

**Savannah State University Intercollegiate Athletic Department
Student-Athlete Academic Success Center
Handbook**



***SAVANNAH STATE
UNIVERSITY***

2020-2021

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Introduction

Savannah State University (SSU) recognizes the important role advising plays in the academic success of students as well as in their growth and development as future leaders. As a result, this manual was designed as a resource for the “Athletics Academic Department.” Savannah State University strives to maintain a workable advisee/advisor workload. Several strategies can be used to deal with overloads. Amongst these strategies are faculty assistance from other departments with low enrollments, student-peer advising, departmental/college group advising, and utilizing paraprofessionals for advising. We are a direct extension of the Center of Academic Success who specifically focus on a special population of students, our student-athletes.

Mission Statement

The Savannah State University Athletic Academic (SSUAA) Services Program is committed to assisting all student-athletes in reaching their full potential academically, personally, and professionally. Our program includes academic advising, community service, study hall, tutoring referral services, and degree mapping. All of these are all aimed at promoting a philosophy of individual responsibility to encourage each student-athlete to value their educational experience.

SSUAA Definition of Advising and Goals

Academic advising is a developmental process in which student-athletes are guided in clarifying their life/career goals and in developing educational plans for realizing and obtaining those goals.

- To encourage each student-athlete to develop an educational plan that helps them achieve their life/career goals.
- To train each student-athlete to monitor and evaluate their progress toward degree.
- To provide student-athletes services from other campus and/or community agencies.
- To promote opportunities for professional and personal growth through facilitated programs and workshops.
- To instill pride in our student-athletes of our institution and department by learning the alma mater and adapting to the culture of SSU.

SSUAA Academic Advising

As a student of Savannah State University, one is entitled to receive any and all academic support provided to the student athlete in order to perform at optimum level academically. Major department academic advisors can assist student-athletes with:

- Preparing class schedules, and giving overview of expectations of major department.
- Reviewing, assessing and signing advisement forms, including degree audits.
- Provide updates on opportunities such as new classes, scholarships and internships.
- Be familiar with the requirement and programs of various schools and programs.
- Provide advice on courses needed to complete selected degree of study.

Advisor Roles/Responsibilities

The responsibilities of an Athletics Academic Advisor is not limited to assisting the student with selection of courses. We monitor our student-athletes' Progress Towards Degree (PTD) completion and their GPA, while adhering to NCAA rules and regulations. Please reference Bylaw, Article 14.4 within the 2019-2020 Division II Manual.

- Assist students in planning a program consistent with their abilities, interests and resources.
- Assist students in monitoring progress toward educational and career goals.
- Discuss linkages and relationships between instructional program, career and further educational pursuits, where appropriate.
- Inform students of the nature of the advisor/student relationship.
- Obtain written administrative approval prior to making course substitutions.
- Refer students to other sources when educational, attitudinal, attendance, financial, employment, or other personal issues require the service of other professionals.
- Schedule and meet with each advisee at least twice in a semester.
- Interpret and provide rationale for academic policies, procedures, and requirements.

Advisee Roles/Responsibilities

The advisee plays a critical role in the success of the advisement process. Advisors promote success and have recommendations. We encourage our student-athletes to utilize the following recommendations:

- Adhering to the Athletic Academic Advising contract.
- Meet with your advisor as necessary.
- Demonstrate ownership in the advising process.
- Select major before the end of sophomore year.
- Maintain an updated degree map on file.
- Exhibit responsible behavior by; academically and personally.
- Reading and abiding by rules and regulations.

Coaches Responsibilities

The Athletics Department encourages coaches to limit the athletic participation of any student-athlete that (1) appears to be having academic difficulty, or (2) misses classes for non-athletic reasons (other than illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances). Coaches reserve the right to curtail a student's participation in athletic related activities, especially when a student is not demonstrating full commitment towards their academic endeavors.

Coaches are not permitted to contact any member of the faculty to gain favor or exception for student-athletes. However, faculty members are strongly encouraged to contact a student-athlete's coach to discussing academic performance. No special consideration for any student-athlete will be requested at any time outside what is approved by the NCAA regarding competition travel.

