

B. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Using information shared with us by other schools, our committee found that UMC is understaffed and under-funded compared to other universities within our conference. The committee polled members of the NSIC, DAC and UMAC to gather data to compare UMC. We communicated with directors from Sports Information, Athletics, Admissions, Financial Aid and research university websites to compile the statistics in the attached spreadsheet (*to view support systems, see Exhibit E*).

In the attached spreadsheet, you will find the school, state, conference, enrollment, quantity of full-time trainers, athletic administrative assistants, assistant athletic directors, sports information staff, number of sport offerings, number of coaching staff and total graduate assistants. In the findings, UMC falls into a lower percentage in the NSIC for athletic training staff, administrative assistants, assistant athletic directors, sports information staff, coaching staff and graduate assistants. UMC is more comparable with support staff in the UMAC and the DAC (*see Exhibit E*).

Services That Support Retention Efforts:

The UMC Athletic Department has implemented the following programs or efforts to help enhance student-athlete retention. Retention of student-athletes is undoubtedly one of our highest priorities as an athletic coaching staff and administration.

- At the beginning of each school year (fall term) the athletic department hosts an orientation session for all student athletes including incoming freshman, transfers and returnees. During the session, a thorough review of the student-athlete handbook is administered that includes expectations, policies, procedures and compliance issues. The Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) representatives share information and perform a survey as well.
- UMC coaching staff is encouraged and continually reminded to provide direction to the student athletes regarding the usage of on-campus Student Support Services, Counseling and Career Services, Advisors and Disability Services.
- The Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) provides an opportunity for student-athletes to voice concerns and issues they may have as an individual or as a team.
- Mandatory study tables are administered to most teams; especially to those teams and student-athletes that typically demonstrate problems academically.
- Coaches meet with each player on a regular basis, both in-season and post-season (weekly, or bi-weekly at minimum).
- The Faculty Athletic Representative has started the process of exit interviews for those student-athletes that graduate, transfer or leave school. These interviews are implemented as a tracking tool to obtain information about experiences, comments and concerns regarding the student's time at UMC. The Admissions Department/First Year Experience is also conducting a similar program currently.
- The UMC Athletic Department is implementing a new mentoring program "UMC Heads Up!" (Helping Empower Student-Athletes to Developmentally Succeed and Understand Potential). The Associate Director of Athletics and the Assistant Director of Athletics/SWA have researched the program, designed a protocol, met with staff and coaches and will implement the program in spring 2007. "Heads Up" is designed to