University of Wisconsin-River Falls Instructional Staff Views and Attitudes Towards Student Athletes On Campus.

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Abstract

In the growing world of college athletics we are beginning to see some issues with student-athletes. Many are believed to be considered the dumb jock, the party animal, or worse. Many also believe student athletes are considered hard workers and put efforts into academics and the respective athletic activity. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there are different perceptions of student-athletes from University of Wisconsin-River Falls Instructional staff members in classes and with class work at UWRF. There have been possibilities of both positive and negative views with student-athletes and this issue needs to be seen on a higher level. Previous research relates into the ideas, attitudes and judgments shared by faculty as well as other students on other campuses. Using a mixed methods approach of using both quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher will determine a possible relationship. This study was not meant to attack but identify the possibility of mistreatment if any at the college level.

A survey was conducted by gaining a random sample of the UWRF student population and all 392 members of the UWRF Instructional staff. The survey included questions on the perceptions of student athletes from the instructional staff points of view. Both students and instructional staff were asked to participate because of insight the two sides can provide on interactions between instructional staff and student athletes.

The research indicated that UWRF instructional staff members do not have any preconceived notions or attitudes towards student athletes at UWRF. There was insight brought in by open ended questions provided by both the students and the UWRF instructional staff. It did bring a negative connotation to the main idea presented, but only in a few cases. It has become evident that there was a possibility of mistreatment because of stereotypes and one

student athlete at UWRF causing possible problems creating tension between select UWRF Instructional staff members.

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Introduction

Over the past years in my life I have experienced and witnessed many different views of athletes in schools from a variety of people. These views or are often stereotypical, involving both from a positive stand point or a negative standpoint involving student-athletes at UWRF. One specific view that seems to be occurring regularly is from the educators themselves, more specifically UWRF academic faculty. What seems to be the problem is many student athletes get an impression that college educators do not like or prefer students whom are not athletes. Many student athletes believe unfair treatment towards them is seen regularly both in the classroom and with their grades. From another perspective it has also been told unfair treatment is in a positive way. Some believe student-athletes at UWRF see better scores on work and better treatment in classes because of their student-athlete status. A third ideal is there is no mistreatment at all and all students are treated fairly. Bottom line, I want to know what this campus has to say about this dilemma.

The reason I am looking into this is because somewhere along the line a student had felt mistreated negatively and believed it was because of being an athlete on campus and this individual was not alone. It intrigued me because I knew the instructor and received no mistreatment. After a while I began to put it past me that this had to be false, but issues kept coming up from other athletes on being treated better in other classes. After hearing these perspectives I began to think something was occurring at a level higher than expected. It was then, in my graduate program, I gained a strong interest in finding out why and how big of an issue this could be.

Statement of the Problem and Hypothesis

Some major questions come to mind on this issue. Do UWRF Instructional Staff see athletes differently based on stereotypes seen in society? Are these stereotypes positive or negative, where did they come from? Does the student athlete show a self-fulfilling prophecy in the way they appear or act? Was the professor themselves an athlete and does that affect their view? These questions helped me come to a null and alternative hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis is, UWRF instructional staff on campus have a positive view on the student athlete. This view affects the scores on work and the treatment in classroom in noticeable ways and has a basis with stereotypes and past experiences in comparison to other students. The null hypothesis is, Professors on campus have a negative view on the student athlete. This view affects the scores on work and the treatment in classroom in noticeable ways; it is based on stereotypes and previous encounters with comparison to other students. Many former athletes have given the researcher their own experiences and opinions on student athletes and their good. However the questions from the study can answer what other educators believe. Answers must be found to the provocative questions on why this occurs even if it occurs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a different perception of student-athletes from UWRF Instructional staff members in classes and with class work at UWRF. There have been possibilities of both positive and negative views with student-athletes and this issue needs to be seen on a higher level. Previous research relates into the ideas, attitudes, and judgments shared by faculty as well as other students on other campuses. Using a mixed methods approach of using both quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher has determined a possible relationship. This study was not meant to attack but identify the possibility of mistreatment if any at the college level.

Literature Review

The Division III Experience

When research has been done it has predominantly been done in NCAA Division II programs. With the focus of this study being done only at a NCAA Division III institute it is only fair that the reader understand what Division III is and why it is important. Participants in Division III athletics are not exactly seen like Division I athletes. Jim Schmotter is the chairman of NCAA Division III athletics and provides insight to what Division III is in his article *The Division III Experience* on January 27 2012. He begins his article by discussing differences you see in Division III, an example is Division III athletes do not receive scholarships for their athletic competition. Simply put the Division III athlete plays for the love of the game rather than facing any negatives that come with receiving a scholarship.

It is also foreseen that college athletes at a Division III institute also get a better spectrum of college life. This could be for better or worse, but you are more likely to find student athletes in Division III studying abroad, performing other talents in public, or participating in student government.

Schmotter's (2012) Article stated:

Young men and women (in Division III) are different in participating in an environment where the overwhelming focus of athletics is the educational value and benefit provided to our student-athletes. All NCAA institutions pursue this focus, but the approach in Division III is unique. In particular, revenue generation and entertainment for broader audiences are not a priority for us. (par. 5)

All NCAA institutes want to be competitive, but in Division III goals are not to generate revenue and entertain the audience.

Many colleges that participate in Division III athletics want to use sports as an academic tool.

Schmotter's (2012) Article stated:

Some of the value of this participation can be measured in academic achievement. A topic of focus for the Division III community at the 2012 NCAA Convention was a recent national pilot study demonstrating that DIII student-athletes achieve higher graduation rates than do the overall student bodies of their institutions (par.7)

This is intriguing because of the main focus of this study being athletic underachievement according to UWRF Instructional Staff members.

