

Georgia Southern University Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

[Faculty Senate Index](#)

[Faculty Senate Documents](#)

10-12-2013

Graduation Rates for Student Athletes at Georgia Southern University.

Marc D. Cyr
Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/faculty-senate-index>

 Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cyr, Marc D., "Graduation Rates for Student Athletes at Georgia Southern University." (2013). *Faculty Senate Index*. 481.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/faculty-senate-index/481>

This request for information is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Senate Documents at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Senate Index by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Graduation Rates for Student Athletes at Georgia Southern University.

Submitted by: Marc Cyr

10/12/2013

Question:

Q: What, if any, is the gap (as per the cited study in the Chronicle of Higher Education article below) between our football player Federal Graduation Rate, or FGR, and that of our full-time male student body overall?

Q: What are the respective FGR's of all of our student athletes (those receiving athletically related financial aid and not) and of our student body overall?

Q: What are the respective FGR's, sport by sport and overall, of our "full-ride" (i.e. tuition, fees, books, food, and housing) scholarship student athletes by comparison to those student athletes not receiving such a level of athletically related financial aid?

Q: What impact, if any, does Georgia Southern expect our move to FBS and the Sun Belt Conference to have on our football players' FGR? On what bases are these expectations grounded?

Q: What impact, if any, does Georgia Southern expect our move to FBS and the Sun Belt Conference to have on the FGR of our student athletes in other sports? On what bases are these expectations grounded?

Rationale:

I have consulted with Dr. Chris Geyerman, our NCAA rep, who guided me to the NCAA source below, but who told me that at least some of the information requested would not just be at anyone's fingertips.

1. According to the 2013 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report, there is a significant difference between the graduation gaps for football players in the FCS and the Southern Conference, and the FBS and the Sun Belt Conference:

	2013	4 year average mean
Southern Conference:	-8	-6
FCS:	-9	-8
Sun Belt Conference:	-13	-15
FBS:	-18	-18

We are, therefore, moving our students into an environment that, statistically, lessens the opportunity of student athletes who play football to graduate. This should be of concern to all GSU stakeholders, and is the mandated concern of GSU faculty.

2. The move to FBS will raise the profile of our football program, but also of our athletic program overall. How this will impact the graduation rates of our student athletes in sports other than football should be of concern to all GSU stakeholders, and is the mandated concern of GSU faculty.

3. At least three metrics get involved when looking at graduation rates for students and/or student athletes: FGR (Federal Graduation Rate) is, as the name implies, a measurement devised and used by the federal government; APR (Academic Progress Rate) and GSR (Graduation Success Rate) are products of the NCAA. As I understand it, there is no objectively validated correlation between any two, let alone all three of these numbers. The best I could find out was that the NCAA claims that an APR of 925 or 930 should equate with an FGR of 50%. This RFI focuses on FGR because that is the official federal government standard.

Both the FGR and the GSR necessarily involve a 4-8 year lag; both count the number of students who actually earn a degree in X number of years, so that number of years plus more time to gather and process the data intervenes between the causes of that graduation rate and the reporting of that rate. Hence, if problems are perceived to exist, claims that the causes of those problems have been and/or are being rectified can be made, with the proof-of-the-pudding always being 4-8 years in the future – a perpetually renewing result horizon.

The APR is intended to give a more timely indicator of how things are going by reporting on the immediately preceding year, and also is claimed by the NCAA to be a predictor of future graduation rates.

At any rate, when these three numbers start popping up together in the same context, things can get pretty fuzzy pretty fast. I hope the response to this RFI will take pains to

avoid the potential confusion caused by mixing together uncorrelated metrics. I further hope that the response won't get into how and why the FGR and GSR differ, and how the APR is produced; such information could, for the focus of this RFI, produce only fog or static, rather than clarity.

4. From The Chronicle of Higher Education:

September 26, 2013 by Nick DeSantis

Football Players' Graduation Rates Continue to Lag Behind Male Peers'

[Updated (9/27/2013, 1:51 p.m.) with response from the NCAA and additional detail.]

