

## POST AUTONOMY INVESTMENTS IN STUDENT-ATHLETE WELL-BEING

*Professor David E. Shipley\**

“The term ‘faculty athletics representative’ derives from NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] usage and denotes the perceived need on the part of the NCAA to involve a faculty viewpoint in the administration of intercollegiate athletics programs.”<sup>1</sup> Faculty athletics representatives (FARs) provide oversight and advice to the Presidents and Athletic Directors of their colleges and universities about the operation of their intercollegiate athletics programs in respect to matters such as academic integrity, the academic performance of student-athletes (SAs), the academic services provided to SAs, monitoring the overall experience of SAs,<sup>2</sup> and being “alert to conditions that affect the health of student-athletes, being ready to aid in referral to university resources that provide advice and counsel on all types of physical and psychological problems.”<sup>3</sup> After all, one of the reasons for the founding of the NCAA was the widespread concern about the safety and health of college football players at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>4</sup>

---

\*Faculty Athletics Representative, University of Georgia; Georgia Athletic Association Professor in Law, University of Georgia School of Law. BA Oberlin College 1972, JD University of Chicago Law School 1975.

<sup>1</sup>Faculty Athletics Representative Handbook, National Collegiate Athletics Association 2004, at 9

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 15. A brochure titled ‘What College Presidents and Chancellors Need to Know About Faculty Athletics Representatives, prepared by FARA, the Faculty Athletics Representatives Association, states that “[t]he FAR should be involved in the monitoring and maintenance of the personal well-being of student athletes.” See also Amy Schwabb, *The More Things Change ... Faculty reps’ athletics involvement predates the NCAA, and their organization is just 25 years old*, Champions Magazine (October 2014)

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Carol Barr, *History of Faculty Involvement in Collegiate Athletics* (1999), edited and reprinted in a 2008 report on the FAR survey prepared by Dr. Daniel Fulks. This article states that “in December of 1905, facing a disturbing increase in the

I am starting my ninth year as FAR at the University of Georgia (UGA) which is a member of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The SEC is one of the five autonomy conferences.<sup>5</sup> The intercollegiate athletic program at UGA is administered by the University of Georgia Athletic Association (UGAA) and the Association has operated in the black for many years. It is self-sustaining and does not receive public funding but for \$3.24 million from a student athletic fee that is 2.2% of the Association's 2019 budget.<sup>6</sup> The Athletic Association's annual revenues come from many sources including: gate receipts; seat licenses; donations; endowment income; distributions from bowl games, the SEC and the NCAA; and, revenue from broadcasts.<sup>7</sup> These revenues fund UGA's 21 teams; athletic scholarships and cost of attendance stipends; sports medicine; strength and conditioning; food and nutrition; academic support programs; improvements to facilities; competitive salaries for coaches and staff;<sup>8</sup> and, enhancing the overall experience and well-being of UGA's SAs.<sup>9</sup> This paper is about the substantial increase in the UGAA's investment in the student-athlete experience and well-being over the last eight years.

The substantial investment in the SA experience at UGA and many other universities in the autonomy conferences is sometimes forgotten or ignored in the on-going national debates over whether SAs should be allowed to monetize their names, images and

---

number of serious injuries and deaths resulting from student-led football contests, Chancellor Henry McCracken of New York University called a meeting of faculty athletics representatives from Eastern colleges.”

<sup>5</sup> The autonomy conferences are sometimes referred to as the Power Five. In addition to the SEC, the other autonomy conferences are the Atlantic Coast Conference, the Big Ten, the Big Twelve and the Pac 12. Notre Dame is an independent for football but competes in the ACC for all other sports.

<sup>6</sup> The UGAA's FY 2019 budget of \$143 million includes \$3.24 million distributed to the Association by the University that is collected from a student fee. Treasurer's Report, FY 2019 UGAA Budget, May 25, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* For instance the compensation allocation for football in 2019 is \$19.1 million and the compensation allocation for men's basketball is \$4.7 million.

