Making a commitment to athletics and academics is a challenge. As Faculty Athletics Representatives (FAR), our role is to be a resource to student-athletes when you have questions or concerns about how to strike a successful balance between academics and athletics to achieve your goals at UWSP.

One challenge student-athletes regularly face is the need to miss class time due to competitions. The suggested steps in this document will help you manage this dilemma without creating conflicts that take time and energy to resolve.

Helpful facts:
1. There are no UWSP-wide or UW System-wide policies to guide instructors or student-athletes on how to handle missed class time. Each instructor sets the expectations for each course they teach so you will face different situations in every class.

2. Each student-athlete who misses class because of a competition is responsible for all tests, papers, homework, and materials that are covered while he/she is absent. There is no such thing as an “excused absence” that absolves the student-athlete from course responsibilities. A miss is a miss that needs to be made up.

3. Student-athletes are not permitted to miss class due to practice times or team meetings. This is considered a violation of NCAA by-law 17.1.6. "Missed Class Time-Practice. No class time shall be missed for practice activities except when a team is traveling to an away-from-home contest and the practice is in conjunction with the contest."

The name of the game – be proactive and collaborative
a. **Ask** your instructors early: as soon as any information about one of your courses is available read it carefully (e.g., timetable description, syllabus, anything). When you see an overlap between course and athletic requirements, contact the instructor immediately to discuss how to work TOGETHER to minimize the impact of this overlap. The course syllabus is a contract between students and the instructor and the policies on missed class time and assignments for each course should be in it. If not, ask your instructors for this information in writing (e.g., an email).

b. **Ask your coach** for the schedule of competitions (including potential post-season tournaments) for the semester or season or whatever period of time you need when you are registering for classes. Coaches know the schedule of competition 3 years out, so it’s no secret when and where you’ll be competing this season and the next. This information will enable you to plan your entire semester with your instructors and make smart decisions when registering.

Conflicts usually because of miscommunication
Minimize miscommunication with your instructors. Ask to meet with them for 5 minutes outside of class to discuss your situation completely and calmly. Be sure you communicate clearly and respectfully that their course is a priority for you, and you would like to find a way to meet all course expectations while in season.

Instructors, students, coaches may not be aware of or may misunderstanding institutional and/or NCAA regulations, so expect questions to arise in your conversation with instructors. Don’t interpret such questions as a threat or push back. Jot them down and seek the answers by asking your coach, FAR, or consulting the NCAA rules book (http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/D312.pdf).

Humility is a winning attitude. Remember that you’re asking your instructors for a favor.

Use the UWSP athletics “Missed Class Form” as a way to break the ice if you are hesitant to approach your instructors. The form is NOT meant to be used instead of a conversation with instructors. Do NOT simply hand it off and ask for a signature. DO use it as a point of reference when you begin to describe your concerns,
conflicts, and ideas you have already considered for how to make up the missed work. You can also annotate the form with the plan of action for the semester that you and your instructor agree upon.

**Bottom line**
Take ownership of the situation: it’s your college experience so it’s your responsibility (not your coach’s or your professors’) to set yourself up for success. This means being aware of how all your athletic and academic commitments intersect. If you need information from your instructors and coaches to make a smart decision, ask for what you need. When you feel a conflict between your academic and athletic responsibilities cannot be resolved after diligent and careful communication with your instructors and coach, contact the FAR.

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