rather to make it easier on athletes to get the assistance they need. There seemed to be a dis-connect with athletes perception of university tutors. Many claimed there is a stigma placed on them when they walk into the tutor room. Others claimed there were never tutors with the expertise they were in need of. The main goal this year was to establish a tutor program using honors students to assist athletes in their academic courses, gaining additional organizational skills & study habits by having these students attend athletes' mandatory study halls. This seemed to overcome the barrier many athletes saw and appeared to reach many students who would not have had the self motivation or drive to initiate help on their own.

With help from Maude Bigford, Honors College, and the athletic department as well as the respective coaches we initiated a pilot semester program. The goal was to start the program, iron out any wrinkles and have it ready so that it may be implemented in the fall to fully involve the athletic campus community. The pilot program involved 3 honors students, who attended the athletes' study hall. It appeared to be successful and after talking with coaches we feel this is a much needed and appreciated service. The coaches conveyed to the committee that many of their athletes feel shy about walking into the University tutor room, hate the stigma and really feel much more comfortable if they see their fellow team mates getting this service right along side them. This opportunity also gives us a chance to match tutors expertise with the athletes who are in need of specific help. This proved to be very positive experience and actually reached many of the athletes who really needed the help. In return the honors students get to use the time they spend tutoring to meet their volunteer requirement for the honors college.

After evaluating how the semester went it seemed to be a very positive experience for both the honors tutors as well as the athletes. Currently, we are working to finalize a fall calendar and get the specifics all worked out so that we can physically present this opportunity to the honors college this summer to get more tutors on board for the fall 2008 semester. We are all very excited about this program and feel this is really reaching out and making a big difference in many of our athlete's academic lives.