



News Release

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Report: Student Athletes Perform Well at Public Universities

VERMILLION, S.D. – Student athletes in the South Dakota public university system generally do as well academically as their non-athlete counterparts, according to the latest report from the Board of Regents. On some indicators, athletes outperform the rest of the student population, the report said.

The report examined indicators such as performance on the ACT, grade point averages, credit hours completed, and graduation and retention rates. “When compared across all seven indicators, athletes and non-athletes perform at similar levels across the system,” said Paul Turman, associate vice president of academic affairs for the regents and author of the report.

One area where athletes tend to do better is on overall grade point averages. The report shows athletes first entering college in 2008-09 averaged a higher GPA of 2.77 compared to 2.61 for non-athletes. “Grade point averages continue to remain slightly higher for athletes across the system, and athlete and non-athlete GPA continues to improve for each cohort,” Turman said.

Athletes also tend to do better on measures of academic performance in one particular subject area: mathematics. They generally outperformed non-athletes on the ACT math sub-test (scoring an average 22.4 compared to non-athletes’ 21.8), and also scored slightly higher on the mathematics section of a proficiency exam required of all students at the end of their sophomore year. Student athletes scored slightly lower than non-athletes on the ACT English sub-test and in reading, science reasoning, and writing portions of the proficiency exam.

In the most recent cohort studied, athletes averaged a higher number of credit hours taken each term (13.7) than non-athletes (12.6), and a higher percentage of those athletes either graduated or were retained into their second year when compared to non-athletes (84.5 percent, compared to 77.9 percent).

“It is important to continually monitor the academic preparation and performance of our student athletes to ensure that academic quality is maintained as a central mission for the public universities,” said Regents President Terry Baloun. “When considering the frequent reports of lower graduation rates of student athletes at some institutions throughout the country, it is reassuring to know that student athletes, coaches, and athletic directors continue to place academics at a premium. They should all be congratulated for their efforts,” Baloun said.

The report is available online at <http://www.sdbor.edu/board/items/documents/FULLBOR0510H.pdf>