2.1.1. List all “conditions for certification” imposed by the committee in its Cycle 2 certification decision (if any) as they relate to Operating Principle 2.1 (Academic Standards). For each condition, provide:
   a. The original “condition” imposed;
   b. The action(s) taken by the institution;
   c. The date(s) of the action(s); and
   d. An explanation for any partial or non-completion of such required actions.
   [Please note, the institution is not required to respond to opportunities for enhancement developed by the peer-review team unless those same items were adopted by the committee.]

No conditions imposed.

2.1.2. List all actions the institution has completed or progress it has made regarding all plans for improvement/recommendations developed by the institution during its Cycle 2 certification process as they relate to Operating Principle 2.1 (Academic Standards). For each issue identified, provide:
   a. The original goal(s);
   b. The step(s) taken by the institution to achieve the goal(s);
   c. The date(s) the step(s) was completed; and
   d. An explanation for any partial or non-completion of the original goal(s) and/or step(s) to achieve the goal.

   Measurable Standard No. 1
   If the institution developed a plan for improvement for Operating Principle 2.1 during Cycle, the institution must demonstrate that it has implemented its Cycle 2 plan or provide an explanation for partial completion of the plan.
   a. The committee will not accept the following explanations for partial completion or non-completion:
      (1) The institution did not possess sufficient funds to implement the plan.
      (2) The institution has had personnel changes since the original development of the plan.
      (3) The institution does not have documentation of actions taken to implement the plan.
   b. The committee will accept the following explanation for partial completion or non-completion:
      • The institution has implemented a different plan(s) or taken different action(s) to achieve or maintain progress toward the same goal outlined in its Cycle 2 plan.
   [Please note, the institution will not be required to fulfill an element of a Cycle 2 plan if the element does not affect conformity with a current operating principle.]

Issues identified in the Cycle 2 review include a policy regarding student-athletes’ (SA) conflicts with class time and/or final examinations due to participation in intercollegiate athletics.
a. The original goal was to adopt a formal, written policy.
b. The steps taken to achieve the goal were: 1) Create a written policy, 2) publish the policy in the Department Operations Manual, 3) publish the policy in MSU’s Compliance Manual, 4) publish the policy in the Student-Athlete Handbook, and 5) make the policy available on the Athletic Department student website.
c. Steps 1-3 were completed in August, 2002. Steps 4 and 5 were completed in 2003.
d. All steps were completed as planned.

2.1.3. **Describe any additional plans for improvement/recommendations developed by the institution since the Cycle 2 certification decision was rendered by the committee for Operating Principle 2.1 (Academic Standards), including any plans or recommendations developed through the institution’s involvement in the NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program (APP) Data Review process, if applicable. For each additional plan, provide:**

a. The additional goal(s);  
b. The step(s) taken by the institution to achieve the goal(s); and  
c. The date(s) the step(s) was completed.

The following recommendations were made by the One Team* Committee

*The One Team Committee was an ad hoc committee formed and charged by MSU President Geoff Gamble to “Determine whether Montana State has the appropriate programs in place to assure that the student-athletes we recruit to play for our teams will succeed academically, socially and athletically.” This group reviewed and made recommendations in the One Team Report (2008) concerning the staffing, physical space and financial support for student-athlete academic support services.

Recommendation 1:

a. “Academic faculty be included in screening during a prospective student-athlete’s official visit. Screening includes reviewing official or unofficial transcripts, meeting with recruits and providing a written assessment of the recruit’s chances for academic success at Montana State University in the intended major.”

b. All Official Visits include a meeting with an Academic Department/Faculty member. These visits are coordinated by the coaches and/or the Academic Center. FAR reviews all PSAs academic credentials (transcript and test scores) prior to an official visit or written offer of financial aid. This information is also reviewed by an Academic Center Staff member, the Compliance Officer, and the Admissions Liaison. At this time, no written evaluations from faculty are collected, but informal feedback is gathered by the coaching staffs and Academic Center staff members when possible.

c. Fall 2008/ongoing: The institution has determined that informal communications are sufficient to meet this goal and will only move to requiring written reviews if needed.
Recommendation 2

a. “Academic faculty understand that their role includes: (1) Promoting academic programs at Montana State including opportunities in the faculty member’s department; (2) Assessing the recruit’s motivation for and level of interest in academics; (3) Providing the Department of Athletics with an assessment of the recruit’s academic promise in a timely fashion so that it can be considered in the final review of the recruit.”

b. Faculty and Academic Departments have been more than willing to meet with prospects and provide feedback. MSU's faculty and staff have a clear understanding of their role in the recruitment and retention of all students. Integration of Athletics staff into such groups as Assistant/Associate Deans Council (ADC) helps ensure constant communication.

c. Fall 2007/ongoing: Appropriate communications channels are now in place but effort will continue indefinitely.

