Transforming Our Campuses for Student-Athletes: Student Affairs and Athletics Working Together

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Learning Outcomes

• Participants will explain the perspective and unique needs of student-athletes.
• Participants will consider their current campus environment relative to student affairs and athletics partnerships.
• Participants will outline best practices for cross-campus collaboration between student affairs and athletics.
Student-Athlete Knowledge Community

Vision

- The vision of the SAKC is to empower student affairs professionals with knowledge about athletics and the unique needs of student-athletes to enhance cross-campus collaboration and the collegiate experience for all students. To that end, the SAKC will serve as the NASPA resource that generates and disseminates knowledge about the culture of athletics and student-athlete specific issues.

Mission

- The purpose of the SAKC is to create and advance knowledge in higher education specific to how partnerships among athletics, student affairs and other campus entities could enhance the well-being of all students, including student-athletes.
Student Development in Athletics

• The psychosocial development of student-athletes became a major concern in the early 90’s. As a result, the Division I-A Athletic Directors Association and NCAA came together in a partnership to create the CHAMPS/Life Skills program (Ahlgren-Bedics & Monda, 2009).

• The program provides support to student-athletes in five areas: academics, athletics, career development, personal development and community service.

• Institutions have been empowered to develop programs that meet unique needs of the student-athletes on their respective campuses.

• NCAA Leadership Development department provides support to Life Skills coordinators and professionals through educational and grant opportunities.

• Variety of initiatives for student-athletes on the national level.
Student Athletes: Who are they?
Student Athletes: Who are they?

• Depending on their division and sport, NCAA athletes spend 65.6 to 81.3 hours a week in-season on athletics and academics combined (NCAA, 2011).
  – According to National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the average student spends 14.7 hours on homework for a course load of 15 hours (a weekly commitment of 29.7 hours) (McCormick, 2011).
Student Athletes: Who are they?

- The spring 2012 NCAA Student-Athlete Affairs Needs Assessment identified the following top three needs of student-athletes:
  - Nutrition and Eating Disorders
  - Mental Health
  - Life After Sport
Student Athletes: Who are they?

• “LGBQ Student-Athletes generally experience and perceive a more negative climate than their heterosexual peers in relation to four climate variables: Perceptions of Climate, Perceptions of Respect, Athletic Department Addresses Discrimination, and Diversity Leadership from Athletic Personnel. These negative experiences with climate adversely influence their athletic identities and reports of academic success.” (Rankin & Merson, 2012)
Student Athletes: Who are they?

- LGBQ student-athletes are twice as likely to experience harassment than their heterosexual peers; four times as likely to be pressured to be silent about their identity; twenty-eight times more likely to report harassment is based on their sexual orientation (Rankin & Merson, 2012).
Student Athletes: Who are they?

- In summary, student-athletes have unique needs related to:
  - Visibility and identity
    - Privacy
  - Time commitments
  - Compliance and regulation
Scenarios

• 7 scenarios
  – Questions

• Groups by Association/Division
You are the residence director on your campus. Even though the NCAA has outlawed student-athlete dominated housing facilities, your building has been labeled as the student-athlete residence hall, and it has been straining on your staff. Additionally, a couple of your RAs have observed what they believe to be possible hazing type activities and are concerned about the well-being of the first-year student-athletes involved.

• How would you work with the athletic department in addressing this situation?
• What creative types of programming could your staff develop that engages the student-athletes in the building?
• How do you educate your staff about the student-athlete population so they can help encourage the integration of these students into the residence hall community?
Scenarios - LGBT

You are the director of the LGBT center. During National Coming Week your office sponsored a speaker who discussed the issue of homophobia and athletics. After the program, a member of the men’s football team came thanked you for hosting the event. He mentioned that one of his fellow teammates recently shared with him that he was gay. He disclosed that his teammate is struggling and is worried that his career would be compromised if anyone (including his coaches and other fellow student-athletes) learned of his sexual orientation.

• How do you help this student-athlete get the support he needs?
• How would you support the student who brings this issue forward?
• How would you use allies in the athletics to assist you in your work to combat homophobia in the department?
Scenarios - Orientation

Bernardo is a freshman member of the soccer team at your institution. The team arrives prior to Orientation for the academic year due to practices beginning in mid-August. Bernardo is acclimating well and is being mentored and guided by the older members of his team. Orientation week arrives and other freshmen begin moving onto campus. The Director of Orientation is expecting all freshmen to participate in the programs being offered, but some of them conflict with the two-a-day practice schedule. Bernardo does not want to attend Orientation and lets his Orientation Leader know that he will not be participating. The Orientation Leader insists that he come meet with his group. Bernardo states that he is not going to participate.

• The Director of Orientation comes to you to ask for your assistance in talking with the student-athlete. What do you say?
• Would you involve other members of the athletic staff in a conversation about Orientation?
Scenarios - Race/Ethnicity

You are the Assistant Director of Multicultural Center. During a meeting with the Center’s advisory board, a discussion ensues about the experience of student-athletes of color on your campus.

• What are some potential collaborative efforts that can help this population become more engaged with the Center’s programs and services?

• Who are the constituents that would benefit most by having this conversation with you?
Scenarios - Alcohol/Mental Health

Robin is a member of the volleyball team. Her teammates come to you because they are worried about her drinking behavior. They do not want coach to find out that they have confided in you. They also mention that the last time Robin was drunk she mentioned that she was having “dark thoughts.”

- What do you do first? What are other follow-up processes?
- What resources do you offer to the teammates?
- When if ever would you involve the coaches?
Scenarios - Academics

The athletics department just recently proposed the idea of priority registration for student-athletes to the faculty senate and it was approved. This has received some negative feedback from students, staff and faculty members.

• During your staff meeting, the issue comes up for discussion and the staff appears to be in opposition of the proposal as well.

• What would be some of your talking points about the situation?
Questions
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References