However Division III athletes aren't so different from their Division I and II counterparts, Schmotter's (2012) Article stated:

Division III student-athletes do share many of the characteristics of their larger, taller and faster NCAA mates. They work just as hard in practice. They compete just as fiercely. Winning is their goal every time they enter the playing field, court or pool. (par. 9)

The goal is always to win, not just to play. But just like Schmotter said, Division III athletes are smaller and slower overall. Many athletes have been known to overcome this and become professional athletes, but it goes to show us once again, Division III's focus is an academic one.

Many Division I and even II athletes have a greater opportunity to become professional athletes.

Many of those students gain athletic scholarships and a greater focus is on athletics. NCAA

Division III encourages its athletes to follow their passions and discover their potential.

So what is the value of Division III athletics then? It gives the opportunity for college students to participate in the sport they love. These students did not get into school because of their athletic ability. It was their academics that got them in or at least it should have.

Athletic directors (AD's), coaches, and instructors could also see value in this study. It will only help bridge the gap many claim to see between athletics and academics. If institutions actually view athletics the way that Jim Schmotter claims, it should be used as a tool to enhance the academic side and experience Division III athletes get. The problem is the student-athlete stereotypes people see in media and what one individual athlete has done. On the other hand what do student-athletes see themselves as? Do they have a self-image of themselves that contradicts the model of Division III as a whole? All these questions are hoped to provide some enlightenment in the study.

Athletic Voices and Academic Victories: African American Male Student--Athlete Experiences in the Pac-Ten.

Very little research has been done to specify views on student -athletes from educators, let alone college athletes. However an article by Brandon E. Martin, C. Keith Harrison, Jeffrey Stone, and Suzanne Malia Lawrence titled <u>Athletic Voices and Academic Victories: African American Male Student--Athlete Experiences in the Pac-Ten from 2010 gives insight to the questions at hand. This article relates because many of these students were mistreated by stereotypes not from racism but being an athlete. The students in the study felt a great deal of</u>

pressure from professors and other students. Since these were athletes in revenue generating sports there was an opinion and attitude set against them. Subjects "felt the need to show their professors and fellow classmates (non-athletes) that they were worthy of being students at prestigious universities. Participants consistently noted that they had a point to prove." (Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010, p. 136) One subject in the study noted "A lot of times people look at me and put me in a box. They figure since I'm Black, and an athlete, I probably don't have much to say and that I'm just trying to stay eligible. (Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010, p. 144) The students in the study felt uneasy on how they were projected because of their athlete status on campus. Others perceived them as the "black athlete" before the word student. The mistreatment in the classroom caused the participants to react instead of follow the stereotype. The author called it stereotype reactance (Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010) and it gave a sense of pride to show you to the subjects. They felt they had to work harder in the classroom to gain respect from both professors and other students.

This study directly influences the research that was conducted. It is all about academic success and how student athletes have possible threats at universities. In fact in the future research section it states "Other racial groups (Whites, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders) of academically driven male student-athletes should be explored. Insights into the academic perceptions and experiences of these groups would unquestionably offer a sizeable contribution to the existing literature regarding student-athletes." (Martin, Harrison, Stone, & Lawrence, 2010, p. 148) That statement is very related to what my research hopes to conclude upon.

Class and Cleats: Community College Student Athletes and Academic Success

A second study by David Horton entitled <u>Class and Cleats: Community College Student</u>

<u>Athletes and Academic Success</u> from 2009 discussed many of the same ideals and views of the student athlete. This article discusses the relationships between the faculty members and the student athlete. It discusses a lack of positive enforcement from school faculty and a lack of achievement from student-athletes in community colleges.

Horton's (2009) Study stated:

Athletic participation has long been viewed by faculty members as a hindrance to students' success in the classroom and associated with a decreased graduation rate. The perception is that student athletes are overly concerned and occupied with activities associated with sport, such that they devote minimal attention and focus to their academic studies and development (p. 19).

The subjects believed faculty members looked down upon them instead of helping them. In the conclusion the author sates how positive relationships can better the environment of the college. Instead of looking at each other as the enemy, create interests and support to accomplish the goals of both the students and the teachers.

Simply creating programs for tutors or simply go to the game would create better relationships and remove many stereotypes and negative views of the athletes in their classes. This article directly relates to my research because it already assumes these attitudes and judgments already happen. It then takes it a step further by adding a way to solve the situation instead of just identifying it.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations for this study included:

- 1. Data was collected only at UWRF campus
- 2. Data was limited to only the responses on the research questionnaire/tool.
- 3. Data was limited to the definitions of terms in regards to student-athletes and non-student athletes.
- 4. Data was limited because only 124 respondents actually filled out the questionnaire out a perspective 824 research questionnaires emailed out.
- 5. Data was collected at the end of the academic year.

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations for the study includes

- The research questionnaire was only given out to UWRF instructional staff and a random sample of 400 UWRF students.
- The study only collected data from the research questionnaire between the dates of April 26th through May 12th 2012.

Methods

Subjects/Participants:

There are over 6000 students at UWRF, so a random sample was generated. Student candidates will be selected from a list generated from the whole student body. 400 students were selected randomly to participate in the study. Students will range between both regular students and student-athletes. Since there are only 392 UWRF Instructional staff members all Instructional staff members were asked to participate in the study.

Research design:

The two groups will have a survey specified to each group. The survey will ask for demographic data between the two groups. It will also include questions involving the subjects athletic career in their academic career in college. The survey itself will be a mixed methods survey with a large amount of likert scale questions and two short answer questions to follow. In order for ease and simplicity, the surveys will be administered through the campus wide email accounts. The campus wide email will include a brief description of the study and a return email to clarify any questions.

Variables:

This study has no specific treatment that affects the outcome but more of a subject. Two groups at hand, could affect the possible outcome. Here we have the UWRF Instructional Staff and the UWRF students. The one ideal here is negative views vs. positive views of the professors in regards to student-athletes on campus. However, Trochim (2007) does say that achievement and its measures are the dependent variables. So the positive and the negative views of the

professors are the independent variables because these are manipulated by the idea being affected by the professors themselves.

