



2020-2021 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

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# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

# **75**

Team-specific clinics delivered to teams on a variety of topics related to professional development including networking, informational interviewing, preparing for career fair, resume creation, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness - all teams completed this requirement

# 70+

Student-athletes passed through "Careers and Identity in American Culture" (American Studies 95) in sections of 20-plus in each academic quarter. We piloted an asynchronous version in Winter 2021 that gave us significant scalability for future classes

## 100+

"World of Work" presentations by alumni to teams, sharing personal stories, transferable lessons from athlete experience, and expanding Aggie networks

## **800**+

Members of the EVO Pro network engaged as informational interviewers, contacts, and contributors to various EVO functions





# 28

World of Work podcasts recorded to create an online resource library accessible by student-athletes, alumni, and the public

## 1

Aggie EVO Virtual Road Trips that allowed student-athletes to continue career exploration via recorded sessions with alums in their workplaces and a facilitated panel discussion in the Fall

## 2

EVO Pro Speed Networking Events with more than 150 student-athletes attending in total, engaged in social capital building and World of Work education





# LAUNCH STATISTICS

(update as of August 2, 2021)

For the 2018-19 academic year, we defined the graduating cohort as any student-athlete who graduated in Fall 2018, Winter 2019, Spring 2019, or Summer 2019, giving us four different cohorts to track within that academic year grouping. Successful launch is defined as a graduated student-athlete pursuing professional athletics, enrolled or preparing to enroll in a graduate or professional degree program, or employed in a full-time position requiring a college degree (or an equivalent, such as starting a new business). This is evaluated for each student-athlete one-year post-graduation.

In the first year we made an effort to do this kind of analysis, we had incomplete data from the 2017-18 class that suggested close to a 40% launch rate and partial/anecdotal data from the 2016-17 class that suggested an approximate 35% launch rate.

The 2018-19 cohort had 101 student-athletes (there is inevitably a reduction in numbers from the freshman entering class due to a variety of sport and non-sport factors). 86.1% successfully launched. 3.0% did not launch. 10.9% are unknown/unconfirmed due to an inability to contact them as of this writing.

54.5% of the 2018-19 cohort are employed while 26.7% are pursuing a graduate or professional degree program. 10.3% are pursuing professional athletics. (These numbers were a snapshot as of 7.17.2020.)

The 2019-20 cohort had 113 student-athletes (there is inevitably a reduction in numbers from the freshman entering class due to a variety of sport and non-sport factors). 70.8% successfully launched. 5.3% did not launch. 23.9% are unknown/unconfirmed due to an inability to contact them as of this writing.

51.3% of the 2019-20 cohort are employed while 32.7% are pursuing a graduate or professional degree program. 12.4% are pursuing professional athletics. (These numbers are a snapshot as of 8.2.2021 and may change slightly with the confirmation of a few remaining Summer 2020 graduates.)

# LAUNCH PLANS

(update as of August 2, 2021)

For the 2020-21 graduating cohort, we collected intended launch plans which will be confirmed one-year post-graduation to determine launch status.

The Fall 2020-Spring 2021 graduation cohort had 114 student-athletes (with another 15 anticipated to graduate in Summer 2021). Of the 115 student-athletes who have graduated, 41.2% either intend to pursue or have accepted an offer of employment, 47.4% either intend to pursue or have enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program, and 3.5% intend to pursue professional athletic opportunities. We were unable to collect plans for 7.9% of the cohort as of this writing.





# INTRODUCTION

In July 2017, UC Davis Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) began the process of creating a new functional area designed to provide a better developmental experience for student-athletes, give coaches a strategic edge in recruiting, and deliver a potential vehicle for fundraising and outreach with alumni. The "Aggie EVO System" (aka EVO) is intended to help student-athletes "better know and navigate the World of Work" in order to effectively prepare student-athletes for "launch" after graduation. We define "launch" as graduating and moving onto a career path that builds on the college degree, sets up students for financial and social success, and effectively replaces sport as a central element of their identity.