Student-athletes are educated on the policies and procedures of the Athletic Academic department by their Athletics Academic Advisors. Although the main goal is to create an academic support environment, it is the student-athlete's responsibility to work within the politics set forth by this manual. Coaches are asked to support the efforts of their assigned Athletics Academic Advisors and to impose reasonable consequences for those student-athletes who are not fulfilling their academic obligations. Head Coaches are expected to:

- Encourage students to meet with their respective advisors on a regular basis.
- Provide practice and travel schedule in a timely manner.
- Utilize Athletics Academic Advisors during recruiting to provide prospective students with accurate information.
- Promote a positive academic environment.
- Use your academic advisor as a liaison for inter-departmental communication on campus.
- Abide by all FERPA rules and regulations stipulated by the federal government.

Study Hall

Academic standards and requirements for student-athletes at Savannah State University are no less stringent than for the general student population. Both the University and the Department of Athletics are aware that participation in varsity athletics makes exceptional demands upon a student-athlete's time and energy. Therefore, the Department maintains a Study Hall program within the computer lab of Tiger Arena in order to provide an academic support program to help student-athletes achieve their full academic potential.

We will consistently provide an academic support program to help student-athletes succeed, and in return we expect our fellow student-athletes to abide by all policies and procedures that are implemented to maintain structure. These policies and procedures are expected to be abided by at **ALL** times.

The rules are as followed:

1. Individuals or groups of students who disturb others, or violate Study Hall rules, will be removed from Study Hall without credit; **habitual violators may be suspended from participating in the SSU Athletics Program.**
2. Keep talking to a minimum so that it does not interfere with others; this shall be measured using an individual's volume.

3. The time a student spends in Study Hall must be towards his/her individual academic course work and nothing else. **Sleeping is strictly prohibited.**
4. Music is limited to personal headphone devices; the volume on the device must not be audible to anyone else in the room.
5. No food, no eating, and no drinking in the Study Hall lab.
6. Profane language of any type is strictly prohibited.
7. Inappropriate attire is strictly prohibited.
8. Student-athletes must sign in AND out to receive credit for Study Hall time; a student may not sign in for any other student(s). False documentation may result in suspension from participating in the Tiger Athletics Program.
9. Student-athletes are responsible for any computers, furniture, or property he/she damages.
10. Students are responsible for bringing the necessary materials needed for the course work they are working on; any resource provided by the Athletics Department should be returned to the original owner.

SA Academic Integrity

Students-athletes are expected to demonstrate a high standard of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Athletics Academic Advisors follow the academic policies per the university handbook. These policies are the following:

- All cases of detected academic dishonesty will be reported by the faculty to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Plagiarism, or cheating in any kind, of any academic work will result in a recorded grade of "F" for that work.
- A second offense during the course of a student's academic career at Savannah State University will result in an "F" for the course, in which the academic dishonesty has occurred.
- In addition, students who have committed a second offense of academic dishonesty during their academic career at Savannah State University will be placed on academic probation for a minimum of one semester.
- A third incident of academic dishonesty during a student's career at Savannah State will result in immediate dismissal from the College.
- Falling below University standards for positive standing can result in loss of scholarship.

Faculty Athletics Representatives (FAR)

Within the Athletics department, we have a faculty member who acts as the liaison between the Athletics department and the rest of the faculty on campus. This person is known as the Faculty Athletics Representative, or FAR for short. The FAR represents SSU and its faculty in the relationship between the NCAA and the institution. The FAR also provides significant leadership in the governance of SSU's intercollegiate athletics programs and represents the president—in academic and student-athlete matters—to the athletic department and SSU's faculty. The FAR plays an important role on our college campus and they continually provide oversight of the academic integrity of the athletics program and serving as an advocate for student-athlete well-being. In relation to the student-athlete experience, some of the duties of the FAR are, but are not limited to:

- Promoting a balance between academics, athletics, and the social lives of student-athletes, which affords them opportunities to enjoy the full range of collegiate experiences available to students generally.

- Participating in student-athlete exit interviews, facilitating student-athlete participation on athletics boards and committees, and informing student-athletes about the FAR role as an independent source of counsel, assistance, and information.
- Encouraging and overseeing interactions between student-athletes and the mainstream of institutional activities.

