

MEMORANDUM

Date: 10 October 2001

To: Mary Sue Coleman
President

From: Brandon Miller
Athletic Councilor

RE: Student-Athlete Academic Success Plan

I am pleased to have this opportunity to suggest to you a new system of controls to implement in the University of Iowa Department of Athletics for increased academic success. By implementing my control system, I believe that the university will be able to accomplish its goal of having a 5-year student-athlete graduation rate of 80% in every sport beginning in May 2008. Individual academic success will be as prized as much as our team athletic success.

Minimum standards are important to every control process. The NCAA already has countless standards on eligibility and the university has strict policies on admission to the university so it is not my intention to place any further bureaucratic limitations on neither admission nor eligibility. For example, by NCAA Division I rules, all freshman must have a 1.80 GPA and have completed 24 semester hours of course work by the end of their first year to be eligible. Instead, we must continue to maintain strict adherence to these existing policies and monitor any deviations closely. The main minimum standards we will monitor will be minimum GPA and degree progress, which are shown below. We must also place new emphasis in the areas of academic assistance, individual performance monitoring, and motivation.

BY THE END OF:	MINIMUM GPA:(on 4.0 scale)	CREDIT HOURS PROGRESS
1st Semester	1.7	-
1st Year	1.80	24
2nd Year	1.90	51
3rd Year	2.00	78
4th Year	2.00	105
5th Year	2.00	120 (Business); 124 (Liberal Arts)

The most effective control systems for the university to use to accomplish its goal are mixture of behavioral and normative control. Coaches and academic councilors will instill academic enthusiasm and good academic performance constructs in the student athletes to create behaviors that will yield academic success, motivation, and increased graduation rates. Through behavioral control, coaches and councilors will monitor the athlete's academic behavior closely and reward favorable academic behavior and punish unfavorable behavior. Coaches will be in a great position for this type of control system because they already serve as motivating figures as well as respected all-powerful individuals for the team. They will be able to inspire the athletes and serve as the authority figures. Academic councilors will work at an individual level with the athletes, where they can reinforce enthusiasm and provide direction through any academic problems. It will be essential for coaches and councilors to share coherent academic philosophies in which both are supportive of one another. Thus, councilors will work with primarily a single team so that they can have a strong relationship with the team, and coaches will respect the councilor's ideals and monitoring of performance if punishment is required.

Feedforward control, the monitoring of the performance of inputs, will primarily be a responsibility of the coaches when they are recruiting the student-athletes. Besides adhering to NCAA and University of Iowa admission policy, coaches will make recruiting decisions based on the academic character, values, personality, and the ability to overcome obstacles of the athletes. I do not expect coaches to check for exact standards at this phase because it is hard to judge future academic behavior based on blanket standards that do not have exceptions. Thus, it will be the coach's best judgment (based on the above qualities) used in recruiting academically able athletes. Coaches will be aware of the university's goal and will be expected to recruit the highest academic caliber of athletes. We will use feedback controls to measure if there is a need in the future to set more rigorous admission minimum standards than the existing NCAA and university regulations for recruiting.

Concurrent control, the measurement of performance as it is occurring, will by far be the most important control framework. Both councilors as well as coaches will play an integral role. The academic councilors will be the leaders of the Athletic Learning Center. The center will provide academic services to aid athletes in their studies and increase their academic commitment to insure that the students make satisfactory progress towards a degree and graduation. All new student-athletes will

be required to attend an athletic orientation before beginning classes which will introduce them to the services offered and aid each student in understanding the best means of coping with demands placed upon each as both a student and as an athlete. Use of the Learning Center is encouraged for everyone and required for all first semester freshmen and transfers, student-athletes on probation (athletes that fall below the minimum 2.00 GPA), students whose coach requires their attendance, and students whose GPA is below his/her predicted abilities deemed by his/her counselor. Coach's involvement in the program will be mainly to encourage and in some cases force the centers use and to motivate the students to see the value of a degree. To motivate the student-athletes, coaches may use first-hand experience, recruit past university athletes to speak that are now using their degrees, or use any other motivational materials provided by the center.

The academic councilors will assess each athletes abilities and project a minimum expected GPA, which the athlete will be expected to maintain. The projection will be readjusted, usually upwards, each year with the student. Projected GPA's must be above the minimum standards outlined above. The councilors will also serve as the advisors in helping plan class schedules and course hours to keep the students progressing towards their degree. If councilors find that the students are consistently exceeding the minimum GPA's outlined on the chart above, the minimum standards will be readjusted. It is the goal of the concurrent measurement to constantly assess and reassess performance and the student-athletes progress. It is my belief that if we train our athletes to study and prioritize academics in the Learning Center and provide them with these tools to succeed, this learned behavior about academic degree importance will yield the academic success of the athletes and the triumph of the university's goal to graduate at least 80% of the athletes.

Feedback control, measuring the effectiveness of performance after it has occurred, will be primarily learned after 2008 when the first student-athlete class has graduated although this can be projected with some certainty prior to 2008. This will be when we really learn if our 80% graduation goal was too lofty or humble and if it is in need of readjustment. We will also be able to evaluate the performance of our behavioral control program and consider if a switch to a more bureaucratic or more self-controlled system might be more desirable.

If you have any questions concerning the proposal, please contact me at 353-5148. Thank you.