The 2020-21 academic year was the fourth phase of the implementation and development of the EVO System. Given the uncertainy and multiple challenges spawned by the pandemic, we elected to maintain the curriculum/content that seemed effective and did our first roll over with EVO living in the Canvas learning management system (LMS). The movement of all academic work into a virtual environment allowed everyone at UC Davis to continue their educational paths and greatly increased student engagement with Canvas. This proved to be fortuitous for ICA and the Aggie EVO System, confirming our decision to put the individual student-athlete requirements in the same place they find all of their academic coursework

Engaging student-athletes in a platform with which they were already comfortable and accessed every day, that includes a simple grading process for submitting and evaluating assignments, was a major step forward in 2019 and allowed us to continue EVO activities in pandemic conditions seemlessly. This year also provided us with the chance to increase service to other units on campus taking advantage of online learning. We were able to create an adapted version of the peer-to-peer leadership program (an optional non-cognitive skill course for student-athletes) for Grad Pathways, including individual leadership coaching and assessments for 50+ students.

We have not yet comprehensively solved the challenge of preparing students for life after college graduation and sports, but we have gained a great deal of knowledge and experience. We believe that our ability to follow established industry best practices, quickly adapt to feedback from coaches and athletes, and rapidly implement changes has made us a useful test bed for Outcomes Advising as an improved approach to typical academic advising in higher education.

Our partnership with the campus Internship and Career Center (ICC) continues to expand. One section of AMS 95 ("Careers and Identity in American Culture") is specific to student-athletes and has now been running for more than three full academic years. Our most recent success on this front was transitioning it to a virtual environment in Spring 2020. We were able to launch an asynchronously available version of the class in Winter 2021 that allows us to offer the course to more students. We also continued our collaboration with a variety of campus units on "Aggie Launch", the campus-wide project to expand programming, coaching, and access to experiential learning for all UC Davis students. ICA personnel from development and EVO participated in ongoing research through the pandemic year and made substantial contributions to the final work product that lays out a multifaceted approach to solving the "launch" challenge for all students. The first fruit of that work is a pilot in Summer 2021 where we are providing funding, weekly small group coaching, and an academic credit for a small mixed (athletes and non-athletes) cohort of students from underrepresented communities doing experiential learning they would otherwise be unable to access.

Our strategic plan for roll-out and iteration of EVO is based on adding an additional year of requirements and accountability with each year that passes. As we re-enter oncampus life in Fall 2021, every returning student-athlete will have been exposed to EVO as an integral part of their experience at Davis and we will welcome the second class of new student-athletes who were all recruited using EVO as an inducement. We believe we have done sufficient education and messaging at this point that we have reached a cultural tipping point where the entire department is aligned behind a single-minded focus on EVO as our strategic advantage. Increased development success, expanding alumni involvement, and growing storytelling experience by our sports information professionals are all indicators of department buy-in.

# DEVELOPMENT/CORPORATE/FOUNDATION **PARTNERSHIPS**

One of our goals in creating the EVO System was to leverage it as an opportunity to increase revenue for the department through philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and foundation grants. We have made progress on all three fronts and demonstrated that this kind of programming is attractive to a wide variety of external stakeholder groups.

#### What is the EVO Pro Network?

The Aggie EVO Pro Network is a powerful collection of nearly 1000 Aggie alumni and supporters focused on creating lasting relationships with our student-athletes. Volunteers connect with our student-athletes through a variety of events and touch points to help share skills and knowledge from their personal experiences. Members of the Aggie EVO Pro Network also help make connections and work with our student-athletes to land opportunities and get career-related internships and jobs after graduation. We were pleased to be able to continue the Network's growth during the pandemic by creating a virtual "road trip" to see alumni in their work environments. We also executed two virtual networking events that included 150+ alumni and students using the Remo platform.`

# How are we working to grow our network?

The EVO Pro network is continually expanding to give our student athletes the best opportunities. Throughout the year, coaches and staff reach out to alumni and friends to ask that they be a part of this critical group.