Online Class Policy and Procedures

Student-athletes will be required to take an Online Class orientation prior to being allowed to register for an online class. A Score of 80% will give the student-athlete the approval to take an online class. Once approved, the student-athlete will go see their major advisor and be approved based on their major advisor's recommendation. Once the student-athlete is approved by both of their advisors, the student-athlete will then be allowed to register for an online class.

It is highly recommended that students do not take online courses during their freshman year. We offer online training to set our student-athletes up for success.

Procedure for Assigning Advisees to Advisors

As a student-athlete, you will be appointed a major advisor and an Athletics Academics Advisor, based upon the classification in which a student enters the university. If one has started their curriculum at Savannah State University as a freshman, or a transfer sophomore, an advisor within the Center of Academic Success will be appointed to them based upon the major in which they have chosen. If one has started their curriculum at Savannah State University as a transfer junior, or senior, one will be appointed to an advisor within the department of which the major one has chosen.

As a student-athlete at Savannah State University, you will be appointed to an Athletics Academic Advisor based upon the sport in which one participates. Regardless of the individual participants' majors, the Athletics Academics Advisors will remain your advisor for the duration of your stay.

Change of Major Process

A student-athlete wanting to change their major will have to meet with Athletics Academic Advisor, in consultation with their major advisor. This allows transition from one major to another to be as feasible as possible to assess successful degree completion within the timeframe of their NCAA eligibility. The process is as follows:

1. Student-athlete meets with Athletics Academic Advisor and receives approval.
2. After approval is given, the student-athlete will notify their major advisor of their intent.
3. After approval from both advisors has been given, the student-athlete will acquire the electronic Major/Minor Declaration form to complete and submit it for processing.
 - a. This form requires the student to obtain the electronic signatures of the Dean and Department Head of their current major, as well as the electronic signatures of the Dean and Department Head of the new intended major.
 - b. Once all signatures have been obtained, the completed form will be finalized and processed by the Registrar's Office.

Course Substitutions

The Athletics Academic Advisor, in consultation with major advisor, makes recommendations for course substitutions to the department head. Recommendations should be made as soon as possible. They must be made prior to a student taking a course. Substitutions are appropriate when the courses have similar content (80% or more of the content is the same). If the department head agrees with a recommendation, the recommendation is submitted to the Dean for his/her approval. Recommendations for course substitutions should be approved prior to registration and should not be entered on the curriculum sheet until the Dean has approved the request.

Registration Holds

A student's record may have several holds that may impede the registration process. When attempting to enter classes into Banner, the system will indicate that there is a "hold." The program Banner can be used to give the details of the hold. One can be affected by one or more of the following holds:

- Immunization Hold – Students should be directed to the Health Center, ext.
- Delinquent Holds – Students should be directed to the Cashier or Student Financial Services.
- Academic Hold – Students should be directed to the Dean of the College/School of that student's major program.
- Judicial Hold – Students should be directed to the Director.
- **Athletic Compliance Hold – Students should be directed their Athletic Academic Advisor and/or Compliance.**

Online Registration

The university utilizes an online registration process. Prior to registering online, the student-athlete will seek their CAS/major advisor and get advised on what classes are necessary for the upcoming semester. During this meeting, the student-athlete will also receive their alternate pin. The student-athlete will then see their Athletics Academic Advisor for assistance in picking necessary class times, in order to avoid as many time conflicts as possible that may arise from practice, or competition.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students are required to pass a specified number of hours, with a minimum required grade point average during an academic year for continued eligibility, as stated by bylaws 14.4.3.1, Good Academic Standings, 14.4.3.2, Term-By-Term Credit-Hour Requirement, and 14.4.3.3, Credit Hours Earned During the Regular Academic Year. The academic year is composed of the fall and spring semesters. It excludes holidays and scheduled breaks, and is approximately thirty weeks in duration.

Incomplete (I) grades are counted as failing (F) grades until the course has been completed. Repeated courses are not included in the cumulative hours pursued.

Academic Probation – Institutional

Student-athletes must maintain a 2.0 GPA to be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics per university policy. However, the campus requirements differs by a few points. The campus requirements are as follows:

Any student that fails to meet the minimum cumulative GPA requirement for graduation (3.0 for graduate students) will be placed on Financial Aid Warning, but, will continue to be eligible for financial aid. The student has the following semester of attendance to earn the required minimum cumulative GPA. At the end of the warning period, if the required minimum cumulative GPA is met, the student is taken off of Financial Aid Warning.