The graduation rates of football players in the NCAA's highest-profile conferences continue to lag well behind those of full-time male students, according to the 2013 Adjusted Graduation Gap Report, released on Wednesday by the College Sport Research Institute at the University of South Carolina at Columbia.

The report says all Football Bowl Subdivision conferences had negative graduation-rate gaps in double digits. As in past years, the Pacific 12 had the largest gap, with football players at the conference's universities graduating at a rate 28 points lower than full-time male students over all. The Mountain West Conference had the smallest gap among FBS conferences, at 12 percentage points.

Across the FBS conferences, the graduation-rate gaps for black football players were consistently larger than they were for white players, the report says.

The institute excludes part-time students from its analysis, which the NCAA does not do in its calculation of graduation rates. The NCAA's figures show that athletes graduate at higher rates than do nonathletes.

In a statement to The Chronicle, the NCAA said that there is "no evidence" that a part-time bias exists in graduation rates, and the institute's approach does not account for the variety of campuses and types of students.

5. From the NCAA web site: Understanding the Graduation Success Rate
<http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/newmedia/public/rates/index5.html>

Each year, the NCAA publicly announces the Graduation Success Rate of all Division I institutions, along with a similar Division II Academic Success Rate. According to the most recent Graduation Success Rate data, 82 percent of Division I freshmen scholarship student-athletes who entered college in 2004 earned a degree. In Division II, 73 percent of freshmen student-athletes who entered college in 2004 graduated. The graduation-rate data are based on a six-year cohort prescribed by the U.S. Department of Education.

The NCAA developed the Division I Graduation Success Rate in response to college and university presidents who wanted graduation data that more accurately reflect the mobility among all college students today.

Both the Graduation Success Rate and the Academic Success Rate account for the academic outcomes of student-athletes who transfer from one institution to another. The rate compiled using the federal government's methodology does not count transfers in and counts transfers out as graduation failures. Regardless of which rate is used, student-athletes are shown to graduate at a higher rate than their peers in the general student body.

Division I Graduation Success Rate:

- [Search GSR by Sport, School, Conference and Year](#)
- [Ten-Year Trends in Graduation Success Rates and Federal Graduation Rates at NCAA Division I Institutions](#)

Federal Graduation Rates:

- [Search Federal Graduation Rates for Divisions I, II and III by Sport, School, Conference and Year](#)
- [Report Archive](#)

Last Updated: Jul 9, 2012

Response:

10/15/2013: Forwarded to Tom Kleinlein, Athletics Director, for response.

Dr. Costomiris,

Below is the reply for information that you requested from Mr. Kleinlein.

Thank you.

Keith Roughton
Director of NCAA Compliance

Questions:

Q: What, if any, is the gap (as per the cited study in the Chronicle of Higher Education article below) between our football player Federal Graduation Rate, or FGR, and that of our full-time male student body overall?

This data is from the recently released 2013 NCAA Graduation Rate. Cohort is the 2006 Freshman Class.

(This data cohort consists of full time first timer bachelor's degree seeking undergraduate students who entered in the fall of 2006. This is data was reported to the NCAA by the University's office of strategic research and analysis.)

University Total 2006 50%, Four Class Average 47%
University: 2006 Men 44%; Four Class Average 40%
Football Student-Athletes: 2006; 38% Four Class Average 38%

Q: What are the respective FGR's of all of our student athletes (those receiving athletically related financial aid and not) and of our student body overall?

This data only includes student-athletes who received athletic aid. Student-athletes who do not receive aid are not part of the data set.