Recommendation 3

a. “Faculty, Dean’s staff and academic advisors who meet with transfer recruits be educated about the Student-Athlete Academic Progress Form, NCAA eligibility requirements (e.g., progress towards graduation), and how each student-athlete's progress towards graduation contributes to team-level APR.”

b. Often times, advisors are educated about transfer requirements during the evaluation process. The Academic Center staff works closely with the advisors to help them understand the review of academic credentials and the requirements. The Registrar's Liaison regularly attends Eligibility Certification Team Meetings once a month to review legislation and processes which often times includes compliance education on transfer requirements. When necessary, the Admissions liaison attends these meetings. This has also been a topic at faculty advising workshops sponsored by the Academic Advising Center.

c. Fall 2008/ongoing: Goal has been achieved but effort must be maintained.

Recommendation 4

a. “For transfer recruits, academic faculty provide the Department of Athletics with a preliminary estimate of the percentage of degree requirements already satisfied when the transfer recruit enrolls at MSU. This estimate is based on the recruit’s transcript and courses in progress.”

b. When necessary, the Academic Center will submit transcripts to the Academic Departments to assist in determining how many credits the Prospective Student-Athlete (PSA) has completed toward that specific degree. The departments determine which classes are acceptable as transfer credit, and any substitutions that can be made so an accurate percentage of degree completed can be determined. Ultimately, the department provides feedback to the Athletic Academic Center regarding the student-athletes’ chances for eligibility in that specific degree program.
Recommendation 5

a. “Coaches receive training to ensure that they have the information needed to effectively promote Montana State as an academic institution. Better understanding of MSU’s academic standards and programs will facilitate more effective initial screening of recruits as well as communication of academic expectations and likely academic experiences at MSU, especially in the first two years.”

b. Admissions meets annually with head coaches to discuss their program and admissions requirements. The last meeting was held November 23, 2010. On March 25, 2009, Athletics hosted a half-day seminar for the coaches that included multiple presentations from departments on-campus so the coaches learn more about the academic standards and research happening at MSU. The Athletic Academic Center has also implemented programming to assist student-athletes.

c. Spring 2009/ongoing: Goal has been achieved but effort must be maintained.

Recommendation 6

a. “The University invest in significant improvements to the Department of Athletics’ academic support infrastructure – both staffing and physical facility. The current facility is too small to serve as a center of academic activity for a large athletics program. Aside from limiting programming and services, the small size of the facility potentially sends a negative message about the relative importance of academics. Despite recent additions, current staffing is still inadequate for providing regular advising meetings with all student-athletes or additional support to identify and support students experiencing academic difficulty. A long-term goal could be to have one full-time academic support staff for every 80 student-athletes, which would allow for an average of 30 minutes of contact with each student-athlete during critical periods. This must be in addition to personnel needed to track compliance with NCAA academic requirements. Academic support is a fundamental responsibility of the University and as such, meeting this responsibility through adequate staffing and facilities is an essential function of the university.”

b. The physical space of the Athletic Academic Center was increased during the summer of 2008. This expansion added more study space and computer terminals. The space was also reconfigured to allow for more individual study space and more computers. The expansion added 10-12 more computer terminals and new, more efficient shelving to save space required for the textbook library. The Athletic Academic Center has also built an inventory of laptops, netbooks, graphing calculators, and other like equipment for student-athletes to check-out. Additionally, the Academic Center Staff has been expanded to include three full-time individuals: a Director (who also performs academic coordinator duties), an Academic Coordinator, and a Student Athletic Affairs Administrator (formerly Life Skills
Coordinator) who also performs academic coordinator duties for two teams. With the additional staff, student-athletes are now required to meet with their academic coordinators prior to advising by their regular academic advisor. These meetings have been valuable in tracking the eligibility and academic success of our student-athletes. In addition, the CATS program, mentor program, tutoring program, and study tables have all been implemented or redesigned to better serve our student-athletes.

c. Summer 2008: Goal achieved.

Recommendation 7

a. “MSU, as part of its comprehensive retention efforts, increase data collection and analysis to better understand the impediments to success faced by all students. Such analysis, if completed for student-athletes and the general population, would support more strategic decision-making regarding academic support initiatives both within and outside athletics.”

b. Athletics has been collecting much more specific data on SA academic scheduling challenges, and these data have been informing actions on the part of the institution.

