Gender/Diversity Issues and Student-Athlete Well-Being

Operating Principle

3.3. Student-Athlete Well-Being.

Conducting the intercollegiate athletics program in a manner designed to protect and enhance the physical and educational well-being of student-athletes is a basic principle of the Association. Consistent with this fundamental principle, the institution shall:

a. Provide evidence that the well-being of student-athletes and the fairness of their treatment is monitored, evaluated and addressed on a continuing basis.

b. Have established grievance or appeal procedures available to student-athletes in appropriate areas.

c. Provide evidence that the institution has in place programs that protect the health of and provide a safe environment for each of its student-athletes.

Self-Study Items

1. List all “conditions for certification” imposed by the Committee on Athletics Certification in its second-cycle certification decision (if any) as they relate to Operating Principle 3.3 (Student-Athlete Well-Being). In each case, provide:
   a. The original “condition” imposed;
   b. The action(s) taken by the institution;
   c. The date(s) of the action(s); and
   d. An explanation for any partial or non-completion of such required actions.

   Please note, the Institution is not required to respond to opportunities for enhancement developed by the peer-review team unless those same items were adopted by the Committee on Athletics Certification.

   There were no conditions for certification or corrective actions imposed by the Committee on Athletics Certification during the second-cycle self-study process.

2. List all actions the institution has completed or progress it has made regarding all plans for improvement/recommendations developed by the institution during its second-cycle certification process as they relate to Operating Principle 3.3 (Student-Athlete Well-Being). In each case, provide:
   a. The original plan;
   b. The action(s) taken by the institution;
   c. The date(s) of the actions; and
   d. An explanation for any partial or non-completion of such plans.

   Please note, the institution will not be required to fulfill an element of a second-cycle plan if the element does not affect conformity with a current operating principle.

   a. The original plan, developed during the second-cycle self study related to the former Operating Standard 4 (Equity, Diversity, Student-Athlete Well-Being, and Sportsmanship) recommended a collaboration with the University Health Center or University Counseling Services to bring programming on prevention of violence, abuse or harassment to student-athletes on an annual basis.
b. The updated plan, which adds a column reporting on the status of the completed work, will be available to the review team. It shows the actions taken and the corresponding dates. The plan update reports material on abuse, violence and harassment has been incorporated into the SDVE 1113/CHAMPS/Life Skills curriculum, and is addressed in the institution’s Student Rights and Responsibilities document printed annually in the student newspaper and online.

c. The plan prescribes annual inclusion of course materials/programming on abuse, violence and harassment.

d. SDVE 1113/Life Skills curriculum specifically addresses violence and abuse and less specifically harassment, but the course is only taken by some first semester student athletes so most of the cohort does not have the benefit of such programming on an annual basis. The committee believes the original recommendation to collaborate with UHC or UCS for an annual program on violence, abuse or harassment remains a good recommendation. In addition, information on the subject and the URL of the Student Rights and Responsibilities document should be included in an updated version of the Student-Athlete Handbook. Both suggestions have been incorporated in the new plan for improvement.

3. Describe any additional plans for improvement/recommendations as they relate to Operating Principle 3.3 (Student-Athlete Well-Being) developed by the institution since the second-cycle certification decision was rendered by the Committee on Athletics Certification.

   While not a plan for improvement, in response to an issue raised by the second-cycle review team, then President James E. Halligan wrote to Dr. Paul Risser, Chair of the NCAA Division I Committee on Athletic Certification, on May 22, 2002. On the issue of Student-Athlete Well-Being (then Operating Principle 4.3) Dr. Halligan addressed the development of a supplementary statement titled, “Statement of Student-Athlete Appeals Procedures for Student-Athlete Handbook.”

   His letter indicated that the statement would be published in future editions of the Student-Athlete Handbook to provide written guidance to student athletes on how to appeal issues beyond transfer release and loss of financial aid, (i.e. problems with coaches or sexual harassment.)

   Although the statement may have been published in the Handbook at that time, neither the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, nor the 2008-2009 Student-Athlete Handbook contains the statement that appeared in that letter. Elements of the statement in regards to transferring to another institution, aid appeals, and drug testing appear in pages 12 – 28 but nothing on the issues particularly raised by the review team.

4. Please submit a copy of the student-athlete exit-interview instrument with the submission of your self-study report. [Please use the file upload link contained within this question on the ACS to submit a copy of your current student-athlete exit-interview instrument.]

   This document will be uploaded with the rest of the self-study report on or before May 1, 2009

5. Describe opportunities other than the student-athlete exit-interview process that are available to student-athletes to provide input regarding student-athlete well-being issues (e.g., student-athlete advisory committee, open-door policy of athletics administrators, including the director of athletics, senior woman administrator, and/or faculty athletics representative).

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)
The SAAC, comprised of two representatives from each team, meets bi-weekly during the spring and fall semesters. It serves in an advisory capacity to the athletic department both raising issues of concern to student-athletes and reviewing issues/policies from the department that impact student-athletes. The Senior Associate Athletic Director serves as the department’s liaison to the group, but other departmental administrators regularly attend meetings to answer questions and interact with student-athletes.

The second-cycle review team expressed concern that few minority athletes were involved in SAAC. The committee found within the past four years, the majority of those in attendance are female student-athletes particularly from the women’s soccer team and women’s track and field teams. There is also representation from men’s track and field and usually at least one male present. In 2007-2008, two of the four elected officers were minority students. SAAC officers have attended coaches’ meetings—particularly baseball and softball—to report to them that their student-athletes are not represented on SAAC. More teams were represented in 2008-2009 but few male athletes participate.

**Athletic Council**

Each year an active member of SAAC is selected by the Director of ASSA to represent student-athletes at the monthly meetings of the OSU Athletic Council. The student-athlete representative serves as one of two student representatives on the Council assigned to the Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being Committee to provide input on issues affecting student-athlete well-being and review key indicators and plans for improvement in order to report back to SAAC.