Each month, we send out a newsletter as a way to keep everyone up to date. These go out to EVO Pro members so they stay engaged with the latest news and events happening around the EVO program. Items highlighted from these newsletters include the ability to connect our head coaches with a different employer to speak to their student athletes each week, news on Coffee Talk podcasts, networking events, and the latest success stories from the program.





Another important aspect of the EVO Pro Network is the library of Coffee Talk Podcasts. Once a week during the school year, we ask a different EVO Pro member to share their story on a recorded podcast for student-athletes to reference. These podcasts feature a variety of career paths and team experiences.

We look to continue to grow our network each year and bring new alumni who can connect with our student-athletes. To ensure the EVO System's success, we also seek enthusiastic community partners who can help provide resources and careers for our student-athletes and for the programs financial success.

## **Development/Corporate Partnerships**

The EVO System has received significant major gifts from individuals and corporations, including John and Diane Watson, Jordan Moss, Steve and Roxy Klein, Five Star Bank, and Safe Credit Union. Through private and corporate philanthropy, the EVO System has pulled in a variety of major gifts that will sustain the program for the next five years. John and Diane Watson were among the first donors to contribute, providing critical program support to enhance the depth and impact of the EVO System. SAFE Credit Union came on board early as well to underwrite several programs while also providing opportunities for our student-athletes to learn more about managing their finances through EVO Core Clinics offered to each team. Five Star Bank named the Athletes in Business (AIB) resource group and the peer-to-peer leadership program in the fourth year of the EVO System for student-athletes. These partnerships also give access to prospective positions for our student-athletes after graduation. We continue to work with the local Davis and Sacramento communities to find ways for companies to be involved so we can successfully launch each student-athlete.









# METRICS AND IMPACT

We were challenged from the very first meetings we had with external stakeholders to quantify the results of the investments we are making in the Aggie EVO System. Assessment is a popular conversation in higher education but it is also a critical process to allow us to evaluate what we're doing, discard ineffective practices, prioritize essentials, and convince potential donors to continue investing in our efforts.

The simplest measure of impact is our "launch rate". While there is no reliable historical data available for student-athletes locally or nationally, and even general campus data is not a perfect comparable, we have begun the process of tracking "launch" according to our definition. With no historical data, it will be impossible to compare post-EVO success with ICA graduates' experience prior to the start of the EVO System, but we are now able to evaluate current and future classes. We are now able to generate a launch rate for our second longitudinal cohort and are compiling the data to consider coaching efficacy in contributing to launch and provide coaches with powerful data about post-graduation student-athlete outcomes to use in recruiting conversations. We continue to work with the campus effort ("Aggie Launch") to compare assessment methodology and results for non-athlete students with Aggie athletes.

## **Individual Student-Athlete Requirements**

In 2019-20, we began using the Canvas learning management system to set up the EVO requirements as if the EVO program was a class in which student-athletes were enrolled. Each year has a set of tasks that increase knowledge, build skills, develop tools,

and add to experiences in a sequence designed to move athletes along a progressive career development path prior to graduation. Canvas gave student-athletes the ability to go through the material at their own pace and independently submit responses to the various tasks. It also made reporting much easier as we were able to assign a point value for each requirement and we now provide quarterly updates to coaches, who are our best resource for nudging regular student-athlete participation.

In 2020-21 our engagement and completion levels moved dramatically upward as we hit a cultural tipping point in terms of athlete awareness and buy-in. With all academic work moved online as a result of the pandemic, we also noted much improved competency navigating and utilizing Canvas on a daily basis.