Procedures:

After generating the representing population, a survey was conducted. A survey was created using Qaultrics software. The survey itself had branches which controlled the flow of questions given determined by the demographic data the subject provided. The study used a mixed methods approach. Each group took the same survey. They included the same questions for application between the two groups, because of this it determined the true nature of the situation at hand. This had also allowed for better comparison between the two subject groups. Questions used a likert scale design which generated and determined certain measurements based on UWRF instructional staff members and students opinions, views, and attitudes about student-athletes.

Two scales were used in the survey. The first scale was used to determine the overall general attitude towards student-athletes on campus. The scale consisted of:

- 1. Very Positive
- 2. Positive
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Negative
- 5. Very Negative

The second and most used scale had seven possible responses. The scale is:

1. Strongly agree

- 2. Agree
- 3. Mildly agree
- 4. Neutral
- 5. Mildly disagree
- 6. Disagree
- 7. Strongly disagree

The idea behind the likert scale aided in designing tables to show an illustrated representation in the mind of the reader. The graphs themselves are various graphs to show the points of the likert scale for each question to show significances between both the students and UWRF instructional staff. Other questions were qualitative short answer questions which generated more views, ideas, and evidence about the situation. The open ended type essay questions provided a basis and explained the occurrence and discovered the truth of the situation. These questions were interview like and asked those in the study to elaborate on their answers they provided to illustrate a clear view on the situation and whether it needed to be improved or changed.

Data Collection Process:

Since the survey has been generated using Qualtrics software data collection was quick and consistent. The researcher asked them not to leave their names to keep the confidentiality.

After the data was collected, the researcher then paired each question and compared the answers given by the students and the UWRF instructional staff. The questions that used the likert scale type, was presented in tables. The questionnaire type were placed into two groups (Professors

and Student-athletes) and were evaluated. Those questions were then broken down into sub groups and were evaluated.

Data Analysis:

Since each question in the likert scale type had different ratings. Two tables were used each time to illustrate distinct differences between the responses of the UWRF instructional staff and the students. If responses were all heavy towards strongly agree or strongly disagree, those were thrown out. With the questionnaire type, the researcher had evaluations of each and placed similar responses together. When the responses from each group of subjects were narrowed down into subgroups relationships were found between the UWRF instructional staff responses and the students responses. Similar relationships were found and gave enlightenment to the situation.

Ethical Issues:

With this study a major ethical issue is in jeopardy. This may cause a lot of tension in the target area. There was an understanding that the study could cause conflicts between faculty members and athletes as well as the athletic department itself. A letter was included stating they do not have to complete the survey and it is just a study not an attack. It is intended to ease possible tensions and promote a more comfortable situation for the respondents. Confidentiality is under possible scrutiny as well. If respondents had put names on anything, it was thrown out.

Results

Demographic Data:

The study shows that with the 123 participants out of 124 who responded actually agreed to take the study. Figure 1 indicates this:

Figure 1

Number of Participants Who Agreed To Take the Survey

Answer		Response	%
Agree Disagree		123 1	99% 1%
6	Total	124	100%

Only one individual decided not to take the study after opening the online link provided.

123 participants agreed to take the study, however only 117 individuals answered the next question on gender. 55 participants were male and 62 participants were female. Figure 2 shows the number of males and females who participated.

Figure 2

Numbers of Participants Who are Male or Female

Answer		Response	%
Male		55	47%
Female		62	53%
	Total	117	100%

The following question regards whether the participant was a student or a UWRF Instructional staff member. Out of the 124 participants only 120 answered:

Figure 3

Numbers of Participants Who are UWRF Instructional Staff Members or UWRF Students

Answer		Response	%
Students		44	37%
UWRF Instructional Staff		76	63%
	Total	120	100%

Figure 3 shows that out of the 120 participants 44 were students and 76 were instructional staff members. Here it is determined which branch for demographic data the participant takes. Out of the 76 UWRF instructional staff members 73 responded with their position on campus. This included professor, associate, assistant, and instructor. Figure 4 shows the demographic of what type of instructional staff members are on campus who participated in the study.

Figure 4

Type of UWRF Instructional Staff Members on Campus

Answer		Response	%
Professor		26	36%
Associate		11	15%
Assistant		9	12%
Instructor		27	37%
	Total	73	100%

UWRF instructional staff members were also asked what college they taught in on campus. Each college was included on campus. With a majority of participants being from the college of arts and sciences the other colleges had representation as well in the study. Figure 5 below shows both the number of instructional staff members whom participated, but also which college at UWRF they taught in.

Figure 5

College UWRF Instructional Staff Members Teach in

Answer	Response	%
College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences	9	12%
College of Arts and Sciences	41	56%
College of Business and Economics	7	10%
College of Education and Professional Studies	16	22%
Total	73	100%

The students were asked something similar in regards to what year in their collegiate career they are in. Figure 6 shows the demographic of the student participants in the number of years they have been attending UWRF.

Figure 6

Number of Years Student has Attended UWRF

Answer		Response	%
1 Year		5	13%
2 Years		3	8%
3 Years		11	28%
4 Years		14	35%
5 Years		7	18%
6+ Years		0	0%
	Total	40	100%

Students had a choice of 1-6+ years depending on their academic situation.

The next section looks at ethnicity/race. The next figure will show the ethnicity/race of the participants in the study. Figure 7 is focused on UWRF instructional staff member's race and ethnicity.

Figure 7

UWRF Instructional Staff Members Race/Ethnicity

Answer	Response	%
White	66	90%
Black or African American	1	1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Asian	2	3%
Native Hawaiian	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	0	0%
Two or More	0	0%
Other	4	5%
To	ital 73	1009

The student participants however showed a 95% white population. Only one African American student and one American Indian or Alaskan native participated in the study.