**Faculty Athletics Representative**

According to the job description for the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) approved on October 5, 2000, the FAR shall “act as a liaison between the faculty and general University administration and the Athletics Department regarding athletics matters, especially in regard to issues of academic progress and student-athlete welfare.” Since her appointment in 2007, the FAR has attended the fall orientation meeting with the student-athletes and is introduced. In addition, she periodically attends SAAC meetings and has attended a meeting of the football team prior to their summer vacation. During the spring 2009 semester the FAR began attending practices of some sports so that student-athletes would know who she is and feel comfortable in approaching her in situations where it would appropriate for them to ask for her help.

**Open Door Policy**

Administrators are encouraged to respect the time management challenges already facing student-athletes, all are invited to visit administrators including the AD, SWA and other Associate AD’s, as well as sport administrators, at any time via an open door policy. Administrators often attend team meetings so that student-athletes can associate faces with the names and contact information appearing in the Student-Athlete Handbook. The Open Door Policy is also covered in compliance briefings with all student-athletes at the beginning of each school year but the committee believes information including names of administrators should be in the Student-Athlete Handbook.

To further facilitate open communication between athletics administration and student-athletes, administrators travel with teams approximately two to three times per year. For example, AD Mike Holder travels to all away football games and some men’s basketball games; SWA Amy Weeks travels with the soccer, women’s basketball and softball teams to all post-season competitions and occasionally travels with women’s track and field; the compliance staff rotates with the men’s and women’s basketball teams as they advance in the NCAA tournament to help monitor compliance issues.

**General**

The institution’s Division of Student Affairs has a “student concerns database” where questions and concerns may be brought forward by any student including athletes. The database has been a viable outlet for students wanting to register concerns anonymously. Adding information about the database to the Student-Athlete Handbook including the URL would make more student-athletes aware of this option.

In addition, the university has contracted with an off-site software program called Ethics Point® to provide a way for faculty, staff and students to anonymously report concerns, abuse or misconduct on issues of:

- Finance
- Research
- Human Resources
- Athletics
- Risk and Safety Matters
- Medical issues
- Academics or Student Affairs
Other issues
The site may be accessed through the university’s website or through an 800-number. Anyone using the program is electronically assigned a private password so that they may check back in 72 hours for an update without leaving a name or contact information. On the Ethics Point® homepage, the program is described as: “a reporting tool that assists the University community in working together to address fraud, abuse, misconduct, and other violations, while helping to cultivate a positive environment. The system, built to protect the identity of the reporter, provides a formal mechanism for investigation, follow-up and response.” Again, the committee found it would be helpful for student athletes to find this information in the Student-Athlete Handbook.

6. Describe the athletics department’s written grievance and/or appeals procedures available to student-athletes in areas mandated by NCAA legislation (i.e., financial aid and transfers). Also, provide the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) responsible for overseeing the administration of these grievance and/or appeals procedures. Describe the means by which these grievance and/or appeals procedures are communicated in writing to student-athletes and athletics department staff members.

The Athletic Department’s written grievance procedure for financial aid and transfers is found in the Student-Athlete Handbook (SAH). Every student-athlete and every Athletic Department staff member receives an updated copy of the handbook annually during required fall athletics orientation meetings. Newly arrived athletes in the spring semester receive a copy upon arrival.

Loss of Financial Aid
In the 2008-2009 version, financial aid is addressed in a section entitled, “Appealing the Loss or Reduction of an Athletic Scholarship” (p. 19). The statement includes:

- information about key deadlines,
- describes how the appeal is to be made and to whom,
- who will assist the student-athlete with needed documentation, and
- who will hear the appeal.

Transfers
The written grievance procedure for transfers is found under “Transferring (NCAA Bylaw 13.1.1.3)” (p. 12). Because the decision to release a student-athlete to transfer or to grant permission for another institution to make contact lies solely with the head coach, student-athletes are advised to visit with the Compliance Office to learn more about the procedure and available options or to appeal a negative decision by the head coach.

For both financial aid and transfer grievances the information provided appears adequate. The committee observed that there is no table of contents to lead a student-athlete to either procedure, and providing this basic navigational tool for the handbook is recommended.

In addition to the written information provided in the handbook, the appeals process for financial aid and transfers is reviewed verbally during the annual required compliance orientation meeting held in August. Scott Williams, Associate Athletic Director for Compliance, is charged with oversight of the grievance and appeals process. He is assisted by the Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance, the Eligibility and Education Coordinator, the Coordinator-Athletic Financial Aid, and the Compliance Monitoring Coordinator.

The institution’s Senior Director of Financial Aid, Dr. Charles Bruce, administers all student financial aid, and the appeals process for non-renewal of an athletic grant-in-aid is handled by the OSU Office of Financial Assistance in accordance with NCAA Bylaw 15.3.5.1.

Currently, oversight for the appeals process for suspension or dismissal from a team is handled by the Faculty Athletics Representative, Dr. Meredith Hamilton, who appoints a committee of no less than three members to hear a case. In order to come into alignment with the process in place at most Big 12 universities, the committee recommends the stand-alone improvement plan for student-athlete well-being include an item re-assigning the appeals process for dismissal from a team to the AD or sport administrator.
7. Describe the institution’s written grievance and/or appeals procedures available to student-athletes in other areas (e.g., harassment, hazing, abusive behavior, discrimination). Also, provide the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) responsible for overseeing the administration of these grievance and/or appeals procedures. Describe the means by which these grievance and/or appeals procedures are communicated in writing to student-athletes and athletics department staff members.

The grievance and appeals procedures available to student-athletes in areas other than loss of financial aid or transfer are the same procedures available to all OSU students.

**Academics**

Appeals related to academics are addressed in OSU Policy and Procedures Letter 2-0821 “Appeal of Final Grade not Involving Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity.” Appeals related to academics are handled through the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Gail Gates, who oversees the faculty committees which hear the appeals.

