



May 4, 2015

To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of the athletics department to support the transformation of our Learning Strategies course (UNIV 011) from a developmental course to a 100-level course, Foundations for Success (UNIV 111), that could be used as elective credit toward a student's degree. As we continue to make the transition to Division I athletics, we are becoming increasingly aware of our need to provide more comprehensive and intentional academic support for our student-athletes and we would like for that support to begin when they first set foot on our campus as ACU Wildcats.

The material covered in the enhanced, three-hour version of Foundations for Success course covers not only the basic study skills our students need to have to succeed but also requires the use of campus-specific resources, such as the Writing and Speaking Centers. Being required to use these resources early in their academic career will ensure that our student-athletes are not only aware of the resources but know how to access them.

The personality assessments and career guidance are also critical to this particular group of ACU students. In addition to maintaining a specified GPA, the NCAA requires Division I athletes to meet pre-determined measures of progress toward their chosen degree each year. Counseling incoming student-athletes with regard to appropriate and achievable career aspirations early in their college career should help minimize their desire to change majors later, when insufficient progress toward their new degree would render them athletically ineligible.

As we visit with our student athletes in one-on-one, faculty-conducted interviews at the close of each athlete's college career, we ask what has been the biggest challenge in balancing the academic, athletic, social, and spiritual parts of their life. The answer is invariably time management or not having enough time for everything. In light of that common theme, the units in UNIV 111 that focus on planning for upcoming assignments and tracking where their time actually goes are extremely important. Again, it is important help our student-athletes develop these time management skills at the beginning of their college careers when they can

get the most benefit from them. We would like to facilitate development of these skills as a proactive measure instead of in reaction to an academically disastrous start.

Finally, many of our student-athletes receive vouchers associated with their athletic scholarships. Typically these vouchers are distributed at the beginning of the semester but are intended to pay for living expenses for the entire semester. Without an understanding of budgeting and financial planning, student-athletes are more likely to use their semester's funds too quickly, causing financial stress at the end of the semester. Financial stress can bleed over to create stress and cause issues in other aspects of their lives, resulting in diminished performance in the classroom and on the field of play.

In conclusion, the topics covered in the proposed UNIV 111 are critically important for the academic success of our student-athletes and we wholeheartedly support this proposal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lee De Leon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Lee De Leon, Director of Athletics

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Laura Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Laura Phillips, Faculty Athletic Representative