Next is when the Instructional staff and the students were asked if they participated in college athletics. For instructional staff it is referred to when the participant was in college, not teaching in it. The students were asked if they were currently a student-athlete or regular student. 17of 73 UWRF instructional staff members stated they participated in college athletics at some point and 56 stated they had not participated. Of 39 responses, 28 students stated they were not participating in college athletics. Of these 28 students 5 students stated they had participated in athletics at some point as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8

UWRF Students who are not Participating in College athletics Currently vs Students who Participated but not all Four Years of Eligibility

Answer		Response	%
Not all Four years		5	18%
Never Participated		23	82%
	Total	28	100%

For the five students who participated in athletics, each of them stated that they only participated in one year of college athletics.

The UWRF instructional staff members who participated in athletics in their college career were also asked how many years they participated in college. Figure 9 shows us that of the 17 instructional staff members who participated in athletics in their collegiate careers 12 played all for years (not including redshirts).

Figure 9

UWRF Instructional Staff members who participated in Athletics in College by the Number of years

Years	ears Response		%
1		2	12%
2		2	12%
3		1	6%
4		12	71%
	Total	17	100%

Participants who are both instructional staff members and students who did not finish a full athletic career were asked about why they did not finish a full 4 year athletic career in college. Answers ranged from a career ending injury, not enough time, class constants, and an unsympathetic coach.

Both UWRF instructional staff members and UWRF students were asked the same questions in regards to UWRF Instructional staff attitudes towards athletes. Figure 10 shows the UWRF instructional staff responses.

UWRF Instructional Staff Members Attitudes Towards Student-Athletes According to Instructional Staff Members

Figure 10

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
UWRF instructional staff hold						
athletes to a higher standard than non-athlet	tes. 1	5	17	31	14	68
UWRF instructional staff see athletes as less achieving than non-student athlete						
on campus.	0	12	18	32	6	68
UWRF instructional staff are						
not always favoring	11	17	20	10	2	60
student-athletes.	11	17	28	10	2	68
UWRF instructional staff expect a student-athlete's school work to have better quality than the work of						
a non-student athletes.	0	4	9	34	21	68
UWRF instructional staff grade with lighter scale on student athletes.	0	3	12	27	26	68
Racial or ethnic minorities whom are student athletes are treated by UWRF instructional staff with more						
compassion.	0	2	22	31	13	68
Racial or ethnic student athletes see more isolation and separation in classroom situations than non-student						
athletes.	2	10	28	20	8	68

UWRF instructional staff members have a large spectrum of views on how the instructional staff sees student-athletes. In regards to whether UWRF instructional staff members hold athletes to a higher standard than non-athletes 46.27% disagree. On whether UWRF instructional staff see athletes as less achieving than non-student athletes on campus, 47.76% disagree. When it comes to favoring student-athletes 41.79% neither agree nor disagree. Another perspective is UWRF instructional staff expect a student-athlete's school work to have better quality than the work of a non-student athlete, 50.75% believe this to be untrue and disagree. 40.6% of the UWRF Instructional staff state "UWRF instructional staff members do not grade on a lighter scale towards student-athletes.

In regards to adding any racial connotation in the mix of being a student-athlete UWRF instructional staff members see them as normal students. 46.38% of UWRF instructional academic staff disagree that racial or ethnic minorities whom are student athletes are treated by UWRF instructional staff with more compassion. Although 41.79% of UWRF instructional staff neither agree nor disagree that racial or ethnic student athletes see more isolation and separation in classroom situations than non-student athletes.

The overall student perspective is very similar to that of the Instructional staff members with only a few more agreements in some questions. Students were asked the same questions that Instructional staff members were asked. Figure 11 shows the percentiles of statements for the UWRF Instructional staff attitudes towards athletes.

Figure 11

UWRF Instructional Staff Members Attitudes Towards Student-Athletes According to Students at UWRF

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
UWRF instructional						
staff hold						
athletes to a higher	0.07	1.60/	200/	420/	20/	21
standard than non-athletes.	0%	16%	39%	42%	3%	31
UWRF instructional						
staff see						
athletes as less achieving						
than non-student athletes						
on campus.	0%	23%	33%	40%	3%	31
UWRF instructional						
staff are						
not always favoring						
student-athletes.	3%	33%	57%	6%	0%	31
student-atmetes.	370	3370	3170	0 /0	0 /0	31
UWRF instructional						
staff expect a						
student-athlete's school						
work to have						
better quality than						
the work of						
a non-student athletes.	3%	10%	45%	42%)%	31
UWRF instructional						
staff grade						
with lighter scale on						
student athletes.	3%	10%	40%	33%	13%	31
Racial or ethnic						
minorities whom						
are student athletes						
are treated by						
UWRF instructional						
staff with more						
compassion.	0%	13%	37%	37%	13%	31
Racial or ethnic student						
athletes see						
more isolation and						
separation in						
classroom situations						
than non-student						
athletes.	0%	7%	43%	40%	10%	31

In regards to whether or not instructional staff hold athletes to a higher standard 41.94% state they disagree with that statement. Over a one percent drop from the instructional staff answers. 40% of UWRF students disagree that UWRF instructional staff see athletes as less achieving than non-student athletes on campus. This was a 7% decrease from the data taken from the instructional staff members. Over half or 56.67% of students neither agree nor disagree that Instructional staff members at UWRF favor student-athletes. This has a significant 10% increase over the instructional staff members statements.

When looking at the students statements on whether UWRF instructional staff expect a student-athlete's school work to have better quality than the work of a non-student athletes, 45.16% were neutral. This is significant because a majority percentage for disagreeing was found from the UWRF instructional staff members. Also 40% of the students in the study were neutral with the statement UWRF instructional staff grade with lighter scale on student athletes. As opposed to the 40.6% of the instructional staff who disagree with that statement.