**Abuse, Harassment, Hazing, etc**

Expectations and appeals procedures related to harassment, hazing, abusive behavior and discrimination are found in the **Students Rights and Responsibilities** which is printed each fall in the campus newspaper, is available online and since 2008 has been printed as a brochure. Bundles of the brochures are delivered to residence halls for distribution to all students, including student-athletes. ASSA also receives brochures and distributes them to student-athletes. Disciplinary hearings are handled by the student conduct officer: Dr. Tawny Taylor. Appeals of decisions related to violations are handled through the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Lee Bird.

**General**

The institution also contracts with confidential software program called Ethics Point® to allow faculty, staff and students to make anonymous reports concerning fraud, abuse, policy violations and misconduct. An electronically assigned password allows whistleblowers to log-in 72 hours later for follow-up information without ever leaving a name or contact information. Ethics Point® is fully discussed in Question 5. Student-athletes might expect to find information on these sorts of appeals in the Student-Athlete Handbook; however, as noted in Question 3 above, the review team from the second-cycle noted a need for such statements and a letter from the then president indicated they would be added. The committee reviewed the 2008-2009 version and did not find them. In addition, as previously noted, lack of a table of contents makes it difficult for student-athletes to find the statements that do exist on financial aid and transfers. This issue will be addressed in the stand-alone plan for improvement. Appeal procedures for academics and student rights issues are generally covered in college-based orientation courses as well as in SDVE 1113/Life Skills in which many new student-athletes enroll.

8. Describe the institution’s educational and support programs in the area of sexual orientation. Also, describe the institution’s structure and/or policies that ensure the provision of a safe environment for all students, including student-athletes with diverse sexual orientations.

The institution’s **Policy and Procedure 1-0101 on Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action** last modified in April 2004 states it is the policy of the institution:

"to provide equal employment and/or educational opportunity on the basis of merit and without discrimination because of age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, religion, national origin, **sexual orientation**, veterans' status, or qualified disability."

Note: the words “sexual orientation” were added in the last modification.

In addition, the policy states the institution’s commitment to students:

"to provide and to promote equal educational opportunity to students in all phases of the academic program and in all phases of the student life program; and shall consistently and aggressively monitor these areas to ensure that any differences which may exist are the results of bona fide factors other than age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, veterans' status, or qualified disability”

Institutional programs concerning sexual orientation exist under the Division of Student Affairs as well as the Division of Institutional Diversity:
Safe Zone:
An educational program open to the entire OSU community, Safe Zone identifies individuals who consider themselves to be open to and knowledgeable about, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer (GLBTQ) issues. Members who attend a required three hour workshop display a Safe Zone symbol to demonstrate their acceptance of GLBTQ individuals. Participation is purely voluntary and membership is free. Safe Zone members serve as a resource to students and others with questions regarding sexual orientation. Safe Zone is supported by the Student Counseling Center, Institutional Diversity Office and Division of Student Affairs. More information on Safe Zone can be found at: http://icae.okstate.edu/safezone.html.

SODA:
OSU’s Sexual Orientation Diversity Association (SODA) is an on-campus, student-run organization. This support program:
• promotes the interests of the GLBTQ community at the institution,
• serves as a venue for social interaction and support within the local GLBTQ community and its allies, and
• advocates tolerance and respect for everyone at the institution and in the community.

Student Rights and Responsibilities:
The Student Conduct Office includes literature in the Student Code of Conduct, incorporated into Student Rights and Responsibilities Governing Student Behavior, prohibiting discrimination of any type, including sexual diversity. The OSU Student Code of Conduct applies to conduct that occurs:
• on university premises,
• at university sponsored activities, and
• in off-campus settings that adversely affects the Oklahoma State University community and/or the pursuit of its objectives.

And in the athletics department:
SDVE 1113/CHAMPS/Life Skills
Student-athletes enrolled in SDVE 1113/CHAMPS/Life Skills address the issue of sexual orientation during the week that they focus on diversity. According to Sally Randolph, CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinator, approximately one hour is devoted to this topic. In the past Ms. Randolph has worked with members of SODA and she has also developed her own activities/discussions. Course content is intended to:
• provide students with information and resources regarding sexual orientation and
• help identify places where students may feel safe discussing their sexual orientation.

Again, materials in SDVE 1113/Life Skills are available only to the subset (about 75%) of new student-athletes enrolled in the course each fall and beginning in 2009, each spring. It would be helpful to all student-athletes if the resources regarding sexual orientation were referenced in the Student-Athlete Handbook, and the committee recommends this be included in the stand-alone plan on well-being. In addition, Policy 1-0101 makes strong statements regarding the institution’s commitment to equal educational opportunity and should be referenced in the handbook.

9. Using the seven program areas for student-athlete well-being issues, provided as Attachment No. 4 on page 60:
   a. Describe how the institution has ensured a complete study of each of the seven program areas for student-athlete well-being. This study must be conducted as part of the self-study process;
   b. Provide data demonstrating the institution’s commitment and current efforts across each of the seven areas for all student-athletes;
   c. Using the data provided in (b) above, analyze and explain how the institution is meeting the needs of its student-athletes; and
If the institution identifies any deficiency (ies) related to a student-athlete well-being program area, explain how the institution’s written, stand-alone plan for student-athlete well-being addresses the deficiency(ies).

1. **Organization and Structure**

   a. The committee gathered information from the following individuals, units and organizations that have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring the well-being of student-athletes at the institution: Academic Services for Student-Athletes, University Counseling Services, Athletic Training, the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC), the Faculty Athletics Representative and the Athletic Council. The minutes of SAAC and Athletic Council and annual exit interview documents were reviewed. In addition, members of the SAAC and the current SAAC representative to the Athletic Council were interviewed as was the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Lee Bird.

   b. The job description of the institution’s Faculty Athletics Representative assigns that individual specific responsibility for monitoring student-athlete well-being as a key liaison between the faculty, the athletic department and the administration.

