

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 282 171

CG 019 939

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 TITLE A Study Skills Program for Student-Athletes.
 PUB DATE Apr 87
 NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association for Counseling and Development (New Orleans, LA April, 21-25, 1987).
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Athletes; *College Students; Counseling Services; Educational Diagnosis; Higher Education; *High Risk Students; *Program Effectiveness; Skill Development; Student Adjustment; Student Needs; *Study Skills

ABSTRACT

The University of Toledo's Athletes Educational Planning Program is a program designed to assist incoming freshmen male and female athletes in adjusting to the academic rigors of college. An initial assessment of 136 freshmen athletes was conducted in the 1983-84 school year and students were classified by risk level. High and moderate risk students met with Counseling Center personnel weekly to learn study skills and academic survival techniques. A preliminary assessment of the program suggests that: (1) risk level of student athletes can be accurately predicted; (2) moderate-risk students can be helped academically by such a program; and (3) high-risk students may need more specialized educational services than those provided by the program. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the study skills program be continued, that academic high-risk students be compared to other student populations, that the study skills program be developed and improved, that the Athletic Department provide staffing and an educational program for student athletes, and that needed services be identified and provided for all students. (NB)

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A STUDY SKILLS PROGRAM FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

by

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and

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A paper presented at the 1987 American Association
for Counseling and Development Annual Convention.
New Orleans, Louisiana. April 21-25, 1987

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PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the program was to describe the development of a specialized study skills and educational planning program for student-athletes at The University of Toledo. The following areas were discussed:

- the history and conceptualization of the program.
- the organization and curriculum of a specialized study skills and educational planning program---the Athletes Educational Planning Program.
- how to develop detailed academic profiles from national test scores and high school academic achievement records.
- the assessment of student-athletes potential academic performance.
- the selection and training of small group leaders.
- a data and record keeping system.
- methods of communication with faculty, coaches, advisors, group leaders, and student-athletes.
- mechanisms for feedback procedures.
- on-going and longitudinal program evaluation.

Implications for future programming for student-athletes was presented along with a discussion of the potential initiation of similar programs for other institutions. Also, program participants were invited to discuss such topics as: funding, leader-development, predicting academic success, and athletic department - academic relationships.

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 1982, the Counseling Center at The University of Toledo targeted its traditional study skills program toward a specific University minority population. The Athletes Educational Planning Program (AEPP) was originally designed to assist incoming Freshmen male and female student-athletes to adjust and to adapt to the academic rigors required of a college environment. After two years of operation, evaluation indicated that a traditional study skills program was not adequately addressing the needs of the target population. In order to address the needs of the target population, additional program components, methods of service delivery, and evaluation techniques were employed in order to enhance the retention, eligibility, and academic performance of the student-athlete enrolled at The University of Toledo.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Athletes Educational Planning Program for the 1983-84 academic year began with an initial assessment of 136 freshmen male

and female athletes from sixteen sports. The following criteria were examined: The American College Testing Program (ACT) individual and composite scores; the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) individual and combined scores; 12 high school preparatory courses (H.S.C.); high school grade point average (HSGPA); college enrolled; and major area of study (see DATA FORM in Appendix A). Based on a composite of this information, students were placed in one of three categories: High Risk (-), Low Risk (+), Moderate Risk or Questionable (?). High and Moderate Risk students were placed into small groups led by Counseling Center staff and doctoral student interns. These groups met each week for one hour. During the groups, various study skills and academic survival techniques were presented (e.g., time management, concentration, note-taking, reading methods, and test-taking). During the course of the groups, student-athletes were referred, as needed, to various University resources such as tutoring, math labs, reading labs, writing labs, and remedial and developmental services and programs. Student progress was regularly monitored. Weekly reports on attendance were forwarded to each coach with a copy to the Assistant Athletic Director. Recommendations were made at the end of the Fall Quarter regarding the student-athletes that should continue to participate in the program during the Winter Quarter.

