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The NCAA graduation success rate (GSR) report released Tuesday, Oct. 14, shows UD had a student-athlete graduation success rate of 96 percent for students who entered college in the 2001-02 school year.

This ranks in the top 10 nationally — ties included — with Alcorn State, Colgate, San Francisco, Holy Cross, Notre Dame, the U.S. Naval Academy, Davidson, Duke, Northwestern, Boston College, Lafayette, Loyola (Maryland) and New Hampshire.

"In 2007-08, our combined winning percentage was the best we've ever had at the University of Dayton," said Ted Kissell, UD's vice president and director of athletics. "But we are just as proud, if not more, of the results reflected in these graduation numbers. It speaks to our commitment to success in the classroom as well in competition — a commitment shared by the University, our coaches, our staff and our student-athletes."

Every Flyer athletics program earned a graduation success rate of 85 percent or better. Women's basketball, men's cross country, women's cross country, women's track and field, men's golf, women's golf, women's rowing, women's soccer, men's tennis, women's tennis and volleyball had a perfect rate. The football team's rate is 95 percent; men's soccer is 93 percent; baseball is 92 percent; softball is 92 percent; and men's basketball is 89 percent. The men's basketball rate is the best in the Atlantic 10 Conference.

Success in the classroom is nothing new for UD student-athletes. The Flyers' combined cumulative grade point average is currently a school-record 3.209. In addition, UD has had 29 academic all-Americans in the last seven years and at least one academic all-American for 24 straight years.

The NCAA developed the graduation success rate as part of its academic reform initiative to more accurately assess the academic success of student-athletes. This is the seventh year that the NCAA has collected data.

Nationwide, 79 percent of first-year student-athletes who entered college in 2001 earned their four-year degrees. The average graduation success rate for the last four graduating classes is 78 percent. Both rates are up one percentage point from last year.

NCAA President Myles Brand praised the latest figures. He cited increased initial-eligibility standards and an overall emphasis on academics, including the development of the academic progress rate for each Division I sports team, as key factors contributing to student-athlete success.

"Nearly eight out of 10 Division I student-athletes are finishing college and earning their degrees," Brand said. "This is extremely good news. We still have work to do and can't declare victory just yet, but the trend lines are moving in the right direction."

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