<sup>9</sup> Overall revenue was projected to be \$84.8 million in FY11 and it is projected to be \$143.3 in FY19 – an increase of 69%.

likenesses (NIL),<sup>10</sup> and whether SAs should be entitled to compensation above and beyond their scholarships and cost of attendance stipends.<sup>11</sup> This paper does not weigh-in on those challenging issues. Instead, it discusses the resources that UGA and many of the other 64 schools in the autonomy conferences are investing in the overall experience and well-being of SAs. These investments are made not only to help these young men and women be successful in their academic endeavors and in their sports, but also to enhance their physical and mental health and overall well-being. In my opinion, today's SAs at UGA and other autonomy conference schools are earning a high rate of return on their investments of time, effort and energy to get a great education and simultaneously compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics thanks to student-focused spending.

#### I. WHAT MIGHT BE DRIVING THE INVESTMENTS

As an old history major<sup>12</sup> I like to speculate about why things happen and ask myself what things might have been like if certain decisions had not been made, so I will try to explain why the UGAA has ramped up its investment in the SA experience and well-being since 2010. For many years the University of Georgia has been committed to the overall success of SAs, but in my opinion, the UGAA and other athletic associations in the autonomy conferences have been investing more resources to guarantee SA success and well-being, especially in the last five or six years. Listed below are several developments since 2010 which might be driving this increased investment in the well-being of SAs.

---

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., The Drake Group Press Release of May 4, 2018 and its criticism of the Rice Commission on College Basketball for its failure to make a recommendation on allowing athletes to earn money to market their own names, images and likenesses.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Jon Solomon, The History Behind the Debate Over Paying NCAA Athletes, The Aspen Institute (April 28, 2018) (recognizing SAs' value beyond their athletic scholarships).

<sup>12</sup> I was born in 1950 and earned my BA in American History from Oberlin College in 1972. While at Oberlin I ran cross country and was on the swimming team all four years, and was Sports Editor for the *Oberlin Review* for two years. My late father was a professor at the University of Illinois and served on the U of I's athletic board in the 1960s, so I grew up following intercollegiate athletics.

The NCAA started discussions about the association's role in preventing sexual assault in 2010, and an association-wide policy was adopted in 2017 that requires annual sexual violence prevention education for athletics administrators, coaches and SAs.<sup>13</sup>

In 2010 the NCAA required member institutions to develop concussion management plans for athletes who were or might have been concussed.<sup>14</sup> The first lawsuit against the NCAA over concussions was filed in 2011. The plaintiff, a former college football player, claimed negligence in the handling of several head injuries he sustained during his playing career.<sup>15</sup> By June 2018 the NCAA was facing 111 class-action suits related to how Division I football programs handled concussions.<sup>16</sup> These suits are ongoing<sup>17</sup> although a major one settled on June 15, 2018.<sup>18</sup>

The NCAA established its Sports Science Institute (SSI) in 2013 and hired Dr. Brian Hainline to lead the institute and be the association's point person on the physical and mental health and well-being of the nation's SAs. The SSI, in collaboration with NCAA's Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports, has been collecting and analyzing data, issuing policy statements, and announcing best practices since 2013. The Institute's studies and pronouncements cover a variety of topics including nutrition, sleep, performance data, concussions, alcohol and substance abuse, and sexual assault.<sup>19</sup> The SSI's health and safety priority areas are cardiac health; concussions; doping and substance abuse; mental health; nutrition, sleep and performance; overuse injuries; sexual assault and interpersonal violence;

---

<sup>13</sup> Michael Miranda, FARA Division I Update, (March 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, A Verdict Could Have Changed the Tide, Inside Higher Education, June 26, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Ben Strauss, *Judge Approves Settlement in Head Injuries Suit Against the N.C.A.A.*, New York Times, January 26, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Bauer-Wolf, *supra* note 14; Associated Press, *NCAA facing 43 concussion lawsuits after latest filings*, Denver Post, October 5, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Shrader & Associates, Blog, Discovery Continues in Ploetz v. NCAA CTE Lawsuit, March 7, 2018, <https://www.shraderlaw.com/blog/2018/march/discovery-continues-in-ploetz-v-ncaa-cte-lawsuit/#~U6e2C61>.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Bauer-Wolf *supra* note 14. The NCAA agreed to settle an earlier suit for \$75 million with most of the money going to set up a monitoring system.