ASSESSMENT

To determine if there were student-athletes who were academic underachievers an assessment tool was developed (see Appendix A). The names of all incoming freshmen male and female student-athletes, including non-scholarship athletes, were obtained from the University Athletic Department. Relevant academic data to complete the assessment tool was obtained from the Admissions Office for each student-athlete. Also, any background information that was deemed pertinent to the student-athletes' academic performance was included.

All variables used to assess potential academic performance are important. Certain variables, however may be more important or better predictors of academic achievement. For example.

- high English national test scores usually means the work is capable of being achieved, regardless of low scores in the social and natural sciences, and previous high school grades.
- the completion of one or two years of a foreign language. Foreign language generally requires a great deal of high school homework. Homework relates to study habits.
- the completion of a high school typing class. Student-athletes who took high school typing usually performs well at the college level. Reasons unknown - may be the persistence and the practice which is necessary to learn the skill.

- major area of study and college enrolled. For example, athletes with very few high school math courses and low math national test scores will probably do poorly in mechanical (major area of study) engineering (college enrolled):

Once all the student-athletes had been assessed and placed in one of the categories that was mentioned hereinbefore, they were then randomly assigned to one of several small (8-15) groups.

GROUPS - INDIVIDUAL

Student-athletes met in their assigned groups each week throughout the quarter. The groups generally assembled in the evening for about one hour on different days of the week. During the sessions, student-athletes received the program's instruction along with discussing relevant issues and topics which they raised. In most instances, the groups were co-facilitated with at least one leader experienced in working with this particular population. Inexperienced group leaders were paired with experienced leaders. During the quarter, each student-athlete was scheduled to meet individually with the program coordinator.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

A more lengthy longitudinal study will be required to assess the full impact of the study skills program on the participants but based on the analysis of the present data the following statements can be made:

1. The accurate prediction of high risk and low risk student-athletes can be made.
2. Moderate risk students appear to be helped academically by their attendance in the groups. At least a trend seems to be evident.
3. Statistically speaking, a statement cannot be made that the study skills program has helped the highest risk student-athletes to improve their GPA's at this time.
4. It is too early to assess the full impact of the group approach on the student-athlete academic performance. However, self-report is favorable.
5. The highest risk group probably has greater educational needs than the study skills program can meet. These student-athletes should be provided access to other specialized educational services.
6. Not one of the non-attending high risk football players achieved a 2.0 GPA in 12 credit hours earned or better.
7. High risk and moderate risk student-athletes were extremely incoherent regarding various academic matters at the University; especially the areas of: 1) academic advising; 2) course selection; 3) educational preparation; 4) study techniques; and 5) career goals.
8. Between 40 and 50 percent of all moderate and high risk student-athletes stopped attending the study skills program in both the Fall and Winter Quarters.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the study skills programs be continued through this year so that a comparison of the two year data (one year for each group) can be made.
2. That further study be conducted in the comparison of academic high risk groups to other traditional university student populations. The purpose of the study would be to attempt to identify common causes for student-athletes high risk status.
3. That development of the study skills program be continued in order to find more effective methodologies of providing high and moderate risk groups time and environmental management, academic survival skills, and career exploration and development.
4. That the Athletic Department provide staffing and an educational program for their student-athletes. The program should include academic assessment; study skill training; referral to appropriate remedial programs; in-depth follow-up of each freshman class; referral to appropriate academic advising; and career counseling systems.
5. That the specialized academic support of student-athletes be considered a small part of a larger problem; namely the identification, remediation, and retention of high and moderate risk students at The University of Toledo.
6. That the need for:
 - a) more extensive academic advising,

- b) comprehensive remedial education programs,
- c) in-depth orientation to academic life, and
- d) systematic career planning

be considered an important facet in the retention of all students at The University of Toledo.

DATA FORM

Name:

College:

Sport:

Major:

Social Security:

H.S. GPA

College GPA as of

ACT

SAT

EN	MA	SS	NS	CP

V	M

APPENDIX A

College GPA

F '83	W '84	Sp '84	Accum. 83-84

HIGH SCHOOL-COLLEGE PREP COURSES

AG1	AG2	GEO	TRG	AVM	CHM	A/P	PHY	LG1	LG2