## **Coaching Staff Requirements**

There are also requirements for head coaches that ensure we have broad coverage of two major focus areas - World of Work Education and EVO Core Clinics. We now include bonus language in head coach contracts to ensure their commitment and incent assistance with launch tracking. Coaches help us to expose athletes to alumni and supporters in the World of Work, who can contribute to social capital building but also educate athletes about career options. And we work with each coaching staff to make sure we are covering some of the ground dictated by the EVO core curriculum with teambased clinics, designed to fit the context of different sports and continue developing athletes in ways that positively impact their athletic and professional identities. 100% of coaches with bonus language completed all four requirements in 2020-21.

#### I. EVO Core Clinics

The clinics are designed to be no more than 30 minutes long and provide highly relevant, applicable knowledge and skills that fit into the EVO System of requirements. Coaches are told by the Director of Athletics that they must use 30 minutes of official practice time three times per year to meet this requirement (part of our effort to get full buy-in from coaches). All head coaches with bonus incentives completed this requirement by the end of the Spring 2021 term and the remainder are on track to be finished by the end of Summer 2021. We added flexibility this year to accommodate creative approaches by coaches, exemplified by Dan Leyson's adoption of the 10 session peer leadership training program. The entire team met on a weekly basis for an entire quarter to review each chapter in The Captains' Manual, the book version of that course (co-written by a former MWP player). We have also enhanced our ability to deliver virtual clinics, facilitating scheduling and adding flexibility.

#### II. World of Work Educators

With the broad mandate of helping athletes to "better know and navigate the World of Work," we recognize that we have to create structured opportunities throughout the year to force some interaction by student-athletes with alumni and supporters.

In the second year of the EVO System we instituted a model requiring each coach to work with the development staff to identify alumni who would be willing to meet with the team to share a little of their story, describe their work life, and engage in some bridge building to set the stage for informational interviews, internships, and eventual job offers. Each coach was required to do five of these "World of Work Educator" sessions during the course of the year. We have continued that model through the 2020-21 academic year.

Coaches work with Outcomes Advisors, Associate Athletics Director Liz Martin who oversees the EVO Pro Network, the EVO Pro fellow, as well as their individual development officers, to find candidates and then organize appropriate events. Some coaches chose individual sessions while others opted for larger events with multiple alumni coming together at the same time. The feedback from coaches and student-athletes has been very positive, with concrete success in the form of informational interviewing, internships, and ultimately jobs resulting from some of these connections. We're also confident that we're getting increased alumni engagement and identifiable increases in philanthropy as a result of this work. The pandemic required us to adapt and we found Zoom sessions with alums to be well-received from participants. The virtual environment also allowed us to access alums from all over the world and minimize schedule friction.

Every coach with EVO bonus language in their contract had either completed this requirement as of July 1, 2021 or was on track to be finished by the end of Summer 2021.

## III. Graduating Senior Launch Plans

In order to track launch statistics and build the EVO Pro Network, we recognized a need to do a much better, more systematic job of collecting contact and career information from graduating senior student-athletes. Some coaches do this well, but it is not the norm across the country since "normal" is bidding farewell to athletes once they've completed their athletic eligibility. "Normal" is also not proactively developing the kinds of relationships with former athletes that can lead to annual or major gift contributions.

We have placed shared responsibility between Outcomes Advisors and coaches to collect the data by distributing a survey to seniors. Last year we shifted internal responsibilities and have a new EVO Program Manager, Ms. Tianna Diaz, who has primary responsibility for EVO metrics. With her help, we have contiued to monitor two key data collection points and improved a systematic way to track launch statistics.

Immediately upon graduation, we require coaches to collect an initial plan, an email address, and telephone number. Step two is a rigorous evaluation of launch status 12 months after graduation for each cohort. We believe that the Fall 2018 graduation cohort was the first group meaningfully impacted by the EVO System so we started our first serious launch evaluation work this year. Diaz followed each graduate from the Fall 2018, Winter 2019, Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 cohorts (one complete academic year), collecting their industry/role data and evaluating them as "launched" or not. We now have preliminary data for the Fall 2019 - Summer 2020 cohort, but the impact of the pandemic on economic growth and hiring clouds any conclusions we can make for this group. In general, we are now able to start doing more granular analysis of teams, majors, industries, genders, and other identifiers that will help us further focus programming. We also follow up with each individual designated as "not launched" to offer any assistance necessary to help move them into the "launch" category.

