

September 14, 2016 Forum

**Intercollegiate Athletics and the University of North Carolina:
Student-Athlete Time Demands**

*Faculty Campus Discussion Regarding the Academic Implications of the
Changes Coming to College Sports (per UNC Faculty Council Resolution)*

I. History: 1991 NCAA Athletic Activity Time Demand Caps

II. Student-Athlete Experience Studies: Focus on Time Demand Data

III. Seeking Clarity: Countable Athletically Related Activities

IV. 2017 Autonomy Conferences Potential Legislative Concept

The question of how much time students who participate on intercollegiate athletic teams should spend on athletically related activities has evolved into a prominent national concern amid those charged with ensuring an appropriate balance among three key campus dimensions - academics, athletics, and student life. The purpose of this document and associated sources are twofold: (a) to provide an overview of the time demand issue; and (b) to encourage robust campus conversations among all interested parties with the hope that Carolina can not only become an advocate for policies that make most sense for our own institution, but also might contribute to broader Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and Autonomy Conference deliberations.

History

Prior to 1991 there were no national legislative limits in terms of the amount of time students participating on intercollegiate athletic teams could be permitted to “formally” spend on their sport. In the latter half of the 1980s - based on concerns that athletes were being asked to spend too much time on their sport arguably at the expense of academic and extracurricular pursuits - the NCAA Presidents’ Commission and Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics began to push for the development and adoption of NCAA legislation that

would cap playing and practice opportunities. It should also be noted that there was concern among some college presidents that unless something was done to seek what some saw as a more appropriate balance between academics and athletics there was a threat that Congress might become involved in legislating intercollegiate athletics. As a result, a resolution was passed at the 1990 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Convention calling for the consideration of reduced time demands for athletes in all sports.

At the 1991 NCAA Convention legislation was adopted limiting the amount of time Division I athletes could be required to spend on their sport. The bylaws limiting athletes to 20 hours per week of athletic activity during the season and eight hours per week out of season are still in existence today.

2016 GOALS Studies

In an effort to investigate the experiences and well being of students participating on intercollegiate teams the NCAA has conducted three GOALS (Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Learning of Students in College) studies over the past ten years (2006, 2010, 2016). More than 7,000 Division I athletes participated in the 2016 study, and the issue of athletic activity time demands was a prominent area of

consideration. All three studies – including the most recent 2016 version – revealed that students were exceeding both the 20-hour in-season and 8-hour out-of-season limits. The 2016 study also revealed varying interpretations as to what exactly constitutes a *countable athletically related activity* (CARA) as well as a myriad of perspectives as to what should constitute a CARA. More specifically, the 2016 GOALS study included - among many others - these findings:

- (a) On average Division I athletes reported spending 34 hours per week on their sport;
- (b) Division I athletes reported spending 38.5 hours per week on academics (up from a reported 35.5 hours per week in the 2010 GOALS study);
- (c) 59 percent of male athletes and 66 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend more time on academics, while 9 percent of male athletes and 6 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend less time on athletics;
- (d) Athletes reported that – on average for all sports – they miss approximately two classes per week while in season;
- (e) 42 percent of male athletes and 24 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend more time on athletics while

- 16 percent of male athletes and 25 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend less time on athletics;
- (f) Most male athletes (approximately 70 percent) and female athletes (approximately 60 percent) reported spending as much time on athletics out of season as in season.
 - (g) 41 percent of male athletes and 32 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend more time on organized out-of-season workouts while 16 percent of male athletes and 16 percent of female athletes would prefer to spend less time on organized out-of-season workouts;
 - (h) Approximately three-quarters of male and female athletes reported desiring more time to visit family, socialize with friends, and relax alone;
 - (i) Slightly over 50 percent of athletes reported most often not getting enough sleep to the point where they did not feel rested when waking up in the morning (these findings were comparable to those for non-athletes).

It should be noted that while these data may raise issues for consideration and in some cases even concern, the 2016 GOALS study

also revealed considerable satisfaction on the part of athletes regarding their athletic, academic, and extracurricular experiences.

Countable Athletic Related Activity (CARA)

As we consider the above and perhaps related additional legislative proposals it may be useful to briefly discuss CARA. One might rightly ask how there can be a 20-hour athletics activity cap yet athletes routinely report activities that far exceed that standard. Two issues to be aware of related to CARA are: (a) how CARA are presently interpreted by the NCAA; and (b) the lack of clarity surrounding what constitutes a truly voluntary athletic activity. For example, while competition/game days count for a maximum three hours against the 20-hour cap, many athletes report spending considerably more time on “athletic activities” (ex. travel, pre-game meetings, pre- and postgame game medical care, media responsibilities, etc). Likewise, while “voluntary” athletic activities do not count against the 20-hour cap, there is significant concern among athletes that some of these activities are voluntary in name only. For example, a 2015 Pac-12 Conference survey of 409 athletes revealed 73 percent felt that at least some activities deemed to be voluntary were actually perceived to be more mandatory in nature. There was also a perception among athletes that

there may be consequences for choosing to not participate in activities defined as voluntary.

2017 Autonomy Conferences Potential Legislative Concept

In an effort to begin to address time demand concerns voiced by student-athletes, Autonomy Conference (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-12, Southeastern) leaders are proposing that the head coach for each sport be tasked with completing an annual *Student-Athlete Time Management Plan* (to be developed in collaboration with student-athletes and senior administrators, and approved by each school's Director of Athletics). The plan must include how the coach intends to assure that:

- (a) each student athlete will have at least 1 day per week free from athletic activities during the competitive season and 2 free days per week during the remainder of the academic year;
- (b) each student-athlete will have at least an 8-hour block of athletic-free time following both home and away competitions (to begin when the team is released from athletic obligations);
- (c) all student-athletes are free of athletically related requirements for at least 7 days after their competitive season concludes; and
- (d) in addition to the days off noted above in (a) and (c), each student-athlete will be provided 14 days with no required athletic activities during the academic year at a time when academic activities are in session.