Recommendation 8

a. “MSU improve coordination and communications regarding university, college and department academic support services for students. This should begin with an inventory of existing academic support services to be publicized to the entire MSU community. An analysis of the inventory might suggest efficiencies that would benefit all students. With this information, coaches, assistant coaches, and academic support staff in the Department of Athletics would be better positioned to direct student-athletes to available support across the campus.”

b. Within the athletic department, the Athletic Academic Center publishes a list of support services/programs available for student-athletes in the Student-Athlete Handbook. The handbook is distributed to student-athletes during an academic meeting with each team at the beginning of the year. It is also available on the athletic department website. MSU has also introduced a comprehensive retention effort led by the Office of Student Success, and one of the key elements of this effort is regular and timely communications with all students about academic support services available to them. A new interactive web site is also designed to create a one-stop shop for all students to find this critical information.

c. Fall 2008: Goal has been achieved.

Recommendation 9

a. “Student-athletes connect directly with each of their professors. With the additional academic challenges posed by participation in NCAA athletics, we view such connections as critical. Specifically, we offer two suggested mechanisms: (1) Prior to the first class meeting or soon thereafter, student-athletes should meet with each of their professors to share their athletic participation status, competition schedule that will create absences from class, and
any other information concerning athletic issues that may impact the student’s participation in the class. This meeting should be during regularly scheduled office hours and not by catching the professor after class. (2) Student-athletes should meet personally with faculty to get progress reports.”

b. Student-athletes are encouraged to meet with their professors at the beginning of each academic semester to discuss missed class time and athletic participation. Each student-athlete is given a letter concerning missed class time required for his/her sport to distribute to his/her professor. Additionally, students in the CATS program or other selected students who are required to complete grade checks, must distribute grade check forms to their professors. These forms must be hand delivered by the student-athlete to the professor to encourage dialogue about class performance and attendance. The students must return completed forms to their coaches and Athletic Academic Center staff.

c. Spring 2008/ongoing: Goal achieved but requires constant monitoring.

Recommendation 10

a. “The Department of Athletics emphasize academic commitment/success among student-athletes in all public communications (public addresses, news releases, web pages, programs, etc.). Academic major or academic distinctions should be presented as equally important as athletic statistics or awards. This should begin with an audit of current practices including on-line player biographies.”

b. The athletic department has engrained the academic success of student-athletes into everything that it does. For example, the department now has majors listed for student-athletes on the website, Student-Athletes of the Week are selected for the website and are introduced during the FB game broadcasts, feature stories are written and posted on the website about the academic success and community involvement of student-athletes, and majors and academic programs/interests of student-athletes are often included in featured athletic related stories on MSU student-athletes.

c. Fall 2009: Goal achieved.

Recommendation 11

a. “Coaches incorporate class attendance policy and study group participation requirements into the written rules for their sports to clarify expectations and maximize academic success.”

b. The Athletic Academic Center has developed study tables that are offered four nights a week and monitored by graduate students. Tutors are sometimes available during study tables to assist students as well. Required attendance is mandated as follows: 2.65 – 2.5 Cum GPA must serve 2 Hours a week, 2.5- 2.20 Cum GPA must serve 4 Hours a week, and 2.20 or below Cum GPA must serve 6 Hours a week. New Student-Athletes must attend study tables 4 Hours a week, and SAs who drop below 12 hours in a Previous Term must
attend 4 Hours a week. MBB, WBB, WVB, and FB have different (more strict) criteria for study table attendance.

c. Fall 2007: Goal achieved.

2.1.4. Describe the process by which student-athletes are admitted to the institution and identify the agencies vested with this responsibility. In what ways (if any) do the process and/or criteria used for the admission of student-athletes differ from the process for admitting students in general? Be specific and give careful attention to key decision points (e.g., second-level or subsequent review process, appeals procedure) in these processes and the individuals or groups involved at each point, including the role, either formal or informal, the department of athletics plays (if any) in the admissions process for student-athletes.

Measurable Standard No. 2
Student-athletes must be governed by the institutional admissions policies that apply to all students.

Measurable Standard No. 3
Institutional admissions decisions for student-athletes must be made solely by the authority responsible for admissions decisions.

Admission to the Montana University System in general and Montana State University in Bozeman (MSU) in particular is governed by standards and policies set forth by the Montana Board of Regents (BOR Policy: 301). These policies clearly define the specific criteria by which prospective students are eligible for admission to the individual institutions in the Montana University System. All prospective students who provide the appropriate credentials and who satisfactorily comply with the established admission criteria are admitted to Montana State University. Athletes are not handled any differently than non-athletes.

