

Executive Summary
of
The University at Buffalo Self-Study Report
on NCAA Certification
June 15, 2002



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Executive Summary

Introduction

The University at Buffalo's self-study was conducted as a part of UB's participation in the NCAA certification process, our second cycle of certification. This study has been a year-long, university-wide process intended to benefit the many diverse communities we serve.

As a part of UB's commitment to integrity in intercollegiate athletics, this self-study opens the affairs of athletics to our university community and to the public at large, while demonstrating our continuing commitment to NCAA standards for the operation of a Division I athletics program.

These standards cover four areas: governance and commitment to rules compliance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and equity welfare and sportsmanship. Examination of each of these areas in the self-study affords UB the unique opportunity to address the many ways in which our athletics community is outstanding, while offering a forum for suggestions for continued improvement from a wide section of the university community.

Overview

Over the past year, the Steering Committee for NCAA certification and each of its four subcommittees have collected data from the campus community regarding aspects of the athletics program in each of the four areas of the standards for certification, in accordance with the authorization granted them specifically and solely for this process by UB President William R. Greiner. Members of both the Steering and the four subcommittees came from all university community constituencies; the four subcommittees appointed were the Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee, the Academic Integrity Subcommittee, the Fiscal Integrity Subcommittee, and the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship Subcommittee. In brief, the job of each of these subcommittees was to examine its area with respect to the NCAA operating principles, to reach consensus among the members on the issue of conformity, and to recommend plans for improvement. The Steering Committee met frequently to hear subcommittee reports, provide guidance, and serve as liaison-point between each subcommittee.

In general, the self-study confirmed our belief in the excellence and integrity of our athletics program. Each of the subcommittees determined that UB was in substantial conformity with NCAA operating principles, and identified a few areas where continued improvement could be made. Specific plans for improvement have been written for each of these areas. The operating principles, major findings, and plans for improvement for each of the four subject areas are summarized below.

Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

Previous Certification Self-Study

There were no “corrective actions,” “conditions for certification,” or “strategies for improvement” related to the governance and commitment to rules compliance area during the first cycle certification.

Upon examination of the status of the plans for improvement developed during the first-cycle certification, the Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee concluded that the six recommendations made during the first cycle certification were addressed appropriately. These recommendations concluded:

- that the Intercollegiate Athletics Board (IAB) meet monthly;
- that the finance committee of the IAB be established;
- that a designated seat should be added for the Faculty senate on the IAB;
- that the IAB should be involved proactively in policy and budgetary matters related to intercollegiate athletics;
- that the membership of the IAB should include more women faculty and staff; and
- that the Director of Compliance should be provided with additional help.

NCAA Operating Principles

The NCAA operating principles in this area speak to the extent that the athletics program is an integral part of the institution through: (1) the fundamental nature of the mission statement and the extent to which actual practice in athletics is tied to both the athletics mission statement and the mission of the institution as a whole; (2) demonstration of responsibility and control of athletics, with chief responsibility resting with the President; and (3) demonstration of compliance accountability and commitment to ongoing education and personnel management. The subcommittee deemed the Division of Athletics to be in substantial conformity with all of these elements.

Plans for Improvement

While the Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee deemed the University at Buffalo to be in substantial conformity with all elements of the NCAA operating principles, they did make four recommendations for continued improvement. These recommendations were:

- to ensure that student-athletes are aware of the mission of the Division of Athletics;

- to establish a standing subcommittee of the IAB to serve as an oversight body for institutional rules, compliance policies and standards;
- to raise the level of awareness in the Blue & White club and its Board of Directors regarding NCAA rules and to increase the communications regarding NCAA rules; and
- to formalize the involvement of the Office of Internal Audit in the annual review of the compliance program per NCAA bylaw 22.2.1.3(a).

For more detailed information regarding the NCAA's operating principles, the University at Buffalo's previous certification self-study, the present self-study, or plans for improvement, please see the Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance section of the University at Buffalo's self-study report on NCAA certification.

Academic Integrity

Previous Certification Self-Study

There were no "corrective actions," "conditions for certification," or "strategies for improvement" related to the academic integrity area during the first cycle certification. However, the NCAA raised two potential concerns regarding the ratio of student-athletes to academic advisors in light of the changing General Education requirements and the existing upper limit of 100 for special admission students. In the view of the Academic Integrity Subcommittee, both of these concerns have been addressed: the number of special admissions is considerably below the 100 student limit and will likely stay well below this limit, and the growth in the Office of Athlete Academic Services and facilitated access to degree progress information and registration through the university registration systems: the Degree Audit Reporting System (D.A.R.S), the Billing, Inquiry, Registration, and Drop/Add (B.I.R.D) system, and the Student Online Access to Records (S.O.A.R) system have positively affected the student-athlete population.