<sup>19</sup> [www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mental-health-best-practices](http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mental-health-best-practices); *id.*/nutrition; *id.*/nutrition-sleep-performance; *id.*

athletics health care administration; and data-driven decision making.<sup>20</sup> The goal for each campus is to provide an environment that promotes the safety and well-being of college athletes on and off the field and their playing venues.<sup>21</sup>

Related to the work of the SSI, the NCAA passed Independent Medical Care legislation that requires member schools to designate an athletics health care administrator in carrying out a broader obligation to build a structure that supports the delivery of independent medical care for SAs.<sup>22</sup>

On April 15, 2014, the NCAA approved action to allow unlimited meals and snacks for SAs in conjunction with their athletic competitions. The new rules for meals incident to participation apply to walk-ons as well as scholarship athletes.<sup>23</sup>

The establishment of the five autonomy conferences became effective in August 2014. Along with greater flexibility to regulate their programs, the 65 schools in these conferences also gained flexibility in spending without being tightly restricted by the principle of maintaining competitive equity with all other NCAA Division I programs.<sup>24</sup>

The 65 schools in the five autonomy conferences have given SAs a meaningful role in developing new policies. Not only are SAs being heard, they have a vote on autonomy legislation with three SAs from each conference voting at Autonomy Business Sessions. The 2018 NCAA Autonomy Business Session was the fourth year that athletes were allowed to debate and vote during

---

<sup>20</sup> NCAA SSE Athletics Health Care Administrator Handbook 9 (2017). There is also a Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>23</sup> These meals are in addition to a meal plan provided to a SA as part of his/her full scholarship. Michelle Brutlag Hosick, *Council Approves Meals, Other Rules: New Model Provides Unlimited Meals and Snacks*, NCAA, April 15, 2014 (NCAA website).

<sup>24</sup> Dan Wolken, *Power 5 Conferences Get What They Want in NCAA Governance Proposal*, USA Today (July 18, 2014) <http://usat.ly/1mnXdr4>; Brian Bennett, *NCAA Board Votes to Allow Power 5 Autonomy*, ESPN (Aug. 8, 2014) [http://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/\\_/id/11321551](http://www.espn.com/college-sports/story/_/id/11321551).

the sessions.<sup>25</sup> Those 15 SAs can have a big impact on how new policies are shaped when they vote as a block.<sup>26</sup>

The NCAA DI Council and the autonomy conferences approved time demand rules in January 2017. These rules went into effect for 2017-18 and prohibit athletically related activities during certain time periods, require days off, mandate vacation periods, and require schools to create time management plans for each of their sports/teams.<sup>27</sup>

In January 2018 the autonomy conferences adopted a medical care proposal which gives schools discretion on how to provide medical insurance coverage for student-athlete injuries for a period of two years after the SA graduates or leaves school.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, UGA and many other schools in the autonomy conferences have resources to invest in their SAs. Overall revenue for the UGAA was \$84.8 million in FY11 and it is projected to be \$143.3 in FY19 – an increase of 69%. Of course, expenditures have increased during this period but the UGAA's revenues are well in excess of expenses.<sup>29</sup>

## II. CHANGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA: 2010/11 TO 2018/19

### A. *The financial investments:*

**Scholarships and the cost of attendance:** The total number of SAs at UGA has remained relatively stable since 2010

---

<sup>25</sup> Michelle Brutlag Hosick, *Autonomy Conferences Adopt Medical Care Proposal: Student Athletes Support Proposal That Mandates Expanded Coverage*, NCAA (January 19, 2018) (detailing the voting session).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Jake New, *A True Day Off*, Inside Higher Education January 23, 2017 (the article's discussion of the debate surrounding proposed amendments to the new time management rules summarizes the concerns raised by 'outspoken athletes' and how 14 of the 15 SAs voted against a proposal allowing an exemption for participating in recruiting activities on their days off).