The admissions procedures and criteria can be found as Appendix 2.1.4.a

There are no distinctions made concerning the admission of students in general and student-athletes. Student-athletes are subject to identical procedures and criteria for admission as the general student population. All admission decisions are made by MSU Admissions; the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has no informal or formal role in the admissions process. There are provisions for students who do not meet the established admissions criteria which are discussed under study item 5.

2.1.5. Describe the process by which students who do not meet the institution’s standard or normal entrance requirements may be admitted, and identify the agencies vested with this responsibility. This should include any second-level or subsequent review processes or appeals procedures that may be used when students are not automatically admitted because they do not meet the institution’s published entrance requirements.

Measurable Standard No. 3
Institutional admissions decisions for student-athletes must be made solely by the authority responsible for admissions decisions.

Measurable Standard No. 4
Academic standards and policies for student-athletes must be consistent with the standards for the student body in general, conference or NCAA standards, whichever are higher.

The Montana Board of Regents (policy 301.1) authorizes institutions (including Montana State University) to exempt up to 15% of first-time, full-time freshmen from the admissions requirements outlined previously in this report. These exemptions allow admission for students with special talents, minorities and others who demonstrate special needs/the ability to perform well at Montana State University.

In order to ensure that students who are admitted under exemptions are reviewed consistently and fairly, MSU utilizes complex policies and procedures outlined in the attached chart (Appendix 2.1.4.a). These policies and procedures are implemented by admissions staff at Montana State and are very objective in nature. The Department of Athletics has no informal or formal role in these exemption decisions. When students are admitted via this exemption process, they are never informed that they were an ‘exemption’ admit and they are handled/communicated with exactly as a student who is regularly admitted.

Students who do not meet the outlined admissions requirements in full and are not granted an exemption may be granted conditional admission to Montana State University through what we refer to as Pre-University Studies.

Pre-University Studies (PreUS) students have been conditionally admitted to MSU due to not meeting the minimum admissions requirements. They may take a combination of courses through MSU and through Gallatin College’s Developmental Education program during their first semester. Gallatin College is a MSU college which offers 1 and 2 year programs and developmental courses.

PreUS students can be full time (up to 14 credits) in their first semester through a combination of Math, Writing, Effective Academic Practices, and/or First Year Seminar courses taught by Gallatin College, along with a maximum of 7 credits of Core 2.0, major, or elective courses through MSU.

After PreUS students attain a 2.0 GPA their first semester, they may transition to University Studies or an academic major for advising. Students who do not receive a 2.0 GPA their first semester will be suspended from MSU for one semester and may not take classes at MSU or Gallatin College while on suspension.

Student-athletes who may be admitted conditionally as a Pre-US student would be academically ineligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics while in Pre-US status.

All students who have been denied admission or granted conditional admission (Pre-US) may appeal that decision. Appeals are submitted in writing to the Admission and Graduation Requirements Board (GARC) whose specific charge is to hear appeals related to admission.
decisions, university rules and regulations, and graduation requirements. The Board is comprised of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, the Registrar and the Dean (or designee) of the appropriate college (if applicable). Students who are admitted conditionally (Pre-US) may appeal the decision and request to enroll as a full time MSU student without course restrictions the first semester.

This procedure is available to students in general and student-athletes alike. There are no distinctions made in the appeal process; the Department of Athletics plays no informal or formal role in student appeals.

There are no distinctions made concerning the admission decisions of students in general and student-athletes. Student-athletes are subject to identical procedures and criteria for admission as the general student population. All admission decisions are made by MSU Admissions; the Department of Athletics has no informal or formal role in the admissions process.

There are no distinctions made concerning the academic standards and policies of students in general and student-athletes. Student-athletes are subject to identical academic standards and policies as the general student population.

2.1.6. Compare and explain any differences between the percentage of first-year student-athletes receiving athletics aid who were admitted through any of the processes described in Self-Study Item No. 5 and the percentage of first-year students in general (including student-athletes) who were so admitted. Provide these comparative data for the four most recent academic years.