Upon examination of the status of plans for improvement developed during the first-cycle certification, the Academic Integrity Subcommittee concluded that the recommendation made during the first cycle certification was addressed appropriately. This recommendation included that the availability of and use of study tables be evaluated and addressed. As a result of this recommendation, the use of study tables continues to be enhanced with the plans for a new academic center.

NCAA Operating Principles

The NCAA operating principles in this area speak to maintaining the integrity of the academic experience for student-athletes through: (1) establishing the expectation that student-athletes' academic experience, qualifications and performance shall be the same or similar to those of students generally; (2) recognizing that student-athletes should be

free to choose their own academic paths with adequate support and oversight by regular institutional academic authorities; and (3) requiring established written policies to minimize missed class time due to participation in athletics. The subcommittee deemed the Division of Athletics to be in substantial conformity with all of these elements.

Plans for Improvement

While the Academic Integrity Subcommittee deemed the University at Buffalo to be in substantial conformity with all elements of the operating principles, they did make two recommendations for continued improvement. These recommendations were:

- Entrance scores of male athletes are lower than for non-athletes in general and therefore the use of special admission categories should be monitored. Additionally, since graduation rates are the measure of academic success, and since the graduation rates for athletes are higher than the general student body, this difference in entrance scores does not seem to be a problem. Nonetheless, continued monitoring of entrance scores and graduation rates will allow the division to continue to follow this issue.
- The Office of Athlete Academic Services is currently responsible to the Associate Athletic Director for Compliance and Student Services. The University at Buffalo should review the current structure and consider placement of the Office of Athlete Academic Services within a unit that is consistent with other student advising offices.

For more detailed information regarding the NCAA's operating principles, the University at Buffalo's previous certification self-study, the present self-study, or plans for improvement, please see the Academic Integrity section of the University at Buffalo's self-study report on NCAA certification.

Fiscal Integrity

Previous Certification Self-Study

There were no "corrective actions," "conditions for certification," or "strategies for improvement" related to the fiscal integrity area during the first cycle certification.

Upon examination of the status of the plans for improvement developed during the first-cycle certification, the Fiscal Integrity Subcommittee concluded that the eight recommendations made are ongoing and will continue into the future. These recommendations concluded:

- that greater emphasis should be placed on revenue sources other than state allocation;

Executive Summary of
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- that a regular report should be made to the IAB regarding fiscal matters;
- that annual budget deficits should be eliminated;
- that a five year budget plan should be developed;
- that the IAB's Standing Orders on Budget should be followed to address annual budget deficits;
- that the IAB should continue its annual review of the budget and make its recommendation to the President;
- that the IAB's annual report to the President should assess compliance with related institution policies and budgetary process; and
- that campus awareness of institutional expenditure rules should be increased.

NCAA Operating Principles

The NCAA operating principles in this area focus on fiscal management and financial stability through: (1) establishing the expectation of sound financial practices that assure institutional oversight and budgetary approval; (2) focusing on fiscal stability to assure relatively full and stable opportunities for all student-athletes; (3) requiring institutional financial procedures to assure compliance with institutional, conference and NCAA rules, especially those relating to recruiting inducements and extra benefits. The subcommittee deemed the Division of Athletics to be in substantial conformity with all of these elements.

Plans for Improvement

While the Fiscal Integrity Subcommittee deemed the University at Buffalo to be in substantial conformity with all elements of the NCAA operating principles, they did make three recommendations for continued improvement. These recommendations were:

- to formalize the involvement of Internal Audit in the Division of Athletics' annual review of the rules compliance program per NCAA bylaw 22.2.1.3(a);
- to formalize a schedule of review to ensure that all internal Division of Athletics policies and procedures are current and up to date; and
- to establish the expectation that the Division of Athletics should ensure compliance with all areas of Title IX's eleven gender equity program areas.

For more detailed information regarding the NCAA's operating principles, the University at Buffalo's previous certification self-study, the present self-study, or plans for improvement, please see the Fiscal Integrity section of the University at Buffalo's self-study report on NCAA certification.

Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship

Previous Certification Self-Study

The NCAA's Committee on Athletics Certification (CAC) imposed the following equity and welfare related corrective conditions in its first cycle certification decision:

- that the University at Buffalo shall complete and submit to the CAC a comprehensive institutional plan for addressing gender equity in its Intercollegiate Athletics (IA) program;
- that the University at Buffalo shall complete and submit to the CAC a comprehensive institutional plan for addressing opportunities for traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups in its IA program.

After completing the plans and submitting them to the NCAA in June 1996, the CAC informed UB that it was certified on August 20, 1996.

Upon examination of the implementation of the plan to address gender equity issues, the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship Subcommittee concluded that over the last six years, UB has demonstrated an extremely strong commitment to fulfilling the objectives of the plan and, while a small number of issues still have to be addressed, in the view of the subcommittee, UB has made great progress in addressing the gender equity issues discussed during the first cycle certification process.

Upon examination of the implementation of the plan to address minority issues, the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship Subcommittee has concluded that UB has made very good progress. The subcommittee has deemed that UB has demonstrated an extremely high commitment to making measurable progress toward ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all student-athletes and athletics department personnel who are members of traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups.

Upon examination of the implementation of the plans to address student-athlete welfare, the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship Subcommittee concluded that the one recommendation related to student-athlete welfare made during the first cycle certification was addressed appropriately.

NCAA Operating Principles

The NCAA operating principles in this area focus on the principles of gender and minority equity, student-athlete welfare, and sportsmanship through: (1) establishing evidence of a commitment to the principle of gender equity; (2) establishing evidence of an institutional commitment to opportunities for traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups; (3) stressing the institution's responsibility to protect and enhance the physical and educational welfare of the student-athlete; and (4) outlining fundamental personal

values and conduct for athletics competition, requiring institutional efforts to instill and maintain those values through policies, educational programs and continuing oversight. The subcommittee deemed the Division of Athletics to be in substantial conformity with all of these elements.

Plans for Improvement

While the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship Subcommittee deemed the University at Buffalo to be in substantial conformity with all elements of the NCAA operating principles, they did make thirteen recommendations for continued improvement. These recommendations were:

- to continue to implement and to request the IAB to closely monitor the current long-range plan for increasing Grants-in-Aid (GIA) allocated to women's teams;
- to monitor the recruiting dollars for women's programs and to encourage the coaches of women's programs to more fully utilize resources provided;
- to evaluate staffing of women's programs to ensure it is equitable with men's programs;
- to build on the success of marketing women's basketball and apply it to other women's sports to increase awareness of the women's athletics program;
- to develop a more focused and consistent approach to identify and follow up with prospective multicultural students with an interest in intercollegiate athletics;
- to further develop activities and efforts to increase exposure of UB intercollegiate athletics programs to traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups;
- to develop recruitment activity that is specifically geared towards minority student-athletes;
- to aggressively increase efforts to increase the diversity of professional and coaching staff;
- to monitor the equitable application of "team travel guidelines" implemented in 2001 and to expand those guidelines to include hotel rooming numbers;
- to review operating budgets for men's and women's cross-country/track to ensure they more accurately reflect actual dollars spent in support of each individual team;
- to monitor and address the equitable application of class absence policy and to reduce instances of student-athlete issues with class absences; and
- to improve and extend the communication of information gathered in the annual Head Coach/Staff Evaluations surveys completed by student-athletes.

For more detailed information regarding the NCAA's operating principles, the University at Buffalo's previous certification self-study, the present self-study, or plans for

improvement, please see the Equity, Welfare and Sportsmanship section of the University at Buffalo's self-study report on NCAA certification.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Steering Committee and four subcommittees found that UB was in substantial conformity with all of the areas and operating principles established by the NCAA.

Overall, UB has demonstrated an extremely strong commitment to establishing an athletics program which not only strives for competitive excellence, but one which also continually strives for excellence in its governance, finances, academics, and commitment to the diversity and welfare of all of its student-athletes.

The specific plans for improvement developed by the Steering Committee and subcommittees will be a vital part of this continuing process of change, one which will be useful as we continue to refine an outstanding model of Division I athletics.

For more information, or to access the entire Self-Study Report, visit the UB Athletics website: www.ubathletics.buffalo.edu.