<sup>27</sup> Jake New, *A True Day Off*, Inside Higher Education, January 23, 2017

<sup>28</sup> Michelle Hosick, *Autonomy conferences adopt medical care proposal* (January 19, 2018) [www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/autonomy](http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/autonomy).

<sup>29</sup> The Athletic Association has been making annual contributions to the University to support faculty and students since before I became FAR: FY 11 - \$2 million; FY 12 - \$2 million, FY 13 - \$4 million, FY 14 - \$4 million, FY 15 - \$5 million, FY 16 - \$4 million, FY 17 - \$4.5 million; and FY 18 - \$4 million.

at approximately 550 men and women on 21 teams.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the total number of athletic scholarships awarded by the UGAA, both head count and equivalency, has not changed in my years as FAR. However, the cost of a full-ride in a head count sport has increased from \$17,816 in 2010-11 (FY 11) to \$24,108 in FY19. That's a 35% increase.<sup>31</sup> In addition, effective in 2014 UGA and other schools were allowed to award cost-of-attendance stipends to their SAs. In 2018-19 a SA in an equivalency sport on a full grant-in-aid is receiving a \$4,104 miscellaneous expense stipend while one receiving a half grant receives half of the stipend and a SA on a 1/4<sup>th</sup> scholarship receives 1/4<sup>th</sup> of that miscellaneous expense stipend.<sup>32</sup> When that cost-of-attendance stipend is added to the full grant-in-aid (\$24,108 + \$4,104 = \$28,212) and compared to the amount of a full-ride in 2011 (\$17,816), the increase is \$10,396 (58%). Overall, the UGAA's spending for this direct support of SAs has increased 62.8% from \$8,730,000 in FY11 to \$14,221,314 in FY19 due in large part to being able to award the cost-of-attendance stipends starting in 2014.

**Academic counseling:** The UGAA's investment in academic counseling for SAs has gone up 36%; from \$2.1 million in FY11 to \$2.885 million in FY19. The increase is due both to an increase in staffing and to higher salaries for counselors, mentors, learning specialists, and tutors.

**Compliance and student services:** The investment in compliance and student services has increased from \$302,254 in FY11 to \$1.875 million in FY 19 – that's a 520% jump. This investment covers a wide variety of activities such as supporting the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), career counseling, mentoring, leadership training, Learn Play Excel, and

---

<sup>30</sup> UGA had 564 SAs in the fall semester 2017, and 513 in the spring semester 2018. The variations year to year are not substantial.

<sup>31</sup> This covers in-state tuition, room, board and books. In-state tuition includes several fees charged to all UGA undergraduates. Board – the meal plan – provides 3 meals each day, with no closing on Sunday night. For an out-of-state SA in a head count sport, the grant in aid has increased from \$35,024 to \$42,682 during this period – a 21.8% increase.

<sup>32</sup> The cost-of-attendance stipends vary somewhat depending on whether the SA is in-state or out-of-state and whether he or she is living off-campus or on-campus at the East Campus Village.

a variety of other SA focused programs as well as paying higher salaries and having a larger staff in the compliance office.

**Sports medicine and nutrition:** The investment in sports medicine, nutrition, the training table, and meals incident to participation increased by 245% from \$2.3 million in FY11 to \$8.05 million in FY18. The nutrition, training table and meals, and meals incident to participation portion of this \$8.05 million in FY18 was \$4.18 million. That is 52% of the total. This investment should be compared to the FY11 sports medicine budget of \$2.3 million that dedicated only \$37,900 (1.6%) to nutrition. The UGAA is feeding its SAs much better now than in FY11.

