



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August 20, 2021

**To:** Faculty and Staff

**From:** Lawrence Schovanec, President  
Ronald Hendrick, Provost

**Re:** Instructional Responsibilities to Student-Athletes

We are proud of our student-athletes and their successes both in their sports and in the classroom. We look forward to cheering for our Red Raiders and Lady Raiders during 2021-22. As you might be aware, several high-profile institutions of higher learning have been in the news in recent years because of academic misconduct issues and rules violations relating to their athletics programs. The Texas Tech Athletic Department's Mission Statement is "To Educate, Serve, and Grow Fearless Champions," and the very first of its Guiding Principles is to "Do the Right Thing." Please join us in assuring that our efforts together at Texas Tech always strive for honor by doing the right thing.

We want all of our student-athletes to be successful in the classroom and, like all of our Texas Tech students, to attain their educational goals. In that regard, we want to remind you and inform you of several campus and NCAA policies.

First, as you likely are aware, O.P. 34.04 provides the following regarding students who miss class or an exam due to a university-approved trip (whether that student is representing Texas Tech as a student-athlete, as a member of the band, on a competitive academic team, etc.):

- Department chairpersons, directors, or others responsible for a student representing the university on officially approved trips must notify the student's instructors of the departure and return schedules. The instructor so notified must not penalize the student, although the student is responsible for material missed. Any student absent because of university business must be allowed to make up missed work within a reasonable span of time or have alternate grades substituted for work due to an excused absence. Students absent because of university business must be given the same privileges as other students; e.g., if other students are given the choice of dropping one of four tests, then students with excused absences must be given the same privilege.

In addition, NCAA rules provide that "institutional staff members," a term that includes both faculty and staff, "shall not provide impermissible academic assistance to a student-athlete." This means that student-athletes may not be provided with any substantial assistance or favoritism that would not be available to any other student. As an example, an instructor should not provide a student-athlete with the ability to obtain extra credit for an additional project unless the same opportunity would be available to any other student in that instructor's course. Similarly, an instructor should not provide a grade change to a student-athlete unless a valid basis exists that would be equally applicable to any other student. A comparable rule applies to prospective student-athletes with regard

to all campus activities ranging from admissions to housing to academic scholarship determinations. Put simply, student-athletes and prospective student-athletes should be treated like all other students on campus, and neither more nor less favorably. To that point, in the event of a situation involving suspected academic misconduct on the part of a student-athlete, we urge you to address the matter according to campus policies and in a manner that would be the same for any other student in a similar situation. Specifically, it is Texas Tech policy that instructors are to report suspected or alleged academic misconduct by any student, including student-athletes, to the Office of Student Conduct.

Occasionally, as for any student, an independent studies course may be an appropriate option for a student-athlete. Whenever an independent studies course is used for any student, the student is to be presented, at the start of the course, a syllabus, "contract," or similar document stating the expected learning outcomes and grading policy. This document is to be the basis for assessing the student's attainment of learning outcomes and determining the student's final grade in the course. A copy should be retained along with the instructor's other course syllabi.

Also, to avoid even the appearance of seeking any form of special treatment, Texas Tech Athletics maintains a written policy that coaching staff (including all coaches, support staff, volunteer coaches, graduate assistants, student assistants, interns, and managers) are strictly prohibited from initiating contact or otherwise communicating with any Texas Tech faculty member or associated instructional staff member with regard to the academic performance of a student-athlete. A similar policy precludes coaching staff members from contacting campus, college, or departmental administrators or admissions staff regarding either academic issues concerning a student-athlete or admissions determinations for prospective student-athletes. Any such communications are limited to representatives of the Athletic Academic Services office at the Marsha Sharp Center, directed by Senior Associate Athletics Director for Academic Excellence Deedee Brown-Campbell, or the Faculty Athletics Representative. Moreover, we would ask you not to contact any member of the coaching staff directly regarding a student-athlete's academic performance, but instead to communicate with the Athletic Academic Services staff or Ms. Brown-Campbell.

If you ever have any questions about the intersection of athletics, academics, and NCAA rules, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following:

- **Deedee Brown-Campbell**, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Academic Excellence; [dee.brown-campbell@ttu.edu](mailto:dee.brown-campbell@ttu.edu)
- **Jennifer Brashear**, Senior Associate Athletics Director for Internal Affairs & Compliance; [jennifer.brashear@ttu.edu](mailto:jennifer.brashear@ttu.edu)
- **Brian Shannon**, Horn Distinguished Professor of Law and Faculty Athletics Representative; [brian.shannon@ttu.edu](mailto:brian.shannon@ttu.edu)

Thank you for your ongoing support and for continuing to make Texas Tech a top quality, student-centered institution.



**FROM HERE, IT'S POSSIBLE**