University Total 2006 50%, Four Class Average 47%
Baseball: 2006 71%, Four Class Average 35%
Men's Basketball 2006 75% Four Class Average 45%
Note: The NCAA does not calculate individual single year graduation rates for the following sports only Four Year Class Averages.
Golf Four Year Class Average 50%
Men's Soccer Four Year Class Average 64%
Men's Tennis Four Year Class Average 29%
University Women 2006 57% Four Year Class Average 55%
Women's Basketball 2006 100% Four Year Class Average 73%
Women's Track/Cross Country 2006 57%; Four Class Average 69%

Note: The NCAA does not calculate individual single year graduation rates for the following sports only Four Year Class Averages.

Women's Soccer Four Class Average 65%
Women's Swimming Four Class Average 70%
Women's Tennis Four Class Average 75%
Volleyball Four Class Average 80%

Q: What are the respective FGR's, sport by sport and overall, of our "full-ride" (i.e. tuition, fees, books, food, and housing) scholarship student athletes by comparison to those student athletes not receiving such a level of athletically related financial aid?

At the time of this data report (Fall 2006), we offered full scholarships in the following sports: Football, Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, and Volleyball. All of our other sports offer partial scholarships to individuals. The NCAA requires tracking of all student-athletes who are on some form of athletics scholarship so we do not break it out based on full scholarship vs. partial scholarship.

Q: What impact, if any, does Georgia Southern expect our move to FBS and the Sun Belt Conference to have on our football players' FGR? On what bases are these expectations grounded? Our expectations for football as well as our other sport programs in the move to the Sun Belt are for our programs to meet the academic distinction objectives outlined in our strategic plan. The academic and leadership development expectations we have our programs are:

- 1) Recruit student-athletes who have demonstrated a quantifiable commitment to academics.
- 2) Ensure that each student-athlete has an academic plan based on his or her academic background that is developed from the input and advice of all constituents involved with the student-athlete.
- 3) Require that academic success is a vital part of all coaching staff's programs through measurable policy and procedures that are valued and adhered to by their staffs.
- 4) Develop student-athletes who graduate from Georgia Southern with the desire and skill to assume leadership roles in society.
- 5) Create a department which emphasizes the development of the total student-athlete through programs that accentuate career and social development.

Q: What impact, if any, does Georgia Southern expect our move to FBS and the Sun Belt Conference to have on the FGR of our student athletes in other sports? On what bases are these expectations grounded? See above answer.

Minutes: 11/20/2013:

6.1. Graduation Rates for Student Athletes at Georgia Southern University (Athletic Director): the following document was provided to us by Keith Roughton, Director of NCAA Compliance.

Marc Cyr (CLASS): The numbers were interesting. The gaps between our football student athletes and our University male non-athlete overall are about what I expected from the NCAA and the grade gap report 2%, 6% depending upon where you look. Some of the other numbers like a 4-year class average of 35%, but a one-year FGR of 71% for baseball is interesting, but probably can be accounted for by luck of the

draw, just depending upon the cohort for that year. But what I was concerned about was that one of the questions was not answered. Q: What impact, if any, does Georgia Southern expect our move to FBS and the Sun Belt Conference to have on our football players' FGR? And On what bases are these expectations grounded? That really did not receive a reply as to what impact is expected, and why we might expect that because we are moving into an environment, a conference environment where the football gap is far larger than it is in the conference in which we are now probably, I'm just speculating because of increased competition, but if we are moving our students into that academic environment, I wonder if academics were considered at all in making the move to the Bowl Division. And if so what's in store for helping our student-athletes who play football have a decent opportunity and not a lessened opportunity to graduate with a college degree.

Robert Costomiris, Senate Moderator and Chair, Senate Executive Committee: Is Chris Geyerman here?