After compiling the graduation launch data we automatically move all new graduates into the EVO Pro Network and begin the long-term work of getting them engaged in giving back to current Aggies through career help as well as philanthropy. Nationally, student-athletes generally give back to their alma mater at a lower rate than non-athlete students but we believe that future Aggies will feel much greater affinity once they ascribe some of their career success to our specific work with the EVO System.

## IV. Designate Term for Experiential Learning

Every coach is required to designate at least one academic quarter where athletic requirements will be minimized and the opportunity to complete a required experiential learning opportunity (ELO) will be prioritized. Our definition of an ELO is broader than traditional internships and includes study abroad, volunteer work, paid employment, leadership in student-athlete organizations, and any other experience that allows Aggies to apply their student-athlete skills in a non-athletic context as well.

# BIG NEW CONCEPTS

## **Project Destined**

Our most exciting new adventure this year was a combined effort of EVO and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office under Executive Director Dwight Smith. We partnered with a non-profit called **Project Destined** (PD), whose mission is to "transform minority youth into owners and stakeholders in the communities in which they live, work and play". Founded by real estate and investment banking veteran Cedric Bobo, PD provides paid experiential learning opportunities designed to introduce students from underrepresented minorities to the world of wealth creation through real estate.

With weekly education sessions, connection to successful mentors in the industry, guidance by neer-peer mentors, and gamified competitions for biweekly pitches, participants are able to take a crash course in evaluating and investing in commercial properties, while building social capital and earning a stipend and prize money competing against teams from other universities.

UC Davis was the first intercollegiate athletics program to partner with PD and we had our first cohort of eight black student-athletes complete the program in Fall 2020, thanks to generous support from men's basketball alum Jordan Moss. Our participants demonstrated the strengths competitive athletes bring to any workplace competition by consistently winning and creating future opportunities for themselves.

We then worked with PD to create a pilot of their programming in another industry - commercial banking - thanks to the openness of River City Bank and their willingness to be creative with their Banking Academy internship model.



The Winter 2021 cohort had the same kind of life-changing experience, learning about banking, connecting with mentors, and ultimately opening doors for internships and full-time post-graduate positions. The generous funding of the Koret Foundation made this kind of innovative and curated approach to experiential learning possible and we're looking forward to expanding the model in the 2021-22 academic year.

## **Launch Day**

With the advent of the pandemic in Spring 2020, we were deprived of the ability to recognize the launch stories of graduating Aggies. The innovators in our marketing team, led by Associate AD Danielle Shank and assisted by EVO Pro fellow Abbey Mariani, put together a virtual "Launch Day" that gave every team a window during a daylong celebration on our website. Individual student-athletes were invited to contribute video and we were able to provide a short term answer that tells some of the stories of our extraordinary graduates. We continued this new virtual tradition in Spring 2021, but are looking forward to more in-person celebrations in the new year.



# AGGIE STORIES

#### Chethan Swanson, Men's Tennis, Class of 2021



"The Aggie Evo Program conveyed to me that being a student athlete is not a limitation, but rather an asset if you apply the right mindset. I am forever grateful to coach Steidlmayer and coach Robinson, as well as my mentors from the athletic department, for encouraging me to actively pursue career goals while balancing my athletic commitments. I owe all of my success to my beloved Aggie family who instilled their support for me from beginning to end. Thank you all!"