   Within the athletic department, Academic Services for Student-Athletes, located in the Joe and Connie Mitchell Academic Enhancement Center, is organized to provide services which promote the well-being of student-athletes including:
   - Academic counseling
   - Life skills support
   - Personal counseling
   - Career counseling
   - Individual Facilitating/ Mentoring
   - Tutoring
   - Learning Disability Assessment and Support
   - Award and Recognition support

   Sport counselors assigned to each team also monitor and direct individual student-athletes to services that support well-being.

   The administration of the athletic department is organized to spread responsibility for specific teams to the AD and Associate AD’s as follows to monitor and insure student-athlete well-being:
   - AD -- women’s basketball, men’s and women’s golf
   - Sr. Associate AD – equestrian, soccer, football, wrestling, men’s basketball, men’s track and field/ cc
   - Sr. Woman Administrator (SWA) – softball, women’s track and field/ cc
   - Associate AD for Business Operations – men’s and women’s tennis

   The Student-Athlete Advisory Council serves in an advisory capacity to the department on issues of student-athlete well-being – both raising issues and reviewing issues brought to the council by the administration.

   The Athletic Council, through its Committee on Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being, monitors data and plans for improvement regarding well-being and submits an annual report and recommendations to the President.

   Finally, an annual exit interview questionnaire is administered each spring to departing student-athletes in order to assess their experiences over a variety of measures including well-being.

   c. ASSA, and its home in the donor-funded Academic Enhancement Center, is a spacious and well-equipped facility that makes a significant statement regarding the institution’s commitment to student-athlete well-being. Services and the staff there receive some of the highest ratings in student-athlete exit surveys. Increased graduation rates and conference leadership in All-Academic selections are two measures of the success of this unit. ASSA itself is evaluated every four years by a team of academic professionals appointed by the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
ASSA works closely with the University Counseling Services and University Academic Services, as well as other campus and community resources to augment its services for student-athletes.

The athletic medical and athletic training staff offer additional programs related to health and safety. The OSU Athletic Training Handbook addresses a full range of issues pertaining to student-athletes’ emotional and physical well-being. Although the Handbook is more fully discussed in item 7 of this question, it is worth noting that the Handbook provides information on University Counseling Services (UCS) and gives examples about when it is appropriate for staff to refer student-athletes to UCS. It also identifies symptoms of eating disorders, human resources within the Athletic Department and the University who can be of assistance in managing eating disorders, and describes appropriate roles for coaches, teammates, and athletics training staff in dealing with student-athletes with eating disorders. As complete as the Handbook is, there is no information that guides medical and training staff or others in addressing sports nutrition or in working with student-athletes who become pregnant or become parents.

The SAAC executive board has the stated objective to ensure the overall development and well-being of all student-athletes in the area of academics, athletics, and community involvement.

The Athletic Council by-laws were revised in January of 2009 to codify the annual review and report to the President on all NCAA plans for improvement including the stand-alone plan on well-being.

d. In general, the committee found no deficiencies in this area with two exceptions: responses to the exit survey identified a need for more and better information and education regarding sports nutrition and an interview with the current SAAC representative to Athletic Council revealed the absence of information on support for student-athletes who become pregnant or a parent. These issues should be addressed in the stand-alone plan as an addition to the Training Handbook and a statement on pregnancy/parenting issues should be added to the Student-Athlete Handbook.

2. Participation in governance and decision making

a. Information for this section was obtained through a review of SAAC officers for the last three years, interviewing current and former SAAC officers as well as the current SAAC representative to the OSU Athletic Council, and interviewing the Senior Associate Athletic Director and the Senior Woman Administrator.

b. SAAC meets biweekly (the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 6:00 p.m., August-November and January-April). Members of SAAC consist of two representatives from each team. From this group a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are elected. The meetings are fairly well attended and representatives tend to be present consistently when their sport is not in season. The majority of representatives believe that it is an honor to represent their team on SAAC. From the active members of SAAC, the Director of ASSA selects a student-athlete representative to the OSU Athletic Council as well as a male and female representative to the Big 12 SAAC.

c. In addition to the student representatives, three staff advisers serve the SAAC: the Senior Associate Athletic Director, the Senior Woman Administrator, and the Coordinator of the Academic Enhancement Center. The role of the staff advisers is to help find constructive solutions to issues brought forward at meetings and to communicate student-athlete concerns to the appropriate Athletics Department and other campus staff.

SAAC addresses issues that impact student-athletes. Examples of issues recently discussed include parking at practice facilities, seating at athletic events for student-athletes, and the provision of vending machines in the Academic Enhancement Center.

d. While no deficiencies were identified, the committee recommends minutes of SAAC meetings be maintained in the offices of the AD and the Associate AD for Academic Affairs to assist in future reviews of student-athlete well-being.
3. Student-athlete exit interviews

a. Members of the subcommittee reviewed and analyzed the student-athlete exit interview survey instrument and data from the 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 academic years as well as reviewing highlight data from the previous version of the survey covering the years 2003-2005.

b. Prior to the 2005-2006 academic year, student-athlete exit interviews were distributed in hard copy by the SWA to female student-athletes with expiring eligibility in order to evaluate issues and areas related to their experience as student-athletes. Approximately 63% of departing female student-athletes completed and returned the exit survey in any given year.

Working with the Athletic Council:
- the survey was reworked so that questions were asked in a more unbiased way,
- the format was improved to make the survey easier to complete and analyze,
- the survey was converted to an online version,
- all graduating and eligibility-exhausted student-athletes were invited to participate.

Approximately 21 exiting athletes completed the survey in each of the last three years; of those approximately two-thirds are women athletes. The overall participation rate for the past three years has been 32.6%.

