



News Release

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Academic Standard is High for Public University Athletes

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – According to the latest report on the performance of student athletes in South Dakota’s public university system, athletes perform as well or better than non-athletes in most areas.

The report, presented this week to the Board of Regents, covers the performance of three cohort groups of degree-seeking undergraduate students for 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06. “The athletes at the regental universities are performing at the same level or higher than other students,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. “I think it is a credit to our universities. They realize even though these students are tremendous athletes, their first priority is a quality education.”

The report shows that student athletes in all cohort groups consistently had a slightly higher grade point average than non-athletes. Student athletes average a 2.78 grade point average, compared to a 2.65 GPA for non-athletes.

Student athletes are also more likely to stay in school and graduate than non-athletes. For the 2004-05 cohort, 78.2 percent of athletes either graduated or were retained into their second year when compared to non-athletes 71.2 percent. In all three cohorts, athletes took a heavier credit load than non-athletes.

New to the report was the tracking of student athletes who receive the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship. The South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship is a \$5,000 scholarship awarded over four years to high school graduates from South Dakota who complete a challenging high school curriculum and maintain certain academic standards. For the past two years, a higher percentage of athletes were SDOS recipients than non-athletes.

The report also found no significant difference in athletes’ academic performance when the type of sport was taken into consideration.