Model Structure for Student-Athlete Development
The Purpose of Student-Athlete Development

- To prepare student-athletes for life after athletics as they develop the necessary skills to be engaged citizens and prepared professionals.

- Given the unique needs of the 21st century student-athlete, intentional programming is essential for transition to and success in life after athletics.
The SAKC offers this model structure to illustrate a best practice approach to holistic student-athlete development programming.

This resource includes:
1. A **Guiding Framework** for student-athlete development.
2. **Objectives** applicable to each element of the guiding framework.
3. Recommended **Program Standards**-Minimum, Enhanced, Exemplary
Guiding Framework
Model Structure for Student-Athlete Development

The guiding framework illustrates a progression from an inward focus on self (personal enhancement) to an external focus on community (social responsibility and leadership) and the workforce (career development and prepared professional) as a student-athlete advances from matriculation to graduation.
Personal enhancement is the foundation for student-athlete success. This includes a focus on personal identity and values, wellbeing, transition and reflection.

Prepared Professional:
Intentional application and reflection of skills to inform personal identity.

Leadership:
Develop personal, social, and professional leadership skills.

Social Responsibility:
Emphasize social awareness, civic engagement and moral application.

Career Development:
Assist with career exploration, choice, preparation and transition.

Personal enhancement is the foundation for student-athlete success. This includes a focus on personal identity and values, wellbeing, transition and reflection.

Model developed by Dr. Kristina Navarro, University of Wisconsin Whitewater in consultation with:

- NCAA Leadership Development yearly initiatives and standards committee
- N4A student-athlete development committee
- LEAP initiatives (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) standards
Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), Defined

- Student-athletes should come together throughout intercollegiate athletics to make their voices heard on their campuses, in their conferences and nationally. NCAA rules require that these committees exist at each of the campus, conference and national levels. Through these committees, student-athletes offer input on the rules, regulations and policies that affect their lives on campus. At the campus level, SAACs promote communication between athletics administrators and student-athletes and represent the student-athlete voice within the athletics departments.

- Regarding Student-Athlete Development, SAAC should be engaged in all program areas and provide insight into student-athlete experience.

- Recommended standards for SAAC activity include:

  **Exemplary**
  - Expected national involvement.

  **Enhanced**
  - Community service involvement monthly

  **Minimum**
  - Monthly meetings and officers identified
  - Regional or conference involvement
  - Campus collaboration with other student groups
The objectives describe topics and institutional actions to include in a student-athlete development program. These are defined for each element of the guiding framework.
As the first step in the development process, student-athletes should focus intently on personal enhancement and an understanding of how their institution defines academic and athletic excellence. Personal enhancement is the foundation for overall student-athlete success. It should include a focus on personal identity and values, well-being, transition and reflection.

**Programming topics:**
- Transitioning to college
- Time management
- Accountability
- Personal branding
- Making good choices
- Ethics
- Character building

**Institutional actions:**
- Communicate expectations regarding academic and athletic excellence.
- Present campus wide opportunities and resources to enhance campus engagement.
- Establish peer mentorship groups to guide engagement and the personal development process.
- Create an environment that fosters social connections between first year students and veteran peer mentors.
- Pursue campus opportunities to collaborate on programming on these topics.

**Mental health**
- Personal finance

**Social Media Training**
- Identity and Values

**Coping Skills/Stress Management**
- Study Skills

**Wellness/Nutrition**
As the second step in the development process, student-athletes should reflect on healthy relationships and their role in the community. Social responsibility should emphasize social awareness, civic engagement and moral application.

**Programming topics:**
- Violence prevention
- LGBTQ
- Title IX
- Moral Development
- Decision Making
- Citizenship
- Alcohol and Other Drug Use

**Institutional actions:**
- Provide guidance to student-athletes on how to develop and foster healthy relationships.
- Introduce campus based programs available to students (e.g., counseling, personal finance).
- Implement in-person or online drug/alcohol education focusing on safety and prevention.
- Provide training (staff and S/As) for Bystander Intervention Skills (Violence Prevention).
- Consider involvement in NCAA Programs: APPLE Conference.
- Pursue campus opportunities to collaborate on programming on these topics.
Objectives: Leadership Development

- As the third step in the development process, student-athletes should focus on developing personal, social and professional leadership skills and translating these skills to the athletics setting, classroom and community.