Completed surveys are reviewed by the Senior Associate Athletic Director, the Senior Woman Administrator, and the coaching staffs of the responding student-athletes. Since 2005, the administrative team meets to discuss significant notes or trends observed in the exit-interviews. They pay particular attention to comments in the open-ended questions (i.e., what changes would you suggest to improve your sport?) Any mention of rules violations or poor treatment of student-athletes receives immediate attention.

c. The current version of the exit survey examines student-athletes’ satisfaction with their experiences in four areas: recruiting, academics, athletics and student-athlete welfare. Respondents are asked to rate a series of statements on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being strongly agree)

Results reveal student-athlete are most satisfied with:
- recruiting (mean score 4.2)
- academics (mean score 4.18)
- athletics (mean score 3.99)
- student-athlete welfare (median score 3.86).

The highest level of agreement was with the following two statements: “To my knowledge, no coaches or members of the athletic administration or academic support staff participate in any academic dishonesty” (4.68) and “Members of the athletic administration were available to me when I needed them” (4.35).

The lowest level of agreement was with the following two statements: “OSU promoted and marketed my sport in a way to maximize our potential as a team” (2.97) and “I felt like I missed more than ten class days per semester due to competition or team travel” (2.77).

Note: The phrasing of the statement regarding missed classes makes it the only question in the survey in which a lower score indicates a positive outcome. Once the “inverse” score was removed from the student-athlete welfare section, the overall score in that category improved to 4.01.

The exit survey concludes with three open-ended questions regarding:
- the most valuable experience that participation in OSU athletics provided,
- changes that would improve the particular sport in which the athlete participated and
- changes that would improve the OSU Athletic Department in general.

For the most part, student-athletes who completed the survey indicated they received great value from participation in athletics. The following comments were representative:
- “To begin with it has taught me leadership qualities that other paths would not have been able to give me.”
- “It has taught me the importance of hard work, integrity, and has helped me to mature over the last few years.”
- “[It gave me] a platform to influence the lives of young people.”
• “It taught me to deal with adversity and be responsible.”

Student-athletes cited leadership, learning to function in a team environment, time management, learning to work with a diverse group of people, commitment, the value of hard work, and a greater ability to handle difficult or new situations among the skills they had learned through their participation in OSU athletics.

d. The Student-Athlete Exit Survey also contained suggestions for improvement including a funding stream that would allow them to participate in a higher level of competition (track and cross-country athletes), better marketing and promotion of sports (equestrian, track and field, cross-country, and soccer), better coaching (softball) and better facilities (soccer, tennis, and track and field). A number of student-athletes indicated that they would like to see more attention placed on sports nutrition. Some respondents in non-revenue sports complained about access to the weight room and access to training staff. Specific suggestions for improvement have been incorporated into the written, stand-alone plan for student-athlete well-being. Finally, the committee recommends development of a thorough, standardized method for inviting eligible student-athletes to participate in the survey. This should consist of invitations from the sport administrator, SWA (for female student-athletes), and any persons the Associate AD for Academic Services deems appropriate.

4. Programs and Activities

a. The committee gathered information for this section through a review of the Student-Athlete Handbook, the OSU Student Rights & Responsibilities document, the SDVE 1113/Life Skills syllabus, and interviews with the Director of ASSA, University Counseling Services, the instructor for the SDVE 1113/Life Skills class, and the VP for Student Affairs.

b. The institution’s Academic Services for Student-Athletes program, based in the Connie and Joe Mitchell Academic Enhancement Center located in the Athletic Center, goes far beyond academic services in a number of ways that specifically address:
   - Career counseling
   - Personal counseling
   - Nutrition
   - Diversity
   - Gambling
   - Alcohol and drug education
   - Sexual orientation
   - Personal development
   - Leadership

ASSA is staffed to provide individual attention to student-athletes through team (sport) counselors who assign an individual salaried facilitator to each athlete. This program replaced a mentor program of faculty and community volunteers in order to insure quality control, consistency of services and a reporting mechanism. Facilitators focus on academic success and eligibility as well as life skills and personal issues in order to refer athletes with concerns to professional resources inside and outside the institution. Most student-athletes sign a “contract” with their facilitator that sets academic, competitive and life skill goals. And progress is monitored through weekly meetings now tracked on ASSA’s new SAMS software.

All student-athletes are required to attend a team meeting/orientation at the beginning of the semester in which their sport’s season commences. They are given a copy of the Student-Athlete Handbook which contains written information regarding NCAA, Big 12 and OSU by-laws/policies on substance abuse/drug testing, gambling, sportsmanship, codes of conduct and behavior as well as academic rules and requirements for eligibility. The information is verbally reviewed at the meeting and key personnel attend so that student-athletes can put a face with names. The committee noted it would be helpful to have actual names and numbers in the handbook for administrators by sport, trainers by sport, the compliance officer in addition to the ASSA staff information already included.

In regards to substance abuse, particular attention is given to the Safe Harbor Program for drug or alcohol treatment—available to all student-athletes but only BEFORE the athlete has been notified of an impending test or BEFORE notification of a positive test result. A specific list of impermissible
All freshmen (and first semester transfer) student-athletes are encouraged to enroll in SDVE 1113 Transition Skills for Athletes which features the CHAMPS/Life Skills curriculum. The course includes content on diversity, sexual orientation, time and stress management, public service, personal development and leadership skills. In addition, the ASSA offers short courses and speakers from institutional resources such as the University Counseling Center or Institutional Diversity or the Wellness Center in the AEC.

Career counseling is particularly important for student-athletes who in many cases have not considered career options beyond professional sports. The ASSA shares a position with the institution’s Career Services in order to offer computerized career guidance systems and individual career assessments. The university’s colleges follow this same model of having a satellite Career Services position physically located in the college and have found it to be highly beneficial to students across all disciplines. Career Services offers student-athletes services such as on-campus interviews, resume critiques, practice interviews, career and employer information, workshops, teacher placement days, and individual sessions with career advisers. ASSA provides programming on interview techniques for employment and interactions with the media.