Since the number of first time freshman at Montana State University was approximately 1,800 in the fall of 2009, the institution has the discretion to fully admit approximately 270 (15% of the total number of first time, full time new students) who did not meet the published admissions criteria. In addition, MSU has the option to admit new first time students under the Pre-University Studies status as outlined earlier in this report. MSU admitted between 11% and 14% of the total number of new, first time freshmen as exemptions/special admits between the years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. The numbers of student-athletes admitted as exemptions/special admits for the years 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 were significantly less than the percentage of overall first year students admitted as exemptions. New admissions requirements specific to minimum test scores requirements for mathematics were implemented between 2009 and 2010. The increase in first year student-athletes admitted as exemptions which are observed in the 2009-2010 school year is due to that change. Note the very small sample sizes and the impact of those small samples upon the percentages. A total of 8 first time full time student-athletes were admitted as admission exemptions in the fall of 2009. This figure represents only 3% of the total number of exemptions granted that fall (8/270).

Upon examining the distribution of student-athletes admitted as exemptions by sport, no significant trends were observed. Again, note the very small sample sizes involved.

2.1.7. Compare and explain any differences in the admissions profiles of student-athletes who received athletics aid with the profiles of students in general by submitting the following information for the four most recent academic years: average standardized test scores for first-
year student-athletes who received athletics aid (by gender, by racial or ethnic group, and according to the eight sport groups) and for all entering first-year students (by gender and by racial or ethnic group).

If any of the institution’s sports teams had student-athletes certified through the pilot early academic certification program from August 1, 2007, through July 31, 2008, provide an explanation regarding how the inclusion of these average core-course grade-point averages affects the data provided.

**Measurable Standard No. 5**

The institution must analyze and explain any differences between the academic profile of entering student-athletes, as a whole or for any student-athlete subgroup (i.e., sport, gender, ethnicity, transfers), and the academic profile of other student-athletes and comparable student-body groups or subgroups.

A systematic comparison between the admissions profiles of student-athletes and students in general indicates there are no substantive differences in the academic predictors between these two groups. As the tables illustrate, the profiles of these two groups are relatively comparable. It should be noted that the average standardized test scores for all entering first year students has increased over this 4 year period at Montana State University. It should also be noted that, in general, male student-athletes present slightly lower average test scores than the overall group of first year students. The scores of female student-athletes are generally higher than the overall group of first year students. It should also be noted that MSU admission requirements also allow the use of high school gpa or rank in class as admission criteria. Many students are fully admissible based upon gpa and rank in spite of lower than average test scores.

Detailed analysis of academic predictors indicate that when subgroups of racial/ethnic background are considered, the average test scores of general students and student-athletes are relatively comparable given the fact that the sample sizes are very small. It should be noted that overall, the scores of white athletes tend to be higher than those of the overall new student population. It is also important to note the most ethnic and/or racial groups other than white are clearly underrepresented in the student body at MSU. Therefore, comparisons between groups should be done cautiously.

Upon examination of college core grade point averages by sport, it appears as though MSU student-athletes perform very well as students within the various MSU academic programs in spite of the fact that in some sports, the average entering test scores are lower than the overall new student averages.

The comparison of the general student and student-athlete profiles indicates that the two groups are comparable with regard to standard academic predictors, and therefore, have equal probability of being successful in the pursuit of degrees of their choosing at Montana State University.

In conclusion, MSU has clearly delineated policies, procedures, and criteria for admission of students to the university. The responsibility for implementing these policies, procedures and
criteria is housed within the MSU Office of Admissions which is under the Vice President of Student Success.

2.1.8. **Describe the institution’s specific academic support programs (e.g.; Facilitating Learning and Achieving Graduation program (FLAG) to ensure acclimation, academic success and retention of first-year student-athletes with special academic needs and first-year student-athletes admitted through any of the processes described in Self-Study Item No. 5.**

**Measurable Standard No. 6**

The institution must develop specific academic support programs to address the unique needs of student-athletes with entering academic profiles lower than those of the general student body.

The first component of adequately supporting first-year student-athletes with special academic needs is identifying those students. There are a number of different identifiers used to match our student-athletes with our various programs. Prior to stepping foot on campus, the student-athletes test scores and core course GPA’s from the NCAA Eligibility Center are scrutinized. The Admissions Office on Campus evaluates the student-athletes admissions status and breaks it down into part-time admit, exception, provisional, and full-time admits. If an incoming freshman does not receive the full-time admittance status, they are usually flagged. Fall schedules of the student-athletes are also looked over to see if they have been placed in any developmental/remedial courses. Coaches here at MSU also play a large role in the early identification process, and can refer student-athletes into the programming offered.