*B. The Impact of the Investments:*

**Physical health, mental health and nutrition:** The UGAA's approach to meeting, implementing and developing protocols for the NCAA's health and safety priorities<sup>33</sup> is under the leadership of Georgia's Senior Associate Athletic Director for Sports Medicine, Ron Courson. He had a Sports Medicine Staff of ten in 2011 and worked with a budget of \$2.33 million. He now has a staff of over a staff of 16 full-time trainers, five full-time nutritionists, and a mental health professional. In addition, a psychiatrist and a clinical social worker – both affiliated with the Piedmont Athens Regional Health Center – are part of his team. As noted above, the overall Sports Medicine budget, including the training table and nutrition, increased to \$8.05 million in 2018. That's a 245% increase from 2011.

How does this investment impact SAs? All SA are now receiving a full-physical when they matriculate including a battery of tests to detect any heart conditions. This pre-participation evaluation includes an ECG and complies with the NCAA's cardiovascular care best practices checklist.

Testing is also done to provide a baseline for each SA against which cognition can be assessed in the event of any kind of head injury or trauma. This is part of the UGAA's concussion protocol, and this pre-participation concussion assessment also complies with the NCAA's concussion care best practices checklist.

---

<sup>33</sup> See text and notes at notes 19 to 21 *supra*.



The increased revenues also fund programming for SAs on drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, mental health awareness, and sexual assault/bystander intervention. In addition, there is programming on these topics for coaches, counselors, trainers, and other members of the UGAA staff. The goals of this programming for SAs and the staff includes breaking down the stigma that is often associated with reaching out for help to deal with issues like depression and anxiety as well as to sensitize SAs, coaches, counselors and others to notice changes in a SA's academic performance, attendance, mood, attitude and other forms of behavior. In the terms of the NCAA's Mental Health Best Practices Checklist, all SAAC representatives, SAs, coaches and others are receiving information about the signs and symptoms of mental health disorders, programming about preventing and responding to sexual assault, interpersonal violence and hazing, and programming about peer intervention in the event of a teammate's mental health distress. Everyone is being educated to recognize the "importance of understanding and helping to minimize the possible tension that can exist in student-athletes about adverse consequences for seeking mental health care."<sup>34</sup>

As for food and nutrition, the financial investment has increased dramatically so the SAs at UGA are much better fed today than in 2010-11. Moreover, the UGAA did not employ a nutritionist in 2010-11 and it now has 5 full-time nutritionists<sup>35</sup> who understand that the food and fuel needs of SAs vary considerably from sport to sport, from in-season to off season, and between individual SAs. Moreover, this nutrition expertise goes hand in hand with greater awareness of mental health issues that impact some SAs such as eating disorders, body image concerns, and substance abuse. The work of the nutrition staff is coordinated with the work of the strength and conditioning staffs for the Olympic sports and the football team. The strength training, conditioning, and feeding of a defensive lineman, a gymnast, a golfer, a distance runner, and a shot-putter are

---

<sup>34</sup> NCAA Mental Health Best Practices Checklist, July 2017.

<sup>35</sup> There is also a small army of undergraduate and graduate student interns from the University's food, nutrition and dietetics program in the School of Family & Consumer Sciences.

different, and the UGAA now has the expertise and the resources to tailor these regimes for each of its SAs.

**Academic Support:** UGA's academic support program for SAs has not changed substantially since 2010-11. The counseling staff and the number of mentors and learning specialists is larger now than eight years ago. UGA hires tutors carefully, their training is rigorous, they are evaluated regularly, and the director of the Tutorial Program is not reluctant to replace them.