If the required minimum cumulative GPA is not achieved, then the student will be placed on Financial Aid Suspension during the next semester of attendance. The student will not receive financial aid assistance while on Financial Aid Suspension. The total cumulative earned hours consist of hours earned at Savannah State University and accepted transfer credits. Transfer credits are not included in the computation of the cumulative GPA for financial aid unless the credit was earned while attending other schools as a Transient Student, where a student was taking classes at another institution as a degree-seeking Savannah State University student.

Academic Suspension

A student on academic probation is suspended from SSU at the end of any semester (including summer session) in which a grade point average of at least a 2.0 is not obtained, as stated in bylaw 14.4.3.5, Fulfillment of Minimal Grade-Point Average Requirements. A first-time freshman who was admitted in good standing will not be suspended prior to the completion of two semesters of study.

Students who have been suspended during a spring semester may attend summer school without appeal. If the cumulative GPA is raised to at least a 2.0 the suspension is removed. If the cumulative GPA is not raised to at least a 2.0 the suspension remains in effect for the fall semester.

A student has the right to appeal a suspension when extenuating circumstances impacted the academic performance. Appeals must be made in writing to the academic dean of the student's major. Supporting documentation must be included with the written appeal.

Support Services – On Campus

- Student Intervention & Resource Center – This unit offers counseling services to students and faculty. This unit also coordinates ADA services for students. The Student Intervention & Resource Center is located in King Frazier Complex 2nd Floor Room 233. The Coordinator of this service can be reached at 358-3129.
- Harris McDew Health Center – This unit offers medical services to students. It is located on the North side of campus across from University Police building and outside basketball courts. The phone number is 912 (358-4122).
- University based tutoring –
 - Attendance

- Student-athletes must go to all scheduled tutoring appointments unless traveling with their team.
- Sanctions
 - Coaches discretionary based punishment
 - i.e extra practice, added Study Hall hours, game suspension, etc.
 - Athletic Department discretionary based punishment
 - i.e game suspension, scholarship reduction, etc.
 - Student-athletes found not to be attending, or not progressing in tutoring, will be re-evaluated for other assistance.
- Reporting
 - Tutors will report a student-athlete's progress and attentiveness monthly for review.
 - Coaches will receive a report detailing their student-athlete's attendance and progress monthly.

Support Services – Off Campus

- Bull Street Library – 2002 Bull St., Savannah, GA 31401
- Oglethorpe Mall Library – 7 Mall Anx, Savannah, GA 31406
- Carnegie Library – 537 E Henry St, Savannah, GA

Most local libraries and their hours of operation can found at <http://www.liveoakpl.org/home>. The site will also provide you a list of different locations that provide a plethora of services.

Academic Advising Evaluation

The academic advising evaluation form is one way of assessing advising. Advisees will evaluate their advisors towards the end of the fall semester. The results will be distributed to the Associate Director of Compliance, who will in turn, distribute them to the Athletics Academic Advisors. The criteria for the Academic Advising Annual Evaluation Form is included below.

- Internal audits on folders
 - Advisor peer to peer review
- Monthly reports per team per sport
 - Progress; GPA Flags, Transfer Students, Coaches Notes

Alma Mater

Savannah State University Hymn

Written by J. Randolph Fisher and Hillary Hatchett

Let us give thanks and praises to
Our Alma Mater, S.S.U.
Thine honor, pride, and eminence,
We raise in prayerful reverence.

Refrain:

Where Savannah meets the sea,
Where grassy plains and palms abound,
Where the flow'rs are gems of loveliness,
There S.S.U. is found.
We adore each beauteous scene and hall,
Our all we pledge to Thee!
In our hearts we'll build a shrine for You
We hail Thee, S.S.U.!

Guide us still from day to day,
Be Thou mindful lest we lose our way;
Help us know that life, short or long,
Means unceasing work for weak and strong.

Refrain:

Where Savannah meets the sea,
Where grassy plains and palms abound,
Where the flow'rs are gems of loveliness,
There S.S.U. is found.
We adore each beauteous scene and hall,
Our all we pledge to Thee!
In our hearts we'll build a shrine for You
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