Because the relationships between student-athletes and their facilitators and team counselors are so individualized and closely monitored, intervention and assistance in potentially difficult situations from family crises to financial problems to mental or physical health issues tend to be addressed early and in a manner that respects privacy of individuals. For instance, high profile student-athletes may be referred to counselors off campus because they tend to be recognized to the point that waiting to see a counselor in the University Counseling Center could end up in the campus paper. As previously noted however, ASSA maintains a close working relationship with the counseling center which provides student-athletes with individual personal and drug/alcohol counseling as well as group classes on a variety of topics essential to emotional and social well-being.

Issues related to nutrition tend to be addressed by coaches and trainers supplemented by the actual menu at the training tables provided for nearly every team. At least one speaker on eating disorders was provided in 2008.

The ASSA has a particularly strong program for developing and recognizing leadership skills among the institution’s student-athletes in order to nominate them for campus, conference and national awards. Results including 721 Academic-All Big 12 selections, 17 Arthur Ashe Scholarship winners and many campus award winners since 2001 not only reward the winners but also set a high standard for future student-athletes.

Responses to student-athlete exit interviews show a very high level of satisfaction with services related to well-being.

c. The data indicates a comprehensive program that successfully addresses nearly all the program areas emphasized in Operating Principle 3.3. There are three areas that should be addressed in greater detail in the Student-Athlete Handbook and perhaps in the SDVE 1113/Life Skills course: diversity, nutrition and sexual orientation. In addition, the handbook needs an index and specific references regarding who to see on what issue.

d. The committee found no deficiencies in this area, but nevertheless recommends enhancements to the student handbook to clarify all areas with a table of contents and much more specific information on nutrition, diversity and sexual orientation.

5. Time Demands

a. The committee reviewed the following documents in order to better understand time demands on student athletes and relevant written policies and procedures related to time monitoring:

- 2008-2009 Student-Athlete Handbook,
- 2008-2009 Big 12 Conference Handbook,
- Student-Athlete Exit Interviews from 2006-2008,
- Missed Class Policy approved by the OSU Athletic Council on September 21, 2006
• Summary of class days missed by sport for 2006-2008,
• PowerPoint slides from the fall orientation for all student-athletes, and
• Countable Athletic Related Activity (CARA) form.

In addition, the committee interviewed the Associate AD for Compliance in order to better understand the way schedules for each sport are reviewed and approved.

b. The 2008-2009 Student-Athlete Handbook provides a limited explanation of NCAA Bylaw 17.1.5 regarding Countable Athletic Related Activities (CARA) including definitions of allowable participation inside and outside the competitive season. Additionally, students receive information about countable practice and competition activities through a PowerPoint presentation made by the Associate AD for Compliance at the fall orientation meeting for all student-athletes. The presentation includes information about activities that count and that don’t count as well as an explanation of in-season and out-of-season limits on athletic activity. Additional regulations in place for some sports are discussed during the first team meeting held by each head coach.

Missed Class Policy
The institution’s Missed Class Policy was last revised by the Athletic Council in September 2006 and states: “NCAA student-athletes will not be required to miss more than ten (10) full days of class in a semester and … no class day will be missed more than six (6) times in a given semester.”

Scheduling Process/ Review
Coaches develop competition schedules in conjunction with the Associate AD for Compliance to ensure NCAA rules are met. Then the ASSA director reviews the schedule for impact on academic success and athlete well-being and the administrator for that sport reviews the schedule for budget and competitive rigor implications. The schedule then goes to Provost/Senior VP for Academic Affairs who makes a determination based on the Missed Class Policy that the schedule is approved or must be revised by Athletics. Exceptions to the policy may be approved by the Provost at the request of the AD. The process ensures that schedules undergo at least two independent reviews for academic and student-athlete well-being implications. Under Big 12 Conference rules, scheduling of conference athletic events and championships during the final examination period is prohibited unless an exception is granted by the Faculty Athletics Representative as a matter of necessity.

Student Feedback
The student-athlete exit survey was re-designed in 2006-2007 in cooperation with the Athletic Council’s Equity and Welfare Committee. Seven questions related to time demands are included in the survey instrument to assess time demands on student-athletes both from an academic perspective in terms of missed classes and a welfare perspective in terms of:
- whether the 20 and 8 hour rules were respected,
- whether coaches were sensitive to the time demands placed on student-athletes and
- whether the student-athlete felt he/she had time for activities other than academics and athletics.

c. The Student-Athlete Handbook contains basic information about CARA but does not:
- indicate that coaches are required to submit CARA forms to the Compliance Monitoring Coordinator on a weekly basis.
- explain that the forms must be signed and dated by three members of the team nor
- provide any information on what a student-athlete can do if s/he believes that the coach has violated the 20-hour rule or the 8-hour rule.

Currently coaches are responsible for obtaining the required signatures from student-athletes affirming the accuracy of the form. The committee is concerned that a student-athlete who does not want to sign the form may fear retaliation from the coach. Additionally, there is no written explanation of activities such as rehabilitation and team meetings that do not count toward the CARA total. As previously noted, a verbal explanation is provided annually at the fall orientation meeting.

