

Public Abstract

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The Evolution of Academic Support Services for Student-Athletes at the
University of Missouri

ABSTRACT

Athletics has been a heavily scrutinized aspect of university life. It is often criticized for its nature of exploiting students for their athletic talents and overlooking the importance of the educational mission of the institution. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has responded, as the governing body of intercollegiate athletics, by instituting academic reform legislation designed to ensure that incoming student-athletes are not only prepared for the rigors of college but must meet academic benchmarks to maintain their athletic eligibility.

One response to the needs of these students has been the mandatory implementation of academic support services for student-athletes. These programs are relatively new in the past few decades, but have grown to be a significant factor in recruitment and value in helping student-athletes be successful in their academic endeavors. This study looks at the evolutionary development of one such program, the Total Person Program at the University of Missouri, how it has evolved into a successful program for student-athlete academic success. This historical study is a descriptive look at the past forty years, and how the program was implemented and developed. Through documents, interviews and data, this study creates a timeline during which the Total Person Program grew through increases in financial and human resources with a collaborative effort from campus and athletics, utilizing student-athlete Grade Point Averages (GPA) as a benchmark for success.