When it comes to racial and ethnicity students at UWRF have a slightly different perspective on whether racial or ethnic student athletes saw different treatment. 36.67% of students were neutral and disagreed with Racial or ethnic minorities whom are student athletes are treated by UWRF instructional staff with more compassion as opposed to the 46% of instructional staff members who say there is no extra compassion towards racial/ethnic minorities. 43.33% of students were also neutral with the statement of racial or ethnic student athletes see more isolation and separation in classroom situations than non-student athletes. This was consistent with that of the UWRF staff members.

The next segment involves the topic on how the survey respondent viewed student athletes and regular students in regards to academics and life on campus. The questions were targeting certain spectrums to gain insight on issues and stereotypes involving student-athletes. Figure 12 shows the scale of response from UWRF instructional staff members on the questions involving perceptions of students and student athletes from the respondents view.

Figure 12

UWRF Non-Student Athletes Attitudes VS Student-Athletes According to UWRF
Instructional Staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
Athletes at UWRF						
have more opportunity						
to fail a class.	3%	10%	30%	38%	19%	63
Overall college athletes						
do not achieve the						
same success in						
academics as						
traditional college						
students.	2%	11%	31%	34%	23%	62
Non-student athletes						
attend classes more						
often than student athletes.	17%	15%	33%	28%	7%	60
Non-student athletes						
do not share the same						
work ethic as student						
athletes at UWRF.	2%	13%	26%	40%	20%	61
Non-student athletes						
are more likely						
considered the partiers						
on campus	0%	7%	48%	36%	10%	61
Racial or ethnic students						
whom are student athletes						
are treated differently by						
other students with more						
hostility.	3%	3%	39%	44%	10%	61

Approximately 38% of the responding instructional staff members disagree with athletes having a greater opportunity to fail a class. Only 9% agreed with the statement. Also only 11% believed

that college athletes achieve less in academics. In fact 34% disagreed with that statement. 33% were neutral in regards to whether college athletes attend classes more regularly than traditional college students (non-athletes), 16% of the instructional staff members strongly agreed with the statement. When asked about non-student athletes work ethic, Instructional staff members stated they disagreed (39%) that non-student athletes did not have the same work ethic as student-athletes on campus. Instructional staff members were neutral, 47% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The last question involving race and ethnicity, instructional staff members disagreed with statement "Racial or ethnic students whom are student athletes are treated differently by other students with more hostility." 44% disagreed, but 39% were neutral about the statement.

Students were asked the same questions with the same scale. The responses were much different in comparison to those from the UWRF instructional staff members. Students had more of a definitive approach to the likert scale questions. This time the students had very high percentages of disagreeing with the questions on students and student-athletes. Figure 13 shows the responses in by percent in regards to student's attitudes and non-student athletes.

Figure 13

UWRF Non-Student Athletes Attitudes VS Student-Athletes According to UWRF Students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
Athletes at UWRF have more opportunity to fail a class.	0%	15%	40%	40%	3%	31
Overall college athletes do not achieve the same success in academics as traditional college						
students.	0%	12%	28%	47%	12%	31
Non-student athletes attend classes more often than student athletes.	3%	23%	32%	32%	10%	31
Non-student athletes do not share the same work ethic as student athletes at UWRF.	0%	16%	35%	42%	7%	31
Non-student athletes are more likely considered the partiers on campus	0%	9%	28%	56%	6%	31
Racial or ethnic students whom are student athletes are treated differently by other students with more						
hostility.	0%	6%	25%	63%	6%	31

As previously stated, the students responses were more overall distinctive. 40% of the students disagreed that student-athletes had more of an opportunity to fail a class. However 40% of the students were also neutral. This is similar to the responses from the instructional staff members. 46% of the students disagreed with the statement that college athletes do not achieve the same success academically as non-student-athletes. 33% of instructional staff members disagreed.

When it came to class attendance students had other opinions. 32% of the students said they neither agreed nor disagreed, but 32% also disagreed saying non-student athletes attending class more regularly. 41% of the students disagreed with statement that non-student athletes do not share the same work ethic as student athletes at UWRF. The statement about non-student athletes being the partiers on campus gave some insight. 56% of the students stated they disagreed with the statement. Students were most definitive with the statement "Racial or ethnic students whom are student athletes are treated differently by other students with more hostility". 62% of the students disagreed with the statement involving race and ethnicity. Race and ethnicity seems to not have an effect on responses throughout the survey.

The next set of questions involves the topic of student-athletes in class situations. Here the respondents were asked general questions about observations the individual sees in the classroom from the student-athletes and instructional staff members. Responses from the UWRF instructional staff members were very one-sided. The students were not as definitive but had the same overall consensus as the UWRF instructional staff members. It almost seems that UWRF instructional staff members felt attacked by this portion. Also note that two instructional staff members quite the survey after this portion. Figure 14 shows the range of responses and the percentages of staff members whom responded to the questions involving student-athletes in classroom situations.

Figure 14

UWRF Student Athletes in Class Situations According to UWRF Instructional Staff

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
In regards to class work, a student athlete's quality of work is seen as underachieving.	0%	7%	28%	50%	15%	60
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes in class discussions by ignoring them.	0%	2%	15%	40%	43%	60
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes by asking tougher questions.	0%	2%	17%	37%	44%	59
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate by asking non-student athletes the tougher questions.	0%	2%	17%	36%	45%	58
Male student athletes struggle more in class situations than male non-student athletes.	0%	15%	22%	40%	22%	59

Very few UWRF instructional staff members agreed with any of the above statements. In fact it was the most one-sided portion of the survey. 50% of UWRF instructional staff members disagreed that a student athlete's quality of work is seen as underachieving. 43% strongly disagreed with the statement of UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes in class discussions by ignoring them. To go along with that, 44% also strongly disagreed with the statement "UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes by asking tougher questions" showing a correlation between the two questions. The final question of the section involves gender, previous studies have mentioned gender as a reason athletes receive discrimination. Male student-athletes have been known to be a target and struggle in academics; however 40% of the instructional staff members at UWRF disagreed with this statement.