Chris Geyerman (CLASS) NCAA Faculty Athletic Rep: I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the academics of any student group, and athletes, in particular, since I work so closely in an oversight capacity with respect to their academics and overall well being. I don't know that its that the academics weren't considered in making the move, and I'll give kind of a, in fact, they were considered. I'll give you one factual example, and I'll rely on Provost Bartels and Vice President Whitaker to correct me, if I misspeak. One of the things that's happened in planning for this move because the expectation is that the athletic department will grow a little bit. Certainly the football team will. As in this summer, I chaired a committee and we hired a Director of Student Athlete Academic Services. Her name is Allison Ruff. Until Allison came on board, Student Athlete Academic Services were grouped in with Compliance, and Keith Roughton, did both of those jobs, and they are both full-time jobs. Since arriving, Allison has done a really nice job. She's come to the University Athletics Committee meetings. Dr. Mondor serves as the Senate Rep on those committees, so he can attest to what I'm saying and so can your elected colleagues from your respective colleges. And she's doing a really nice job in terms of planning and getting her structure in place, given the fact that we're going to be in the Sun Belt next year. I also want to point out that this office in consultation with Athletic Director Kleinlein, he and I had several lengthy discussions and came to the conclusion that its more of an academic affair than an athletic affair. That there was kind of an apparent, at least room for a perceived conflict of interest having student athlete academic affairs, in the Athletics Department, so that office now reports to the Provost and is housed in the Provost's office, and the budget line for that entire office was transferred from the Athletic Department into the Provost's Office, so it didn't eat up dollars that were already in the Provost's Office. So that's one thing that's happened, structurally. In addition, the University Athletics Committee, just at our meeting this morning, was talking about what's this going to mean for our student athletes and one of the things that we're going to do as we begin growing is send a member from the Student Athlete Academic Center on the road trips with the student athletes and conduct study hall while they're on the road, actually that would be the same as if they were here. Another thing that's happened in terms of discussion,

nothing substantive has come of it yet, it will be on the agenda for the Faculty Athletic Representatives Association at the Sun Belt meeting this May is we're trying to work out a kind of tradeoff so that when a school say from Texas comes to Georgia to play Georgia Southern and Georgia State that we open up our Student Athlete Academic Success Center to them for a couple of hours and when we're on the road we'll do the same thing. That's going to be a logistical nightmare and it will be kind of fun to be involved in those discussions, so those are some things that have happened, and I totally agree with Marc that it wasn't that that aspect of the RFI definitely wasn't directly addressed, but those are some of the things that have happened. And I could share my opinion, but that's all it would be and the grounds on which I hold that opinion with respect to the changes that the move to the Sun Belt will make. And I don't think they're going to be significant, personally and I'll tell you why, is in my experience you get a head coach that holds the kids accountable they're going to be accountable. You get a head coach that doesn't and they're not going to be accountable.

If you think back to the cohort for the 38% federal graduation rate that the football team has in this year's report that's the 2006 cohort, right. If you go back a little bit and look at what was happening with the football team in 2005, we dismissed a coach that was a winning coach. He was winning on the field and nobody knew why that coach's contract wasn't renewed, and the then Athletic Director took a lot of heat for that. We then had a coach for one year and then we had a bunch of instability in the football program, so I feel pretty confident in predicting that next year's federal graduation rate when its released in the 2014 stats, might even be a little bit worse because we are right into the heart of the instability this thing going six or seven years back. And I don't think it will affect any of the other sports because they are not making a change in Division. All of our other sports except football are already in Division I, so the volleyball team, they're going to go to, you know, the same NCAA Tournament that Georgia and Georgetown and you know all of the other Division I schools go to. The only sport that it represents a change in Divisional affiliation for is football. And it will be interesting to see if we have a coach that emphasizes athletic, or academic, they're all going to emphasize athletics, then its a great thing, and the kids will do it. And if we get a coach like when we interviewed one coach, and the comment was, and I have to listen between the lines, I want to make sure all my kids stay eligible, and I thought oh my God, if that's the expectation that's exactly what we're going to get. And the eligibility expectation for the NCAA is 12 hours a semester. Well, that's been up increased, but the GPA is a 2.00, which is a little bit on the low side for my likings as a faculty member, so that's those are some things that have happened in the planning that have actually happened and my opinion for whatever that's worth.