The Missed Class Policy is reviewed and periodically revised by Athletic Council in order to ensure the best academic experience possible for student-athletes given their need to travel to away competitions. To ensure student-athletes are aware of and understand the importance the institution places on their academic experience, the Missed Class Policy should, at a minimum be mentioned in the Student-Athlete Handbook and either included in its entirety or the URL provided.
The exit survey uses a 1 to 5 scale (with 5 meaning strongly agree) on the seven questions related to time demands:

- “The athletic academic staff made sure that I didn’t suffer too much academically from athletic travel.”
  (mean response: 4.13, most frequent rating: 5)
- “The OSU faculty were cooperative in regards to my travel schedule and the necessity of my missing classes.”
  (mean response: 3.89, most frequent rating: 4)
- “I had time for extracurricular activities in addition to athletics,”
  (mean rating: 3.65, most frequent response: 4)
- “My coaches were sensitive to the demands placed on my time while I was an OSU student-athlete,”
  (mean: 4.02, most frequent: 4)

Two of the questions dealt specifically with the CARA rules

- “The 20 hour in-season weekly practice and competition limitation was adhered to in my sport,”
  (mean rating: 3.98, most frequent rating: 5.
- Adherence to the 8-hour rule was rated slightly higher, (mean: 4.13, most frequent response: 5)
Consensus appears high that, in general, coaches are adhering to CARA rules for both in-season and out-of-season athletic activities.

Respondents were also asked to rate their agreement with the following statement, “I felt like I missed more than ten class days per semester due to competition or team travel.” In this case ratings were desirably low with a mean score of 2.77 and the most frequent score being a 1. However, 23 of 65 student-athletes who completed the survey (35%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they missed more than ten days of class. At least one athlete in every sport except equestrian agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. There was particularly strong agreement among softball team members that missing class was a problem. A review of missed classes for the last two academic years however, revealed that softball had less than the 10 allowed missed class days. Adding the Missed Class Policy, which includes an explanation of how missed class days are calculated, to the Student-Athlete Handbook might improve the perception among student-athletes that they are absent excessively.

The Student-Athlete Exit Survey paints a fairly positive picture of the perceptions of student-athletes in regard to the time demands that are placed upon them as students and athletes.

Finally, the Student-Athlete Advisory Council and its representative to the OSU Athletic Council have opportunities to bring forward issues related to time demands so that such issues can be addressed internally by the Athletic Department administration or by the institution. Additionally, the SAAC representative to the Athletic Council is, through the Council’s Bylaws, a permanent member of the Athletic Council’s Committee on Equity and Student Welfare. This provides the student-athlete a direct opportunity to provide input to the mandated annual review of issues pertaining to student-athlete well-being including time demands.

d. The committee found few deficiencies in this area but does recommend some small improvements to the stand-alone plan for student-athlete well-being. The Student-Athlete Handbook should provide:
   - information about the CARA form,
   - information about activities that are and are not countable toward the allowable in-season and out-of-season limits on activity, and
   - an explanation of the option to sign or not sign the form as an affirmation of its accuracy.

Responsibility for obtaining the signatures should be transferred from the coach to the Compliance Monitoring Coordinator to ensure that student-athletes who do not want to sign the form do not fear coaching/competition implications. Additionally, there needs to be a reference to the Missed Class Policy in the Student-Athlete Handbook. Finally, since the Missed Class Policy is reviewed periodically, a record of when it is reviewed and amended needs to be retained, at a minimum, in the minutes of the Athletic Council to facilitate future reviews and either the practice or the policy needs to be re-aligned to reflect the fact that the Athletic Council does not currently review and approve competition schedules.

6. Travel

a. The committee reviewed the Athletic Department Travel Policy which was completely re-written in 2002 in the aftermath of a 2001 plane crash in which 10 individuals involved in the men’s basketball program
were killed. They also reviewed reports from the gender equity consultant and data on modes of travel
and travel records to review compliance with the policy.

b. The current Travel Policy (OSU Policy and Procedure 1-0402 Intercollegiate Athletics Team Travel)
was adopted in April of 2002 and modified in April 2004 and July 2007. The policy’s stated purpose is
to provide for safe and efficient travel, to assign responsibility and accountability and to verify
compliance.

The detailed policy (which will be available to the review team) covers all modes of travel, specifying:
• Insurance requirements,
• driver/pilot certifications, health, experience, prohibitions (i.e. no team member)
• aircraft maintenance requirements and
• permissible types of vehicles/aircraft. (i.e. no private vehicles, no “loaned” aircraft)
The policy also specifies use of an “institutional aviation consultant” to certify compliance with the policy
in either “written or documented oral” form. Note: The policy does make an exception regarding “other”
types of aircraft for coaches and department administrators and fewer than three student-athletes
traveling with a coach for departmental business “with parental permission for athletes under 21.”
There is also a proviso that any of the above can decline to travel on “other” aircraft and an alternative
mode of travel will be provided. “Other” aircraft must still meet the standards of the Travel Policy.

While the AD is invested with ultimate responsibility for compliance with the institution’s Athletic Travel
Policy, he has designated day-to-day travel oversight to the Associate AD for Facilities and
Administration. In addition, coaches are required to sign certification that they have read and
understand the policy and are assigned responsibility for designing travel schedules to comply both
with the Travel Policy and the Missed Class Policy. Alleged violations bring immediate suspension
without pay during investigation and penalties up to termination. The Athletic Director has authority to
approve exceptions to the policy but must present those to the Athletic Travel Task Force. The Athletic
Director is charged with an annual review of the policy in order to suggest needed revisions.

Reports from the gender equity consultant reveal a different story in relation to “use of time” for travel.
And after annual recommendations from the consultant that a policy be developed requiring air travel for
any trip where ground travel would take more than 8 hours, action was taken in 2007. The department
decided not to incorporate a policy requiring travel by air in lieu of road trips longer than 8 hours.
Rather, coaches are now assigned responsibility for developing travel schedules that meet both the
Missed Class Policy and Travel Policy requirements.

c. There are three issues related to student-athlete travel that affect well-being: knowledge of travel policy,
safety and length of travel time affecting class attendance. The committee found a high level of
commitment to travel safety and noted that the institution’s travel policy was considered a national
model when adopted and the subject of presentations at national and conference events. With the
kneeling cowboy memorial to the 10 who were lost located prominently in the Athletic Center, travel
safety continues to be top of mind. Interviews with several members of the Athletic Travel Task Force
revealed that after initial meetings of the group to work on the development of the policy, the task force
is convened about every two years. It is difficult to determine whether the waivers they are charged with
reviewing occur very infrequently, are reviewed very infrequently, or are reviewed by someone other
than the task force.

