

**DEPARTMENT OF SYSTEMS &
INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING**

Engineering Building
1127 E. James E. Rogers Way
Tucson, AZ 85721
Ofc: 520-621-6561

<https://sie.engineering.arizona.edu/>



To: UA Faculty Senate
Leila Hudson, Ph.D., Chair of the Faculty
Mona Hymel, J.D., Vice Chair of the Faculty
Tessa Dysart, J.D., Secretary of the Faculty

Cc: Robert Robbins, M.D., President of the University
Dave Heeke, Vice President of Athletics
Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

From: Ricardo Valerdi, Ph.D., Distinguished Outreach Professor and Interim Head,
Department of Systems & Industrial Engineering; Faculty Athletics Representative

RE: Faculty Athletics Representative Report for 2022-23 Academic Year

Date: Apr 10, 2023

As part of my role as UA's Faculty Athletics Representative, I hereby provide my report for the current academic year.

Background

- ~500 student athletes
- ~45 (123 unique) majors (top choices are Communication, Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Interdisciplinary Studies, Business, Physiology, Education)
- 21 sports (22 in Fall 2023)
- Member of the PAC-12 Conference
- Member of the NCAA Division I/Power 5/Autonomy Group/Football Bowl Subdivision

Acknowledgements

- Rocky LaRose, Chair of Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
- Bill Neumann, Faculty Senator on Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
- Roy Spece, Faculty Senator on Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
- Lehman Benson, Faculty on Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

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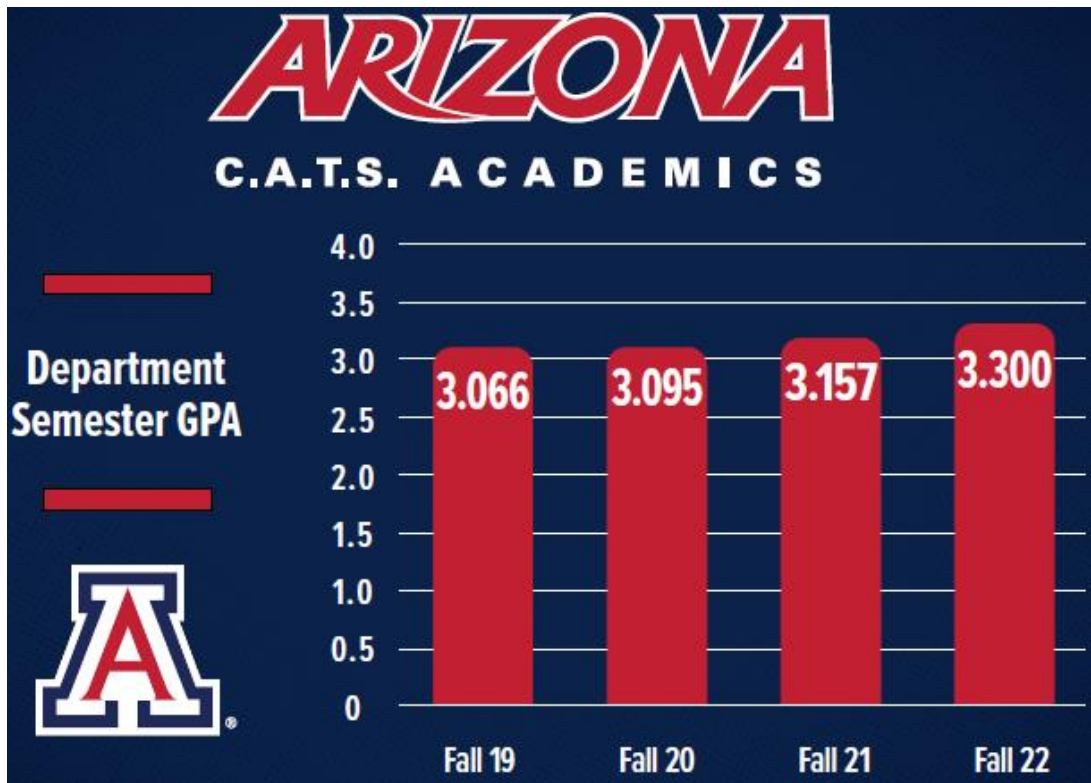
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- George Gehrels, Faculty on Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
- Christine Salvesen, Administrator on Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

Academic Highlights

- Student athlete Fall 2023 GPA of 3.3 is the highest semester GPA on record, this has been a positive trend for multiple semesters
- Football team (> 100 student athletes) achieved their highest Fall GPA in history: 2.978
- Kyle Ostendorp (punter, aerospace engineering major) was the student athlete valedictorian
- Fall 2023: 360 (72%) of student athletes earned a GPA \geq 3.0
- C.A.T.S. Academics Open House on Feb 2023 attracted approx. 100 attendees



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Academic Oversight by Faculty Athletics Representative

- Academic (re)certification: progress towards degree, minimum GPA, full time enrollment
- Review of independent study courses
- Grade changes for student athletes
- Comparison of student athlete vs. non-student athlete grades
- Financial Aid Appeals

Compliance Involvement by Faculty Athletics Representative

- NCAA Bylaw waiver requests (e.g., medical hardships)
- Review of NCAA violations, compliance education
- Time management plans for each team (Countable Athletically Related Activities, Required Athletically Related Activities, Voluntary Athletically Related Activities)
- Completed Independent Accountability Review Process hearing and received decision from NCAA on men's basketball, swimming & diving infractions
- Compliance department staffed with 5 full-time employees, including a staff member whose primary responsibility is to educate athletics department staff on NCAA legislation
- Name, Image, and Likeness education provided to student athletes via Arizona Edge program in partnership with Eller and Rogers Colleges

Structure of College Athletics is Evolving

- Student athletes can benefit from Name, Image, and Likeness revenue, but it is still a patchwork of state laws, no federal law
- USC and UCLA are leaving the Pac-12 Conference to join Big Ten Conference
- Pac-12 Conference has yet to renegotiate its media contract
- Transfer portal opened the door for more movement of student athletes
- Sports betting already allowed in some states within Pac-12 footprint (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada*, Oregon, Washington) *Not home to a Pac-12 campus but host to conference football and basketball tournaments.
- Supreme Court decision on Alston v. NCAA resulted in student athletes at UA being eligible to receive \$5,980 each year as a supplemental academic award

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Notable Highlights

- New sport starting in Fall 2023: Women's Triathlon (Head Coach Wes Johnson)
- New(ish) Commissioner of the Pac-12 Conference: George Kliavkoff (former MLB, Hulu, MGM executive)
- New President of NCAA: Charlie Baker (former Governor of Massachusetts)
- Athletics Department embarking on economic impact study with CALS/Cooperative Extension

What Faculty Should Be Aware of

- Student athletes have a max of 20 hours/week in Countable Athletically Related Activities during the season, max of 8 hours/week in the offseason
- Helping student athletes beyond what would generally be available to the student body could jeopardize their eligibility; feel free to reach out to me, the Compliance Department in Athletics, or C.A.T.S. Academics with questions
- Your mid semester reports are extremely important for the academic success of student athletes
- Coaches or Athletics Staff are not allowed to communicate directly with faculty or staff (Compliance and C.A.T.S. Academics are exceptions to this policy), except in connection with a campus visit where the purpose is to discuss academic offerings to a prospective student-athlete
- NCAA Attestation signed by President Robbins annually