Programming topics:
- Different leadership theories and styles
- Institutional traditions
- Skills necessary to serve as a campus leader via intentional involvement
- How to practice civic and community leadership via community service involvement
- Personal leadership and leading by example
- Vocal leadership and leading teammates
- Transitional leadership skills

Institutional actions:
- Provide support to the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, including its development of community-based leadership activities.
- Promote opportunities for student-athletes to practice on and off campus leadership (community or civic partnerships and initiatives).
- Promote the opportunity for student-athlete involvement in NCAA Programs: NCAA Student-Athlete Leadership Forum, Career in Sports Forum.
- Collaborate with Leadership Development units on campus.
- Recognize leadership accomplishments of student-athletes.
Objectives: Career Development

As the fourth step in the development process, student-athletes should explore career choice, preparation and transition. This includes major selection and preparation for life after college in career fields.

Programming topics:

- Reflection on leadership style and personality strengths and weaknesses.
- Creation of a career development plan to assist with major exploration and choice.
- Opportunities available to students via institutional career and/or leadership development offices.
- Practical opportunities available in one’s field of interest (i.e. field experience and internship opportunities).
- Development of professional materials for employment including resume and cover letter.
- Professional interviewing, written and verbal communication skills.
- Professional dress.

Institutional actions:

- Offer leadership assessment instruments to help student-athletes identify personal strengths, weaknesses and potential career interests.
- Offer support (personal or electronic) for student-athletes to develop a personal career development plan (CDP).
- Pursue campus opportunities to collaborate on programming on remaining career development topics.
The program standards outline offerings to be provided by a minimum, intermediate or advanced program.
**Program Standards: Personal Enhancement**

**Exemplary**
- External experts offering student-athlete specific content for all other personal enhancement topics. Prioritize based on needs assessment or recommendation by SAAC.

**Enhanced**
- Student-athlete specific social media education/training.

**Minimum**
- Freshmen Transitional Workshop/Class.
- Student-athlete specific programming regarding identity and values.
- Resources/Education for students to know how to access general institutional services related to personal enhancement topics.
Exemplary

- External experts offering student-athlete specific content for all other social responsibility topics. Prioritize based on needs assessment or recommendation by SAAC.

Enhanced

- External programs available via local or national grants for student-athlete specific programming related to social responsibility topics.
- Participation in the ‘It’s on Us’ Campaign

Minimum

- Reinforce learning from freshmen transitional workshops through the lens of being a socially responsible college student.
- Resources/education for students to know how to access general institutional services related to social responsibility topics.
Program Standards: Leadership Development

Exemplary

• External experts offering student-athlete specific content for all other social responsibility topics. Prioritize based on needs assessment or recommendation by SAAC.
• Programming and opportunities to empower student-athletes to take active leadership roles within the department and on campus.
• Connection with local professionals to serve as mentors.
• Leadership endorsement program created in collaboration with other campus units.

Enhanced

• Formal student-athlete specific curriculum in the form of a leadership academy with faculty consultants or NCAA.

Minimum

• SAAC led community outreach initiative.
• Resources/education for students to know how to access general institutional services related to leadership development topics.
Program Standards: Career Development

Exemplary

- External experts (e.g., outside consultants or potential employer assistance) offering student-athlete specific content for all other career development topics. Prioritize based on needs assessment or recommendation by SAAC.
- Mock interviews with outside companies.
- Student-athlete specific career fair.
- One-on-one career development and job search support.
- Senior transition workshop.
- Learning communities and first year interest groups.
- Professional development night (i.e. networking/etiquette), connecting student-athletes and professionals.

Enhanced

- Student-athlete specific resume and cover letter workshops.
- Mock interviews (facilitated by the institution) for juniors and senior student-athletes.

Minimum

- Promote opportunity to attend NCAA Career in Sports Forum.
- Resources/education for students to know how to access general institutional services related to career development topics.
Focus on relationship building across campus units

Work with coaches to understand needs

Work with the NCAA/N4A to enhance programming and use standards as a guide

Consider faculty expertise

Utilize SAAC as a advisory board or pilot