Transfer Pricing Consultant, Deloitte

#### **Andrea Gomez-Lloret, Women's Golf, Class of 2022**



"The EVO System has been instrumental to my career development. It was through a Speed Networking Event that I was able to get my first internship opportunity as a sophomore. Since then, EVO has shaped my path tremendously by giving me the ability to build and create my own SARG, Athletes in Business, where I have been able to not only connect other student-athletes to the business world, but most importantly, invite industry practitioners to be our mentors."

**Technology Consulting Intern, PW Coopers** 

#### **Jack Stafford, Water Polo, Class of 2020**



"Aggie EVO helped me network and learn what I truly wanted to do. It opened my eyes to various opportunities to my interests in business and investments. I am thankful for the framework and guidance that was provided through EVO."

Investment
Banking Analyst,
Accelerate Sports







# **APPENDICES**

# **Aggie EVO Launch Reports**

The attached reports were developed from our second complete academic cohort. The 2019-20 graduated student-athletes were tracked at one-year post graduation to determine launch status. The reports provide a brief overview of each academic quarter's cohort and offer insight into launch percentage, team gender, major, professional industry category, and launch outcome. Our industry categories were created from primary job industries. Our three major launch outcome categories are employment, graduate or professional degree program, and professional athlete.

In order, the reports below represent the Fall 2019, Winter 2020, Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 cohorts. Professionally, we have a very diverse alumni population. We still have room to improve in our methods for tracking and contacting student-athletes one year post graduation as ideally the number of unknowns would be zero. Our actual launch rate continues to be roughly double the last known data from UC Davis students in general as well as national averages for "full employment" post-graduation.

#### Fall 2019 Cohort

#### 69.6% Launched

(16 Launched - 2 Did Not Launch - 5 Unknown - 23 Graduates)

#### **By Team Gender**

18 Men 5 Women

#### By Major

1 African American and African Studies
1 Chemistry
1 Cinema and Digital Media
3 Communication
1 English
1 Global Disease Biology
1 Human Development
5 Managerial Economics
2 NPB
1 Nutrition Science
1 Psychology

3 Sociology 1 Sociology - Organizational Studies 1 Wildlife, Fish & Conservation Biology

#### **By Industry**

6 Arts/Entertainment/Recreation
1 Education
3 Finance
2 Management of Companies or
Enterprises
3 Medical/Health
2 Military/Law Enforcement/Fire
1 Other
1 Sales
4 Unknown

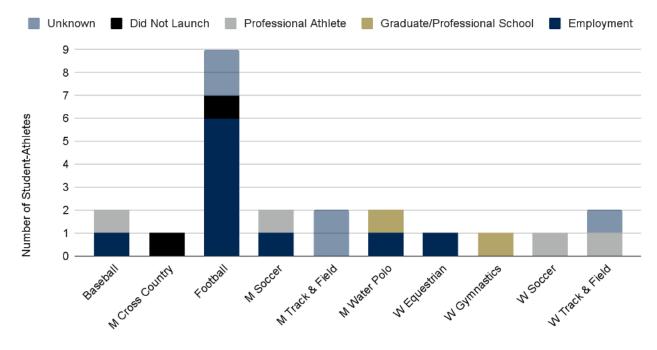
#### **By Launch Outcome**

69.9% Employment

13% Graduate or Professional School

17.4% Professional Athlete

#### Fall 2019 Graduates



#### Winter 2020 Cohort

#### 69.2% Launched

(9 Launched - 4 Unknown - 13 Graduates)

#### **By Team Gender**

7 Men 6 Women

#### **By Major**

1 African American and American
Studies
1 Agriculture and Environmental
Education
1 Biological Science
2 Communication
1 Economics
1 Genetics and Genomics
2 Managerial Economics
1 NPB
1 Psychology
3 Sociology - Organizational Studies

#### **By Industry**

1 Arts/Entertainment/Recreation
1 Finance
1 Management of Companies or
Enterprises
3 Medical/Health
2 Sales
1 Wine Industry
4 Unknown