The students at UWRF had a similar approach to this set of questions. Responses were not as definitive, but the overall consensus was the same. Next is figure 15 showing the range of responses from the students perspective's involving student-athletes in classroom situations.

Figure 15

UWRF Student Athletes in Class Situations According to UWRF Students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
In regards to class work, a student athlete's quality of work is seen as underachieving.	0%	10%	32%	48%	10%	31
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes in class discussions by ignoring them.	0%	0%	25%	69%	6%	31
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes by asking tougher questions.	0%	6%	28%	59%	6%	31
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate by asking non-student athletes the tougher questions.	0%	3%	28%	63%	6%	31
Male student athletes struggle more in class situations than male non-student athletes.	0%	16%	22%	59%	3%	31

In regards to class work, a student athlete's quality of work is seen as underachieving 48% of the student's disagreed, which is slightly lower than the UWRF instructional staff members.

Students definitively do not feel that student athletes are isolated in classroom discussions by being ignored. In fact 68% of the students believe this does not happen. 59% of the students also believe the instructors do not ask the tougher questions towards student-athletes.62 also say the same about non-student athletes. 59% of the students also state that, in regards to gender, Male student athletes do not struggle more in class situations than male non-student athletes.

The next set of questions deals with the other side of the spectrum. This set looks at the athletic staff at UW-River Falls as a whole. The goal is to find a trend in opinions students and instructional staff at UWRF find with UWRF athletic department staff. Figure 16 shows how UWRF instructional staff members see UWRF athletic staff.

Figure 16

UWRF Athletic Staff According to UWRF Instructional Staff Members

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
Coaches at UWRF have more focus on athletic performance over academics.	2%	22%	45%	22%	10%	60
Athletic staff at UWRF guides athletes to success beyond the classroom	12%	30%	55%	3%	0%	60
Athletic staff at UWRF offer enough support to struggling student-athletes	2%	21%	67%	10%	0%	61

45% of Instructional staff members neither agree nor disagree that coaches at UWRF have more focus on athletic performance over academics. 21% also agreed stating that coaches at UWRF do infect have more priorities in their respective sport they coach over academics. In regards to athletic staff at UWRF guiding athletes to success beyond the classroom, 55% of the instructional staff members say they neither agree nor disagree. Does the athletic staff at UWRF offer support outside of the classroom to struggling students? 67% again neither agree nor disagree. However 30% state they agree that athletic staff is in fact helping struggling students. It would seem UWRF instructional staff members have limited information to give insight.

Students at UWRF had a wide variety of responses. Most did fall under the category of neither agree nor disagree, but a larger range is recorded. Figure 17 shows the range of responses from the student's perspectives on athletic staff attitudes towards academics.

Figure 17

UWRF Athletic Staff According to UWRF Students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
Coaches at UWRF have more focus on athletic performance over academics.	9%	22%	31%	28%	9%	31
Athletic staff at UWRF guides athletes to success beyond the classroom	6%	38%	50%	6%	0%	31
Athletic staff at UWRF offer enough support to struggling student-athletes	3%	29%	52%	16%	0%	31

Even though 31% of students were neutral with the statement "Coaches at UWRF have more focus on athletic performance over academics." 28% disagreed with the statement. While the instructional staff members leaned more towards agreeing. 50% of the students also neither agree nor disagree that the athletic staff at UWRF guide athletes to success beyond the classroom and 37% agreed stating the athletic staff at UWRF guides to succeed beyond the classroom. Then 51% of the students are neutral in whether or not athletic staff offer support for struggling student athletes, however 30% also sees athletic staff offering help to those struggling student athletes. This is 9% greater than that of the instructional staff responses.

The last portion of the survey allowed respondents to speak in their own terms about UWRF instructional staff attitudes towards student-athletes on campus. The respondents were

asked to questions 1) Is there any evidence you have to add to this study on attitudes towards student athletes from UWRF instructional staff members here on our campus? 2) Do you have any specific views towards athletes on campus? If so please explain. These questions were designed to gain more insight to the study.

When UWRF instructional staff members were asked "Is there any evidence you have to add to this study on attitudes towards student athletes from UWRF instructional staff members here on our campus?" many stated none, but some gave perspectives. Figure 18 shows all the UWRF instructional staff responses.

Figure 18

Evidence provided by UWRF Instructional Staff members to aid and enlighten the study

None

No

I treat all equally

In my experience in the classroom, student athletes of both genders tend to not try as hard, require more help, and have less motivation then non-athletes. This is a generalization. Occasionally, a strong, self motivated student athlete attends my classes and they perform as well if not better than the non-athlete.

Some instructors have attendance requirements and are very concerned about athletes and other involved students that miss class due to 'official events'. I don't find making accommodations troublesome, but the students are the ones who are ultimately robbed of the class interactions and learning when they are required to attend these other events..

Some of my best students have been student athletes - good work ethic in general.

n

Most professors don't see athletics as part of the entire education experience.

The coaches at UWRF are instructional academic staff so you may get different opinions from them than the rest of IAS.

no.

I treat all students, athletes or not, the same. I have the same expectations.

No

none

I think the attitude of the instructor is often relate to a) the attitude of the student athlete while in class and b) the amount of class a student misses due to athletic activities.

I've had a number of student athletes in courses I teach and they have performed well, however have needed time outside of class to make up work missed due to travel.

Missing classes due to events is a negative for student athletes. I had one student who missed a whole month of night classes because she was obligated to be at practices and games. Because of University policy, I had to give her specialized lessons and excuse her participation requirements.

No

I answered many questions neutrally because I'm simply not in a position to judge how other faculty treat student athletes.

I don't know anything about it.

Some of the worst and some of the best students I've had have been student athletes. They seem either to have very good work ethics, or a sense of entitlement that is infuriating to staff and other students.