A student-athlete can also trigger a flag once they are already on campus, and begin to use our services. Grade Checks are conducted throughout the semester on our student-athletes and usually provide a good sense of how they are performing academically. Random class checks take place during the semester to make sure the student-athletes are regularly attending class. After the semester has begun, many student-athletes will bring disabilities to light that were not disclosed prior, and we will begin to match them with our services from that point on. Once a student-athlete is recognized through aforementioned processes as having special academic needs, they are then matched up with the appropriate academic programming options.

2.1.9. **For the four most recent academic years, assess and evaluate data regarding acclimation, retention and the academic success of student-athletes with special academic needs (as defined by the institution (e.g., at-risk, education-impacting disability]) and those student-athletes admitted through any of the processes described in Self-Study Item No. 5. If necessary, the institution must develop plans for improvement to ensure acclimation, retention and academic success for these student-athletes.**

*If the institution does not employ a special, or alternate, admissions process, the institution must assess and evaluate acclimation, retention and the academic success of student-athletes in the lowest (i.e., fourth) quartile of the institution’s general student academic profile or for an alternate group defined by a different benchmark (e.g., quintile) typically used by the institution. If necessary, the institution must develop plans for improvement to ensure acclimation, retention and academic success for these student-athletes.*
Measurable Standard No. 7

The institution must assess, evaluate and if necessary, develop plans for improvement to ensure acclimation, retention and academic success for student-athletes with special academic needs and student-athletes who are admitted through the institution’s special admissions process. If an institution does not employ a special admissions process, assessment, evaluation and if necessary, plans for improvement must be completed for student-athletes in the lowest (i.e., fourth) quartile of the institution’s general student academic profile or for an alternate group defined by a different benchmark (e.g., quintile) typically used by the institution.

Student-athletes with special academic needs, as defined in 2.1.8 and by our institution, have higher acclimation, retention, and academic success when compared to their counterparts.

For the four most recent academic years, Fall 2006 – Spring 2010, 92% of student-athletes with special academic needs stayed at MSU into their sophomore semester. As of 2011, MSU’s first-time full-time freshman to sophomore retention rate is currently 74.2%.

Of the identified student-athletes with special academic needs, a number of them tested into development coursework here at MSU. The two developmental math courses currently offered by MSU are M065 Pre-Algebra and M096 Survey of Algebra. However, math courses included in this data are M 065, MATH 101, and M 096. In the fall of 2009, MATH 101 course number changed to M 096, the course materials and delivery method remained the same. MSU has an overall pass rate over the four most recent academic years of 68% in M065 and the Athletic Department’s student-athletes with special academic needs were at 73%. M096/Math 101 has an overall pass rate over the four most recent academic years of 69% and the Athletic Department’s student-athletes with special academic needs were at 74%. Overall, the student-athletes with special academic needs showed higher academic success than the traditional student in developmental coursework.

Based on achievement rates in MSU development courses, and acclimation and retention as shown through progression to sophomore level, MSU’s student-athletes with special academic needs are above their counterparts.

2.1.10. Describe your institution’s written policies and procedures related to the step-by-step sequence of actions taken by particular individuals on the institution’s campus to certify initial eligibility for student-athletes. Provide the names and titles of individuals inside and/or outside of athletics who are involved with the certification of initial eligibility. In addition, provide the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) who has ultimate responsibility in determining student-athletes’ initial eligibility.

Measurable Standard No. 8

The institution must have written step-by-step policies and procedures for the certification of initial, transfer, and continuing eligibility.

The written policies and procedures for certifying student-athlete’s initial, transfer and continuing eligibility are outlined in the “Procedures for Certifying Athletics Eligibility” document which can be found at the msubobcats.com website under Compliance>Policies and Forms>Eligibility.
The final authority for certifying student-athletes as eligible is vested in the President who delegates that authority to the Faculty Athletic Representative as described in the official FAR job description.

The individuals involved with the certification of initial eligibility are:
Bob Oakberg, Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR)
Camie Bechtold, Associate AD for Compliance/Student Services/SWA (AAD)
Jamie Rizzuto, Director of Athletic Academic Services (AAC)
Johnathan Taylor, Life Skills Coordinator/ Athletic Academic Coordinator (AAC)
Derek Johnson, Athletic Academic Coordinator (AAC)
Jody Ogata, Program Assistant, Registrar’s Office

Head Coaches and the Athletic Director also sign the Squad List after it has been certified.

