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Holding Court...Academically, Too

University of Dayton

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The NCAA Graduation Success Rate report on Division I student-athletes places the University of Dayton in familiar territory – among the top 25 schools nationally in graduating its student-athletes.

This year's score of 95, which ranks 25th nationally and is tied for first in the Atlantic 10, is the department's second-highest rate since the inception of the GSR reporting system in 2005. Fourteen of the University's 15 teams have GSR rates higher than the national average of a record-high 84 percent. Eight of them — men's and women's basketball, women's track/cross country, men's golf, women's golf, rowing and women's soccer — have perfect scores.

Since the NCAA began tracking GSR with the class of student-athletes who entered in 1995, the Flyers have never rated below a 94 and have ranked 27th or better nationally.

"The NCAA's Graduation Success Rate is in its 10th year and we're very proud that we have been among the top-performing schools in the NCAA," said Tim Wabler, University of Dayton vice president and director of athletics. "It was part of our culture before the GSR, and remains part of our culture today. It's a team effort involving our student-athletes, our coaches, our academic support team and our faculty and administration – the same kind of team effort in a competition setting that leads to championships."

Dayton is the only Division I institution with both men's and women's basketball teams in the 2014 NCAA tournament and a perfect 100 GSR score. The Flyers men's basketball team is the only Sweet Sixteen team in last year's tournament with a perfect score. The women's team is one of only eight to have scores of 100 and reach the tournament the last five years. DePaul, Duke, Iowa State, Notre Dame, St. John's, Tennessee and Vanderbilt are the others.
Since the NCAA began tracking GSR with the class of student-athletes who entered in 1995, the overall rate has increased 10 percentage points, which translates to nearly 14,000 more graduates than if the rate had stayed the same. In that same time period, academic standards for Division I student-athletes improved multiple times, with increases in initial eligibility standards, progress-toward-degree standards and the creation of the Academic Progress Rate, a more real-time mechanism to track a student-athlete’s academic success. GSR was created in response to Division I presidents who wanted a rate that more accurately reflected the mobility of college students than the federal graduation rate.

The GSR formula, intended to be a more complete and accurate look at student-athlete success, removes from the rate student-athletes who leave school while academically eligible and includes student-athletes who transfer to a school after initial enrollment elsewhere. The federal graduation rate, however, remains the only metric that allows comparison between student-athletes and the general student body. Student-athletes who entered college in 2007 earned the highest federal graduation rate ever: 66 percent. That rate is one point higher than the general student-body at Division I schools.

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