I believe that academic staff have different opinions towards our athletes, based on their athletic teams. There are clearly stereotypes that some people believe and they don't see past with our athletes in general, and that is sad.

no

the student-athletes are supported during their competition by a number of faculty

No

It would seem some discretion is indeed seen by some Instructional staff members according to figure 18. In fact some institutional staff seemed bothered by student athletes missing classes and asking for help. One staff member is quoted stating "Missing classes due to events is a negative for student athletes. I had one student who missed a whole month of night classes because she was obligated to be at practices and games. Because of University policy, I had to give her specialized lessons and excuse her participation requirements." Another is quoted stating "In my experience in the classroom, student athletes of both genders tend to not try as hard, require more help, and have less motivation then non-athletes. This is a generalization. Occasionally, a strong, self motivated student athlete attends my classes and they perform as well if not better than the

non-athlete." Not all responses were negative one staff member stated "the student-athletes are supported during their competition by a number of faculty".

Next the same question is asked to UWRF students. Students had a select number of good responses. One of which goes along with athletes missing classes for an event, this related to the statements from the instructional staff members. That student stated "In my years at UWRF, I have noticed more than once, a professor being much more critical of an athlete, especially when needing to miss class for an event." The remainder of the student responses can be seen in figure 19 below.

Figure 19

Evidence provided by UWRF Students to aid and enlighten the study

No

nope

What do you mean by "aid"?

I know plenty of athletes and non-student athletes, and have had classes with both. Some do better and try harder than others, some do not. I don't think all athletes necessarily do better or worse than all non-athlete students; I think it varies from individual to individual.

In my years at UWRF, I have noticed more than once, a professor being much more critical of an athlete, especially when needing to miss class for an event.

I haven't noticed preferential or otherwise treatment.

No

I think it depends on the teacher. Some teachers respect the athletes and are open to changing due dates, etc when games or practices are a problem. However, some are not so helpful. I think it also depends on the department. I am an athlete and an HHP major. The teachers in this department are more open to working with student-athletes when things come up than the teachers i've had in other departments.

no

Being a commuter I could not answer these questions due to the fact that I do not know who is an athlete and who is not and may not actually get the full spectrum of college diversity.

I know a lot of people involved in sports even though I myself am not an athlete. I personally believe they are so overworked. I have to wonder how they are able to do well in classes when they have so many other things to do with sports. Sleep is so important and they lack time to sleep.

I have never witnessed a staff member treat a student athlete differently than other students on campus in my five years at UWRF, they seem to always be held to the same standard of achievement as other students.

I do not think that Professor's treat student athletes any different than non-student athletes.

No

Conclusion

So it comes back to the question stated earlier. Do UWRF instructional staff members see student-athletes differently? Do they have certain perceptions based on stereotypes for or against student-athletes? On a mass scale, according to the data, as a whole UWRF instructional staff members do not treat or have preconceived notions about student-athletes at UWRF. The same comes from the student's perspective. As a whole, student-athletes are not perceived or viewed differently from non-student athletes at UWRF.

Because of a lack of data and responses it can be difficult to make generalizations, but we gained insight into the situation. Overall the UWRF instructional staff has a neutral view of student-athletes. 51% have a neutral view while 44% see a positive view. This tells us that many of the instructional staff members have had bad and good experiences with athletes. The same goes for students, 50% of the respondents have a positive view on student-athletes as a whole.

However there are some cases where instructional staff members do not feel the same. By giving an opportunity to the respondents new conclusions can be made. One member of the instructional staff states "I believe that academic staff have different opinions towards our athletes, based on their athletic teams. There are clearly stereotypes that some people believe and they don't see past with our athletes in general, and that is sad." This instructor is providing evidence that yes there are some instructional staff members who have a negative perception on athletes.

More evidence came in regarding "missed classes". Because of UWRF sanctioned excused events many athletes miss class. Unfortunately it puts a slight feeling of negativity about the situation. "Missing classes due to events is a negative for student athletes. I had one student

who missed a whole month of night classes because she was obligated to be at practices and games. Because of University policy, I had to give her specialized lessons and excuse her participation requirements." So it would seem that a few situations is the cause for any uncomfortable situations for UWRF instructional staff members on campus.

Again students see athletes as a positive aspect and have a positive perception on the student-athletes. For the most part all the data collected from the survey was similar to the data collected from the instructional staff members. There were some small percentage differences that did have some connotation though. For example 16% of the students believed UWRF instructional staff hold athletes to a higher standard. While only 7% of the instructional staff believe that to be the case. Another instance involves class work. Students have 10% believing instructional staff view a student-athletes class work as underachieving as opposed to 6% of the instructional staff. Unfortunately because of a lack of data indicating racial connotation along with being a student athlete cannot be determined according to the data.

So it all comes back to this question. Do UWRF instructional staff members have different perceptions of student-athletes as opposed to non-student athletes? The answer is NO, in most cases according to the data answers to each of the likert scale questions were very similar from the majority of each group.

However we can take into consideration a few cases where athletes at UWRF have been stereotyped and judged negatively and positively on campus. The data as a majority and as a whole indicates that UWRF instructional staff members see student athletes and non-student athletes as equal and have an equal opportunity to pass classes, contribute in class, and succeed at the collegiate level in academics. The data from the short answer portion can tell me though; it

only takes a few student-athletes with a bad reputation to ruin aspects for others with certain UWRF instructional staff members.

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Appendix

Below includes resource tools used to conduct the study. The first page is the letter used to introduce the participants to the study. This explained what the researcher was looking for in regards to the study. The second piece is the research tool used for the study.

Letter-Email

Greetings,

My name is Bradley Novacheck I am a graduate student on campus. I am conducting a survey looking into the views Instructional staff have on student athletes on campus. Below is a brief description.

