

Academic Progress and Eligibility Committee (APEC) Annual Report
May 20, 2025

Dear Faculty Senate Executive Committee Members,

I write to you as the Chair of the Academic Eligibility and Progress Committee, a subcommittee of the Athletic Board, to share my annual report for the Academic Year 2024-2025.

The Academic Progress and Eligibility Committee (APEC) had a busy year discussing numerous changes at the campus level all the way through the NCAA level. We successfully conducted 5 Sport Reviews with the respective Team Head Coaches.

APEC Official Sport Review Summary AY 24-25

The APEC is officially tasked with reviewing three key criteria for every team head coach on a 3-year cycle. Since there were no newly hired head coaches, there were no off-cycle reviews this year. Thus, reviews were only conducted at the AY24-25 September and February meetings.

The APEC sport review criteria include ensuring that:

- (1) the Team GPA for the past 6 semesters is a 2.25 or higher
- (2) the Scholarship athletes earn a 2.25 GPA or higher for the past 6 semesters
- (3) 80% of the team earns a 2.0 or higher

APEC Sport Reviews Completed This Year:

- September 2023: WSD, MTE, WSB
- February 2024: MFB, MGO,

Regular APEC Sport Reviews were conducted this year for 5 teams including Men's Tennis (MTE), Women's Swimming & Diving (WSD), Women's Softball (WSB), Men's Football (MFB), and Men's Golf (MGO). All five teams met and far exceeded the 3 APEC criteria, including notable consistent increases in term GPA for the teams. The coaches consistently complimented Dr. Stephon Fuqua's academic counseling team at Irwin Student Services for their support in achieving consistent performance in terms of academic excellence. However, I noted that for such efforts to be effective, the coach must also be willing to hold high academic standards for their team.

In September, all three teams met and exceeded the criteria. We noted a consistent record of both academic excellence, paired with strong public engagement from both the Women's Swimming & Diving as well as the Women's Softball teams in AY23-24. This was further validated by WSD winning the 2025 Oskees award for the Illini Way student athlete team development competition.

Similarly, in February both teams met and exceeded all 3 criteria. Men's Football had an excellent APEC review to share including reaching over 3.0 average GPA for the past 4 semesters. This was notable because not only are students who choose to stay at Illinois Athletics successfully graduating, they are on average ending up on average eligible for graduate school (especially if this trend of average over 3.0 continues). The review committee noted that the academic success of the football team must be attributed in large part to Dr. Stephon Fuqua, Mike Maziarz, Rachel Kaltwasser, and Madison Rayam.

Men's Golf has an incredibly prestigious historical record of academic excellence. Yet, they also experienced an academic record in Fall 2024 with a team average GPA for Fall 2024 of 3.71. Coach Small's team consistently performs well academically in large part due to the long-term partnership with Shari Clapp.

Another review component includes the Academic Progress Report and Graduation Success Rate for each head coach. These numbers became publicly available again for all NCAA coaches starting this year.

General APEC Updates September 2024

Within the subcommittee meeting, Dr. Fuqua provided an update on AY 2023-2024 academic performance and graduates.

- 128 graduates across 10 colleges and 46 unique majors
 - 24 December 2023 graduates
 - 94 May 2024 graduates
 - 7 August 2024 graduates
 - The greatest representation of graduating student athletes remain in AHS and Gies

Spring 2024 Academic Data shared included:

- Average combined SP24 Term GPA for All Teams 3.46
- Average combined FA23-SP24 Term GPA for All Teams 3.47

Additional Notes included:

- 28 Consecutive Semesters Combined GPA above 3.0
- 18/19 Teams Earned over 3.0 SP24 Term GPA
- 79 Student-Athletes Earned a 4.0 SP24 Term GPA
- 76% of all student-athletes earned a 3.0 or better SP24 Term GPA

General APEC Updates December 2024/February 2025

We were pleased to celebrate 24 graduates for December, 2024. These graduates represented ACES, AHS, LAS, Media, Grainger, Education, and Gies. This included 7 certificate programs and 5 masters degrees.

The 2023-2024 Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for the 2014-2017 cohort was recently announced – 93%. This was down 2 points from the previous year but still within the top 4-5 schools in the B1G conference (Northwestern was 98% and Michigan was 96%). WE noted that 9 teams earned a perfect 100% GSR (MGO, MGY, MWR, WBB, WGO, WGY, WSO, WTN, WVB). Dr. Fuqua’s team noted that plans are underway to bolster the graduation completion program for student athletes who left the university and athletics program without completing their degree. This program financially supports student athletes in completing their remaining degree requirements.

Overall, Fall 2024 athletics programs had great academic success.

- All 19 teams earned over a 3.0 term GPA
- 29 consecutive semester record of combined student athlete GPA above 3.0
- 89 student athletes who earned a 4.0 term GPA
- 79% of student athletes earned a 3.0 or better for the Fall 2024 term GPA

General APEC Updates May 2025

Spring/Summer 2025 athletics programs data will not be available until after May 22nd. We were pleased to celebrate 124 graduates for Spring/Summer across 10 colleges and 52 unique majors. These graduates represented ACES (6), AHS (28), LAS (28), Media (2), Grainger (3), Education (2), and Gies (22), iSchool (2), Grad College (28). This included 16 certificate programs and 12 master’s degrees.

APEC subcommittee meeting summaries

1. SAE Updates

This academic year, due to changes in university funding INBAL was no longer available to support the Screen Assess Evaluate (SAE) process. Therefore, DIA academic services staff had to pivot the process to continue to support students seeking DRES accommodations.

One key component to the 3-tier SAE process involves Clinical Case Consultations, which provide a collaborative space for academic counseling staff, learning specialists, mental health providers, trainers, and coaches to explore best ways to intentionally support student athlete success both athletically and academically.

Faculty members of the subcommittee expressed desire to continue to support this process and were pleased with the academic results it is producing. We believe all Illinois students should have access to this type of intentionally structured support and are proud that DIA is a thought leader in this space.

2. General Conference and NCAA topics

The FAR reports this year continued to center around the Big 10 FAR meeting and conversations related to missed class days as the conference works on supporting student athletes academically despite major expansion to the conference. The Big 10 has worked hard to support member institutions in the logistics of scheduling competitions, such that

there is not significant concern about scheduling impacts on student athlete missed days of class. As well, Illinois already provides 10 days with a process that allows for petitioning APEC for approval of additional days beyond 10. This process requires a written justification of why the team needs more than 10 days and what action was taken to ensure students remain in good standing.

3. Provost Office Updates

The committee continued to discuss provost office updates related to federal changes that could impact campus and athletics. The primary concern related to supporting international student athletes and an ability to continue to serve the wide range of student athlete unique needs.

4. Missed class days and APEC process

The subcommittee members also discussed missed class days for student athletes as it relates to competition scheduling and APEC approval processes. The subcommittee noted the updated language in the student code regarding competition scheduling during finals week. The subcommittee provided additional guidance to the chair regarding practical implementation of the updated language and general process for APEC approval.

In sum, although the landscape of college athletics continues to evolve, the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics has successfully supported our students.

Best,

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