There has been some turnover among the senior academic support staff, but several of the coordinators and counselors have more than decade of experience with the UGAA including the professionals in charge of the writing and math labs, and the professional who coordinates the life skills program. The counselors, assigned to specific teams, work hard to find study-abroad and experiential learning opportunities for SAs. UGA has an experiential learning requirement for all undergraduates as well as many popular study-abroad programs, and it is often a challenge for SAs to fit these learning experiences into their schedules. Finally, like all athletic programs, the UGAA closely monitors APRs, GPAs, GSRs and lots of other metrics for assessing academic success and progress; and gives public recognition to both individual SAs and to teams for outstanding academic achievements.<sup>36</sup>

**Career Counseling:** There have been substantial enhancements in the areas of career planning and career development as well as leadership training. The 'Director of Student Development' position was created and filled in 2015. This staff member hired for this position previously worked in the UGAA's compliance office. She has a JD, practiced law for several years, and she helps SAs with networking, internships (paid and unpaid), connecting SAs with alumni, job-shadowing, interviewing, learning about careers, and initial employment. Prior to creating and staffing of this position the SAs at UGA were much more dependent on the University's Career Development

---

<sup>36</sup> Shortly before the opening kickoff at UGA's first home football game against Austin Peay on Saturday, September 1, 2018 awards were presented to the rising senior male and female SAs with the highest GPAs among all SAs, and the Women's Cross Country team received an award for being the team with the highest team GPA for 2017-18 among the UGAA's 21 teams. The FAR presented these awards on the 50 yard line of Sanford Stadium.

Office. This guidance for life after college sports is much appreciated by SAs at UGA.<sup>37</sup>

Related to this investment in career counseling are the many opportunities the UGAA provides to high achieving SAs for leadership training and opportunities for community service through LEAD. This is an innovative leadership, education and development program that is under the direction of an experienced administrator from the UGAA's Student Services department.

**Time Demands – A True Day Off:** Legislation designed to reduce the time demands on college athletes was adopted by the autonomy conferences in January 2017 and implemented for the first time in the 2017-18 academic-year.<sup>38</sup> In a nutshell, the rules give SAs one day off per week during a season, 14 days off at the end of a season, and two days off per week during the off-season. The five conferences also adopted a rule that prohibits 'athletically related activities' between 9 pm and 6 am as well as a requirement that schools develop time management plans for each team/sport.<sup>39</sup>

I doubt a figure can be placed on the amount of time coaches, the UGAA administrators responsible for particular teams/sports, and the compliance office have dedicated to explaining, implementing, and monitoring the new SA time demand rules in 2017-18. The compliance staff explained the new rules to the University's Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) at a meeting in February 2017. They also gave similar but much more in-depth presentations to each of the UGAA's teams before specific plans for each were developed and implemented.<sup>40</sup> In May 2018 the head of compliance, the UGAA coordinators for each team, the Director of Athletics and the FAR conducted a sport by sport, team by team, assessment of how things went in this first year of the time management plans.

All in all, but for an occasional glitch and some uncertainty on the margins about what constitutes a countable athletically

---

<sup>37</sup> See generally, Rachel Stark, When the Playing Days End, *NCAA Champion Magazine* 40-47 (Spring 2018)

<sup>38</sup> Jake New, A True Day Off, *Inside Higher Education*, January 23, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> Plans had to be developed by the first day of classes or the first day of Countable Athletic Related Activity (CARA), whichever comes first.

related activity, implementation was relatively smooth. Most importantly, the reactions of UGA's SAs to the time management plans and days off during annual exit interviews with the COIA were very positive. They like having the true day off. These reactions were reinforced in discussions with the two SAs who serve on the UGAA Board of Directors and with a panel of SAs who addressed the Board at its regular spring meeting. Similar opinions were voiced by the half dozen SAs from several different SEC schools who attended the SEC's spring meeting in Florida in late May. SAs appreciate these time management rules, and they like having a true day off.

A time demand issue that remains unsettled concerns how SAs spend their summers. Many SAs at autonomy conference schools stay on campus to take summer session classes while training for their sports. Others are competing in summer leagues, entering tournaments and competing. For many, there is not much down time, few opportunities for summer employment or internships, and little or no time for travel or a family vacation. It is not evident whether anything can or should be done. After all, many of the elite SAs at autonomy conference schools have been competing and training year-round since they were in middle school or earlier, and often with very substantial investments of time, energy and resources by their parents or guardians.