Description: The purpose of this research study is to identify the attitudes and views of UWRF instructional staff towards student athletes at UWRF. I ask you to participate by completing the following questionnaire. Please do not include your name within the survey; this study is meant to be anonymous with secure confidentiality. Results of the study will be reported professional presentation and publication. The risks are very minimal. It is completely voluntary; if you are willing to participate, please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

By agreeing to participate in this study I have not waived any legal or human rights. I also understand that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected and with no coercion or prejudice. If you have concerns about how you were treated in this study, please contact: Molly Van Wagner, Interim Director of Grants and Research, 101 North Hall, UW-RF, 715/425-3195. This research project has been approved by the UW-River Falls Institutional review board for the

If you would like to participate please select the link below to begin:

Sincerely,

Bradley Novacheck

UWRF Graduate Student-Agricultural Education

Protection of Human Subjects protocol H2012-W064.

Survey Tool

UWRF instructional staff views and attitudes towards student athletes on campus.

Q1 UWRF instructional staff views and attitudes towards student athletes on

Description: The purpose of this research study is to identify the attitudes and campus views of UWRF instructional staff towards student athletes at UWRF. I ask you to participate by completing the following questionnaire. Please do not include your name within the survey; this study is meant to be anonymous with secure confidentiality. Results of the study will be reported professional presentation and publication. The risks are very minimal. It is completely voluntary; if you are willing to participate, please answer the questions to the best of your ability. Authorization: By selecting "I Agree", I have read the above statement and understand the nature of this study and agree to participate. I understand that by agreeing to participate in this study I have not waived any legal or human rights. I also understand that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected and with no coercion or prejudice If you have concerns about how you were treated in this study, please contact: Molly Van Wagner, Interim Director of Grants and Research, 101 North Hall, UW-RF, 715/425-3195. This research project has been approved by the UW-River Falls Institutional review board for the Protection of Human Subjects protocol H2012-W064.

- O Agree
- O Disagree

Q3	Are you male of female?
	Male Female
Q4	Are you a student or a UWRF instructional staff member?
	Student UWRF Instructional Staff Member
Q9	what level of staff of the UWRF Instructional Staff do you represent?
O	Professor Associate Assistant Instructor
Q1	0 What college do you teach in on campus?
О О	College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences College of Arts and Sciences College of Business and Economics College of Education and Professional Studies

Q11 What is your current ethnicity/race?
 White Black or African American American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian Native Hawaiian Hispanic/Latino Two or more Other
Q13 Where you a student athlete in your college career?
O Yes O No
Q14 How many years did you participate (not including redshirts) in athletics in your college career?
O 1O 2O 3O 4
Q14 If less than four years, why did you leave athletics?

Q15 What is the general attitude staff members at UWRF have about student athle	tes?
O Very Positive	
O Positive	
O Neutral	
O Negative	
O Very Negative	

Q16 Questions on UWRF instructional staff attitudes towards athletes

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
UWRF instructional staff hold athletes to a higher standard than non-athletes.	•	O	0	O	•
UWRF instructional staff see athletes as less achieving than non- student athletes on campus.	•	•	•	•	•
UWRF instructional staff are not always favoring student- athletes. UWRF	0	•	0	•	•
instructional staff expect a student- athlete's school work to have better quality than the work of a non-student athletes.	•	•	O	•	•
UWRF instructional staff grade with lighter scale on student	O	0	O	O	•

athletes. Racial or ethnic minorities whom are student athletes are treated by UWRF instructional staff with more compassion.	0	0	•	•	•
Racial or ethnic student athletes see more isolation and separation in classroom situations than nonstudent athletes.	•	•	•	O	0

Q17 Questions about Student athlete's attitudes/Non-student athletes

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Athletes at UWRF have more opportunity to fail a class.	O	O	O	0	0
Overall college athletes do not achieve the same success in academics as traditional college students.	•	O	O	O	•
Non-student athletes attend classes more often than student athletes.	O	O	O	O	0
Non-student athletes do not share the same work ethic as student athletes at UWRF.	Q	O	O	O	0
Non-student athletes are more likely considered the partiers on campus	•	O	0	•	0
Racial or ethnic students whom are	O	O	0	O	0

student			
athletes are			
treated			
differently by			
other students			
with more			
hostility.			

Q18 Questions about student Athletes in class situations

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In regards to class work, a student athlete's quality of work is seen as underachieving.	O	O	O	O	•
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes in class discussions by ignoring them.	0	0	0	•	•
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate student athletes by asking tougher questions.	O	0	0	0	•
UWRF facilitators/instructors isolate by asking non-student athletes the tougher questions.	O	0	0	•	•
Male student athletes struggle more in class situations than male non-student athletes.	O	O	O	O	•

Q19 Questions on athletic staff attitudes on academics

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Coaches at UWRF have more focus on performance over academics.	0	O	O	0	•
Athletic staff at UWRF guides athletes to success beyond the classroom	O	O	O	0	•
Athletic staff at UWRF offer enough support to struggling student- athletes	•	O	•	•	O

Q20 Is there any evidence you have to add to this study on attitudes towards student athletes from UWRF instructional staff members here on our campus?

Q21 Do you have any specific views towards athletes on campus? If so please explain.

Q5	What year in college are you in?
O	1 year
O	2 years
O	3 years
O	4 years
O	5 years
O	6+ years
Q6	What is your current ethnicity/race?
O	White
O	Black or African American
O	American Indian or Alaskan Native
O	Asian
O	Native Hawaiian
O	Hispanic/Latino
O	Two or More
O	Other
Q8	Are you a non-student athlete student or a student athlete?
\bigcirc	Non-student athlete
	Student athlete
Q2	3 Did you ever participate in athletics in college?
O	Yes
	No
-	

Q24 Since you did not participate all four years. How many years did you participate in college athletics? (Not Including redshirts)

O 1

O 2

O 3

Q22 Why did you leave your prospective sport in college?