Policy:

On an annual basis:
- These procedures will be reviewed by the University Athletic Committee.
- Per NCAA Bylaw 14.10.1, the CEO/President will approve these procedures.
- The CEO/President will designate an individual on the institution’s staff to administer proper certification of eligibility.
- This document, once signed, will be posted to MSUBOBCATS.COM and distributed to all Head Coaches

ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES

Once a student-athlete (SA) has been processed through the appropriate category (initial, transfer, continuing, mid-year, international, etc) the following steps are taken to finalize the SA’s certification of eligibility:
1. All SAs must attend an NCAA Compliance meeting to sign necessary paperwork prior to practicing. Once the paperwork is completed, the Financial Aid Coordinator (FAC) or Compliance Assistant enters all participants into Compliance Assistant Internet (CAI).
2. Practice approvals will be provided to each coach before the first practice and thereafter as necessary. This approval will also be distributed to the Training Room, Equipment Room, Weight Room FAC and Academic Center (AC).
3. After the first week of class, the AC certifies that all SAs are enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours. This is monitored on a daily basis by the AC. Any changes in status are addressed by the AC and coaches are notified. Eligibility status is adjusted as necessary.
4. The Registrar’s Office evaluates if SAs are in good academic standing.
5. The Compliance Office and Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) use the information on CAI to certify the eligibility of each SA prior to competition. A squad list and eligibility certification is printed from CAI and signed by the Compliance Officer, FAR, and Athletic Director. The FAC also signs the squad list.
6. The eligibility list is forwarded to the Registrar’s office for signature by the Registrar’s Liaison.
7. The coach is required to sign both the squad list and eligibility list. This serves as official notification for the coach as to the eligibility status of each SA.
8. These documents are faxed to the conference office and filed. The documents are updated as necessary.
9. Each time the squad list or eligibility list, is updated, items 5-9 are repeated. The updated information will be highlighted.

Updated 4/7/2011
10. As an ongoing effort, the Eligibility Certification Team (Registrar’s Liaison, Athletic Academic Staff, and Compliance Officer when necessary) will meet monthly to identify in advance any issues that may affect certification of SAs.

11. Coaches may not contact academic departments concerning the eligibility of student-athletes or prospective student-athletes (PSA). All communication concerning eligibility must be coordinated through the AC Staff or Compliance Office.

INITIAL ENROLLEES
1. The AC and Compliance Officer will collect names of PSAs who have signed NLIs or FA agreements from the FAC. Names of potential walk-ons are collected from the coaches. This process is on-going.

2. The names are placed onto the Prospect Tracking Form.

3. The Academic Coordinator assigned to each team monitors the progress of the PSAs on each team. Any notes are made on the Prospect Tracking Form. This document is used to confirm admission status of the initial enrollees.

4. The Academic Coordinator inputs PSAs into the NCAA Eligibility Center Database (as necessary for walk-ons) and provides status updates on the Prospect Tracking Form. Once a status decision is made by the NCAA Eligibility Center both on the amateurism and initial eligibility status, the data is entered into CAI by the AC.

5. The Prospect Tracking Form is circulated to coaches on a monthly basis in the spring and early summer and on a weekly basis beginning July 1.

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2. The Prospect Tracker is saved on a shared drive to which the AC, Admissions Office and Registrar’s Office has access. Notes to the PSAs’ status are made as necessary. This information is compiled and forwarded to coaches on a monthly basis in the spring and early summer and on a weekly basis after July 1.

3. Official transcripts are collected by Admissions from each institution previously attended. The AC also collects official transcripts from PSAs once they return a signed release statement granting permission for official transcripts to be released to the AC (Official Transcript Release Authorization). These official transcripts are forwarded to Admissions and the Registrar.

4. The Academic Coordinator collects all relevant documentation (EC status, amateurism status, transfer forms, copies of transcripts, etc) and completes the Confirmation of Transfer Form which confirms the PSA meets all transfer requirements prior to enrollment/receipt of aid/competition. The form is signed/reviewed by the Registrar’s Liaison, FAR, and Academic Coordinator. The form and supporting documents are collected in a packet and placed in the SAs file. The Registrar receives a copy of the packet.

5. The FAC also receives a packet before authorization of aid can take place.

6. All transfers PSAs must attend a transfer orientation session or complete a self-directed orientation coordinated by the Academic Coordinator. A graduation checklist is required to determine which classes will count toward the PSAs major. The checklist (obtained from the department) is collected by the Academic Coordinator and forwarded to the Registrar’s Liaison. The Academic Coordinator develops a graduation plan for all transfer PSAs entering their fourth or later semester.

