1-18-2008

UA1B3/3 WKU Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program, Draft

WKU Athletics Committee

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WKU Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program
(Draft Version 1/18/08)

Mission Statement

The WKU Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program emphasizes the educational mission of intercollegiate athletics. The Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program strengthens the connection between athletics and academics at WKU and provides a foundation for the personal and academic development of WKU student-athletes.

Program Description

The WKU Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program is an opportunity to develop productive relationships between faculty and coaches/student-athletes. The Program will help bridge the gap between athletics and academics. While faculty mentors serve as a resource for WKU student-athletes and coaches, the Program will also provide an opportunity for coaches and student-athletes to become better integrated into the academic community.

Program Benefits for Faculty

- The primary benefit for faculty mentors is the opportunity to make a significant impact on the academic development of the student-athletes at WKU.
- The Program provides the opportunity for faculty to develop meaningful relationships with coaches and student-athletes.
- The Program provides an opportunity to learn more about a significant component of the University and gain a better appreciation for the challenges faced by student-athletes.
Program Benefits for Coaches and Student-Athletes

Coaches will have an opportunity to become better connected and integrated with the rest of the University community.

- The Program can help improve communication between faculty and the coaches.
- Mentors can be used to meet with prospective student-athletes.
- Mentors serve as another resource to provide academic advice to student-athletes.
- Mentors can provide advice to help in the career and/or graduate school preparation.
- Mentors can be used to make presentations to their assigned teams which can be especially useful in helping first-year student-athletes make the transition to college.
- The program will help give faculty a better idea and fuller appreciation of the daily responsibilities that student-athletes face.
- The program can help facilitate and promote student-athlete participation in the Honors program.

Responsibilities & Guidelines for Faculty Mentors, Coaches, and Student Athletes

Successful implementation of the Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program requires substantive interaction between coaches, student-athletes, and faculty mentors. It is the responsibility of coaches and faculty mentors to create an environment where student-athletes get to know faculty mentors and feel comfortable approaching them with academic questions and concerns. The role that faculty mentors will play will vary by sport and coach. The coach and mentor(s) are responsible for defining the specific role that mentors will play. Consequently, the coach and mentor(s) should meet to develop a general plan for implementation.

For the program to be successful, it is important for faculty to make themselves available to interact with the teams that they are serving as mentors for. Some of specific activities and responsibilities for mentors include:

- Occasionally visit team practices.
- Communicate and meet with coaches as appropriate.
• Attend as many home games as possible.
• Be willing to travel with team on one road trip if feasible and appropriate. Opportunity to travel with team will vary by sport.
• Attend other team functions as appropriate.
• Meet with prospective recruits.
• Make presentations to team on topics related to academic success.
• Mentors should be aware of NCAA rules that apply to their participation in the program.
• Under some circumstances and upon consultations with team coaches, mentors may wish to host a team function (i.e. grill out, team dinner, etc.).

The most important thing for coaches to do is to create opportunities where the faculty mentor will be able to interact with team members. Required and suggested activities to facilitate this interaction include:

• Formally introduce mentors at start of season or year.
• Open (at least some) practice sessions for faculty mentors to visit.
• Communicate and meet with faculty mentors as appropriate.
• Allow faculty mentors to travel on at least one road trip.
• Think about how the faculty mentors can be used to promote the academic development of team members. For example, coaches may ask mentors to speak to the team about general strategies for academic success.
• As appropriate, include faculty mentors in other team activities and functions.

Student-athletes should make every effort to take advantage of the benefits offered by the program. They should make an effort to get to know the faculty mentors and be willing to ask them questions and seek them out for advice.

While faculty are expected to participate in a number of roles as mentors, there are some limitations on the role they should play. Mentors are to be supportive of their associated team but their role is not that of a super fan. Also, the role of mentors is not to serve as watchdogs of WKU athletics. Finally, mentors are not replacements for academic advisors and tutors.
WKU Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program Guidelines (Proposed Draft)
(1/18/08)

Program Oversight & Structure
I. The WKU University Athletics Committee will have general oversight over the Faculty Athletics Mentoring Program.

II. A Program coordinator will be appointed by the University President. The Program coordinator is responsible for coordinating the selection and assignment of team mentors. If not already a member of the University Athletics Committee, the coordinator will serve as a voting member of the UAC by virtue of the appointment to Program coordinator.

III. The coordinator will work with the Director of Athletics and the Faculty Athletics Representative to monitor the implementation and success of the program. The coordinator is responsible to make regular reports regarding the Program to the University Athletics Committee.

Mentor Selection
I. Faculty mentors will work be selected for a particular sport. The goal is to have at least two faculty mentors for each sport that would like to participate in the Program. The number of mentors will be adjusted for teams that have larger rosters.

II. The selection of mentors will be done by a committee consisting of the Program coordinator, the Faculty Athletic Representative, and a representative from the Department of Athletics, and up to two additional members selected by the University Athletics Committee. Selection of mentors will be upon the advice and consent of individual coaches and the University Athletics Committee.

III. Criteria for Mentor Selection
   a. Mentors must be members of the WKU faculty.
   b. At least one mentor for each team should be of the same gender of the team.
   c. To meet the needs of the student-athletes, a diverse pool of mentors should be recruited. Diversity of mentors is a goal for the Program.
d. Mentors will serve one-year terms. Mentors must be reappointed on an annual basis. In most cases mentors will be limited to serving two consecutive one-year terms per sport. For the first cycle, one mentor for each sport will be allowed to serve up to three terms.