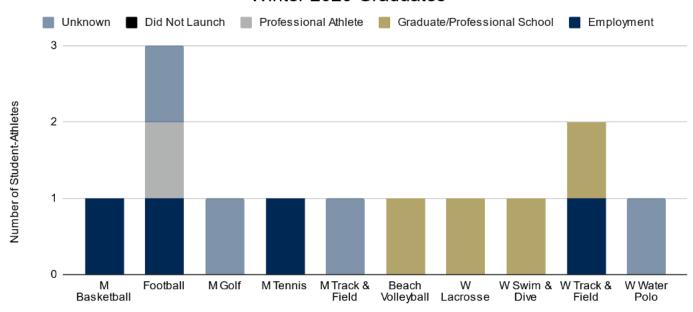
#### **By Launch Outcome**

38.5% Employment

**46.2%** Graduate or Professional School

7.7% Professional Athlete

#### Winter 2020 Graduates



## **Spring 2020 Cohort**

### 76.2% Launched

(48 Launched - 2 Did Not Launch - 13 Unknown - 63 Graduates)

#### **By Team Gender**

22 Men 41 Women

#### **Top Majors**

10 Managerial Economics
8 Human Development
6 Communication
6 Psychology
3 Animal Science
(+22 other majors represented)

#### **Top Industries**

11 Medical/Health
10 Arts/Entertainment/
Recreation
4 Engineering
4 Law
(+12 other industries
represented)

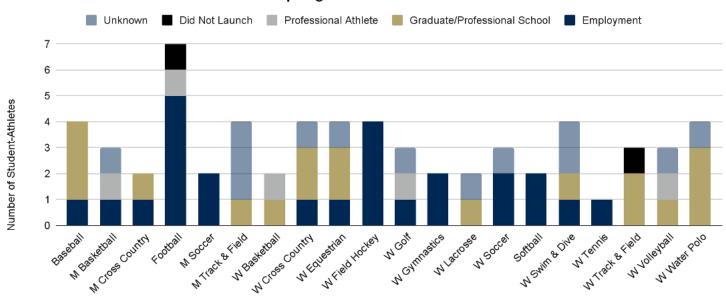
#### **By Launch Outcome**

49.2% Employment

**36.5%** Graduate or Professional School

11.1% Professional Athlete

#### Spring 2020 Graduates



#### **Summer 2020 Cohort**

#### 50% Launched

(7 Launched - 2 Did Not Launch - 5 Unknown - 14 Graduates)

#### **By Team Gender**

6 Men 8 Women

#### **By Major**

1 American Studies
1 Animal Science
1 Cinema and
Digital Media
1 Civil Engineering
1 Communication
1 Economics
1 Gender, Sexuality,
and Women's
Studies

1 History
1 Human
Development
1 International
Relations
1 Managerial
Economics
2 Political Science
1 Sociology

#### **By Industry**

3 Arts/Entertainment/
Recreation
1 Engineering
1 Medical/Health
2 PR/Communications
1 Trade
1 Veterinary Medicine
5 Unknown

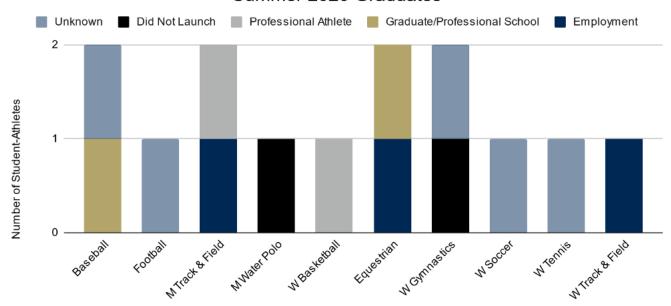
#### **By Launch Outcome**

42.9% Employment

**35.7%** Graduate or Professional School

14.3% Professional Athlete

#### Summer 2020 Graduates



WANT TO LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED?

PLEASE CONTACT: LIZ MARTIN, ASSOC. AD, DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS AT EMARTIN@UCDAVIS.EDU