There appeared to be limited awareness of team travel policy on the part of student-athletes. Since all
student-athletes on aid must travel to competitions, it is important that they have some knowledge of the
rules and policies associated with this activity.

The travel time issue remains a concern. The 2006 -2007 report from the gender equity consultant
noted the soccer team and women’s track and field made several overly long trips by bus rather than
flying.

d. The committee recommends the following actions regarding travel. An overview of OSU Policies and
Procedures 1-0402 Intercollegiate Athletics Team Travel and the URL to the policy should be provided
in the Student-Athlete Handbook. A periodic review (every three years) of the policy should be
incorporated into the policy language to ensure that safety of student-athletes remains a top priority for
the Athletic Department. A review of the role of the Athletic Travel Task Force should also be
undertaken so that the task force functions or review of exceptions to the policy is clearly assigned to someone else.

7. Medical Policies

a. The committee gathered information for this section through a review of the OSU Athletic Training Handbook and interviews with Dr. Val Gene Iven, Director of Sports Medicine/Head Team Physician and Rob Hunt, Head Athletic Trainer. In addition, questions pertaining to training and sports medicine in the 2006-2008 student-athlete exit surveys were reviewed.

b. The institution demonstrates a clear commitment to the health and safety of student-athletes through the position of Director of Sports Medicine/Head Team Physician. After a national search in 2007, OSU hired Dr. Val Gene Iven:
   - University of Oklahoma, M.D.
   - University of Tennessee team physician, 1994-2007
   - Board Certified: Family Medicine
   - Certificate of Added Qualifications: Sports Medicine
   - Member, American College of Sports Medicine
   - Member, American Medical Society of Sports Medicine
   - Member, Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians
   - Fellow, American Academy of Family Physicians

Dr. Iven reports to the Senior Associate AD and is responsible for all aspects of sports medicine in the department including the development and review of medical policies.

Reporting to Dr. Iven is Rob Hunt, Head Athletic Trainer, who has 11 years experience, is a Certified Athletic Trainer and a Licensed Athletic Trainer. Reporting to Hunt are 6 full-time trainers and 8 graduate assistant trainers. Each team is assigned at least one trainer who attends all practices and competitions. In addition, the department has two orthopedic surgeons under contract – one maintains regular office hours in the department.

The department has developed comprehensive written policies contained in the Athletic Training Handbook including schedules, contact information, event management guidelines and an emergency action plan for each sport (including three for tennis depending on whether they are practicing in Edmond, Tulsa or in Ponca City.)

Each Emergency Action Plan:
   - Defines emergency personnel, communication and equipment
   - Designates who is responsible for initial injury assessment
   - Identifies how EMS is to be contacted
   - Describes the care to be provided

The manual also includes:
   - Guidelines for first aid stations in Boone Pickens Stadium
   - Guidelines for use of the automatic external defibrillators
   - Notice of privacy practices,
   - Information on eating disorders management,
   - Institutional substance abuse policy and procedures,
   - Guidelines on treatment of head injuries, and even
   - Policies regarding dealing with lightning during practice or competition

The department uses an online student-athlete exit survey to monitor satisfaction with medical care and athletic training.

c. The committee feels the training staff is of high quality and sufficient number to serve the needs of student-athletes at the institution.

The OSU Athletic Training Handbook appears to be a thorough and thoughtfully developed policy document. All parts of it are reviewed annually and those portions dealing with substance abuse and severe weather are reviewed more frequently. After all critical incidents, a debriefing process occurs. This process is described in each emergency action plan. Based on the debriefing, changes to the emergency action plans and policies have occurred.
A review of responses to two questions pertaining to training and sports medicine in the 65 student-athlete exit surveys completed in 2006-2008 revealed a high level of satisfaction. In response to the question, “When necessary, I received quality athletic training and/or sports medicine,” participants provided, on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being “strongly agree”), a mean rating of 4.26. In response to the question, “I was satisfied with the strength training and conditioning I received,” participants rated their satisfaction only slightly lower at a mean of 4.16. For both questions the most frequent rating given was a 5.

d. The committee found only one deficiency in this area. As noted elsewhere in this document, the Oklahoma State Athletic Training Handbook does not provide guidelines or policies on dealing with student-athletes who may become pregnant, with the exception of a policy on possible pregnancy and X-ray studies. The NCAA has developed a template policy to guide institutions in the development of a policy statement for sports medicine/training handbooks and the committee suggests such a policy should be developed and added to the Athletic Training Handbook. The committee also recommends that with the addition of a new weight room in the west end zone, the gender equity consultant and student-athlete exit survey be utilized to assess how access to strength and conditioning facilities and personnel is being achieved. Additionally, it is recommended that information about sports nutrition be improved in the Athletic Training Handbook.

10. If the institution has developed a plan for improvement(s) for Operating Principle 3.3, describe the institution’s efforts to ensure the plan for improvement was developed through a process.

The institution’s plan for improvement on student-athlete well-being was developed through the self-study process by the Committee on Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being in consultation with the OSU Athletic Council Committee on Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being.

The draft plan was then reviewed, commented on, revised, and expanded with input from the full membership of the Self-Study Steering Committee, the Athletic Council, the Executive Team, the Faculty Council, Dean’s Council, Staff Advisory Council, Student Government Association, Graduate and Professional Student Association, and the Student-Athlete Advisory Council. In addition, the plan was made available for review on the university website and for review and discussion in campus and community forums in order to receive community input. Formal institutional approval was granted by the OSU/A&M Board of Regents in April 2009.

The initial plan runs for five years beginning in 2009 but contains provisions for review and revision that will extend it until the next self-study in 2018.