**Sexual Assault and Bystander Intervention:** The UGAA has been doing regular programs on sexual assault and alcohol abuse since June 2011 starting with orientation for the new freshman on the football team, and orientation for new SAs generally. These programs were repeated in August 2011 for new SAs, and there was programming for returning SAs as well as presentations on drug and alcohol issues. These education programs were repeated in the Spring semester of 2012. In the following years programming was added on self-defense to sexual assault, eating disorders, bystander intervention, sports-medicine generally, what constitutes consent, relationship violence, personal safety, reporting obligations, It's On Us, and mental health awareness with a focus on sexual assault. There were also special speakers on several occasions. Of course, UGA's President, Athletic Director, and Title IX Coordinator, pursuant to NCAA policy, must attest annually that coaches, athletics

administrators, and SAs are being educated about sexual violence prevention. This had to be done by May 15, 2018 for the 2017-18 academic-year.

**Athletic Board Involvement:** The UGAA Board of Directors established a Student-Athlete Wellness Committee in 2014-15 in order to educate the entire Board about the Association's commitment to SA health and well-being, and to keep the Board informed about initiatives in these areas. The Committee is chaired by the FAR – who is also the Board's Secretary and a member of its Executive Committee – along with a mix of the Board's elected and appointed Faculty, an alumni member of the Board, and the Board's two appointed SA members. This Committee meets three times during the academic year and the Chair/FAR reports to the entire Board at the UGAA's three regular meetings during the year. The Committee's charge/definition of wellness is expansive: it includes not just physical and mental well-being but also life skills, leadership training, networking, interviewing skills, public/community service, strength and conditioning, nutrition, academic support, and the transition to life after graduation and the end of eligibility – jobs, interviews, internships and the like. One member of this Committee recently stated that a more appropriate name for it might be the Student Athlete Well-Being Committee.

The Committee's meetings since the fall of 2015 have covered mental health and related behavioral medicine issues three times including discussions about diagnosing and treating eating and sleep disorders, substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. The Committee also heard a presentation about the new rules on time demands as well as how the UGAA has shifted much of the responsibility for behavioral medicine away from UGA's Counseling and Psychiatric Services Center to a partnership with Piedmont-Athens Regional Hospital (PAR) and having a Psychiatrist and a Clinical Social Worker employed by PAR working full-time at the UGAA.

Some of the other topics that the Student-Athlete Wellness Committee has learned about include the strength & conditioning, cardio training, nutrition and the overall SA assessment done for the football team and UGA's Olympic sports. The Committee also heard a presentation by the Director of Student Athlete

Development about her efforts to help SAs plan for careers outside their sports, to explore internship opportunities, to develop networking skills, and to make the transition to the workforce from being a SA. This presentation complemented presentations about SAAC and the programming that the UGAA provides for leadership training, career development and service learning including an in-depth look at the L.E.A.D. program. Last but not least, the SA Wellness Committee learned how the UGAA was handling the distribution of the cost-of-attendance stipends to SAs while providing financial literacy programs to SAs in hope that they would spend those stipends wisely.

#### CONCLUSION

Many universities in the five autonomy conferences have made substantial investments in the SA experience since 2014. These investments are sometimes forgotten or ignored in the ongoing national debates over whether SAs should be allowed to monetize their names, images and likenesses, and whether SAs should be entitled to compensation above and beyond their scholarships and cost of attendance stipends. This paper does not weigh-in on those challenging issues. Instead, it discusses the resources that the University of Georgia and many of the other 64 schools in the autonomy conferences are investing in the overall experience and well-being of SAs. These investments are made not only to help these men and women be successful in their academic endeavors and in their sports, but also to enhance their physical and mental health and overall well-being. Today's SAs at Georgia and many other autonomy conference schools are earning a high rate of return on their own considerable investments of time, effort, and energy to get great educations and simultaneously compete at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics thanks to their athletic associations' student-focused spending and programming.