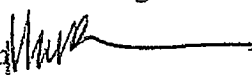


UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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RECEIVED OCT 02 2009

To: Mark Clarke, Chair
University Coordinating Commission

From: Maria Peden 
Associate Director of Athletics
Student-Athlete Services

Date: October 2, 2009

Re: Athletics Response to UCC 0112 09S:
Proposal to Raise Freshman Admission Standards in 2011

The Department of Athletics shares the University's goals of national competitiveness and student success, culminating in increased graduation rates and achievement of Tier I status.

We support UCC 0112 09S: *Proposal to Raise Freshman Admission Standards in 2011*, though it will increase the number of student-athlete prospects that fall under "Individual Review". The Department of Athletics asks the UCC and Office of Admissions to ensure that the Individual Review process continues to take into account the unique skills and diverse qualities that student-athlete applicants bring to the University community.

Athletic recruiting process and admissions considerations:

A review of our last two scholarship classes shows that most (slightly over two-thirds) of our students were admitted based on rank in the top 50% of their high school classes with test scores that met or exceeded current UH admissions standards. A third of our students went through the Individual Review process for fall 2008 and fall 2009.

Most of our student-athletes played key roles on their high school teams in more than one sport and – in the sports of Football and Basketball particularly – normally have other offers of admission from Tier I institutions in the state. When informed by our academic or coaching staffs that they need to re-test or file admission appeals, their anxiety regarding the process increases a great deal and we are at a disadvantage in recruiting because our competitors have guaranteed admissions for student-athletes who qualify for NCAA Division I scholarships.

Many high-profile student-athletes do not re-attempt the SAT or ACT once they are certain they will qualify for Division I scholarships for any number of reasons. Student-athletes are often participating in more than one sport and their time is short and/or they

are unable to afford an SAT preparation course (over a third of our student-athletes are Pell Grant eligible).

However, the NCAA has a separate Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse to certify that student-athletes meet college preparation standards and have a reasonable chance to graduate from a four-year institution. Full NCAA Division I qualifiers are required to complete 16 core courses with a grade point average that corresponds to their SAT or ACT score on a sliding scale. Our department does not allow non-qualifiers to enroll at the University of Houston.

Profile and Academic Review of UH Student-Athletes:

While more student-athletes under the new admission standards will undergo Individual Review, the UCC and Office of Admissions should note that student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than all UH students and had a grade point average of 2.69 with 13.3 hours passed per semester as of Spring 2009. The Student-Athlete Services office supports this progress with five full-time athletic academic counselors, a tutoring coordinator, a computer lab and a study center with classrooms and individual tutoring rooms. Student-athletes are required to attend study table, tutoring and classes and counselors communicate daily/weekly with faculty to gauge progress throughout the semester.

Student-athletes must make progress toward graduation (24 credit hours per year, declared major after 4 semesters, academic good standing and 40/60/80% of their degree completed) or they become ineligible and their teams could lose scholarships.

Student-athlete academic eligibility certification takes place at the end of each semester with participation by department advisors, the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative (Dr. Richard Scamell, Bauer College of Business), and the Registrar's office. In addition, the Associate Director of Athletics for Student-Athlete Services has a dual-reporting line to the Office of the Provost and meets monthly with the Assistant Vice-President of Undergraduate Studies so all academic concerns, support programs, admissions updates and retention and graduation data are shared with these offices.

Summary:

While the Department of Athletics supports the 0112 09S: *Proposal to Raise Freshman Admission Standards in 2011*, we would like to emphasize (a) the unique and prominent role that our student-athletes play in our goals of national competitiveness **and** (b) that the challenges some of them have meeting automatic admissions standards not become a barrier to attracting student-athletes to the University of Houston with the type of talent that can help us all achieve that goal.

Cc: Mack Rhoades, IV
Director of Athletics