Updated 4/7/2011
7. If the PSA has applied and all official transcripts are submitted, the Admissions Liaison and Registrar’s Liaison are consulted to determine which classes will transfer as core classes and/or electives. For degree specific credit that is required to determine Progress Toward Degree, the PSA and the Academic Coordinator work with the departments to determine applicable degree credit.

8. The Registrar’s Liaison determines if the SA meets the applicable transfer credit hour requirements (satisfactory progress and transfer requirements). The Compliance Officer assists in this process, particularly in assisting to determine which requirements the SA must meet.

9. In Men’s Basketball, the Registrar’s Liaison will verify that no more than 2 physical education credits are counting toward transfer requirements (GPA and Credit Hour requirements, but not applicable to %) at the time the Confirmation Form is completed. This rule is applicable to all MBB 2-2 and 4-2-4 transfers.

10. The AC and Registrar’s Liaison confirms that the SA has a declared major if the SA is entering his/her 5th semester or beyond.

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12. The Compliance Officer enters seasons used and the number of terms the SA has received athletically related financial aid into CAI. This information is received from the transfer tracking forms (One-Time Transfer Release and Junior College Transfer Release). Copies of the transfer tracking forms are forwarded to the Registrar’s Office and are part of the Confirmation of Transfer packet.

CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY
1. All SAs who were on rosters the previous academic year are certified at the end of that academic year (during the summer) to determine if they will meet eligibility for the next academic year.

2. SAs identified as deficient are evaluated for any means to make up the deficiency (see summer school).

3. The Compliance Officer and the AC determine if any Progress Toward Degree (PTD) waivers should be submitted to the NCAA.

4. By July 1, SA information is updated by the Registrar’s Liaison before the data is pulled over into the new academic year in CAI by the FAC.

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6. During these meetings, AC staff will identify 3rd semester SAs who have not declared a major and discuss any potential future problems.

7. Additionally, SAs in their fourth semester who have not yet declared a major, will discuss degree declaration with their athletic academic advisors. The Athletic Academic advisor will assist them in evaluating PTD required in a major and ensure they declare a major prior to their fifth semester.
8. After SAs meet with their Departmental Academic Advisors and Assessments are returned and reviewed by the AC Staff. These documents are kept on file to assist with certification. Copies are forwarded to the Registrar’s Liaison.

MID-YEAR CERTIFICATION
1. Once grades are posted after the fall semester, the AC reviews GPAs. All SAs are reviewed for applicable GPA requirements by both the AC and Registrar’s Liaison.

2. The AC and Registrar’s Liaison determine if each SA has passed 6 hours of applicable credit the previous semester.

3. The AC and Registrar’s Liaison determine which SAs need to be certified on a mid-year basis. This includes:
   a. SAs who trigger a new percentage at mid-year
   b. SAs who did not meet eligibility standards at the beginning of the Fall term, but who wish to be reevaluated at mid-year
   c. any new SAs.

4. New SAs are required to meet with the Compliance Officer to complete the required NCAA Compliance paperwork. Once paperwork is complete, it is forwarded to the FAC so the data can be entered into CAI. The procedures for their appropriate category are also followed (i.e. initial enrollee, transfer, international, etc).

5. At mid-year, the same procedures for certifying eligibility at the beginning of the academic year are followed. The Compliance officer will develop a schedule in December of deadlines for each team’s certification for the next semester.(see ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES).

POST SEASON COMPETITION CERTIFICATION BETWEEN TERMS (including Summer)
1. For any competition that occurs between terms, bylaw 14.1.10.2 will dictate certification of the 6 hour requirement.

2. The Compliance Office will collect the names of all students who will compete in any competitions that require certification from the head coach.

3. The Academic Coordinator will review the six hour requirement for all students who require certification and assist in identifying issues.

4. The Compliance Office will coordinate certification of the 6 hour requirement. The Registrar’s Office Liaison, the FAR and the Compliance Office will certify the application of the rule and all will sign the certification document.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES
1. International SAs are certified in their appropriate category above; however, they are required to meet with the Compliance Officer to complete the NCAA Certification of Eligibility for International and Selected Student-Athletes Form prior to certification.

2. All international SAs must be accepted to the University before being issued their I-20 letter. These students are required to have a TOEFL score (or equivalent) necessary for admissions before they will be admitted.

3. Additionally, all PSAs must be certified by the Eligibility Center as a final qualifier prior to issuance of the I-20 letter.
4. See the International PSA Recruiting Policy for more information.

**SUMMER SCHOOL**

1. During the spring term, the AC and Registrar’s Liaison will review the needs of enrolled SAs to meet continuing eligibility. They will identify SAs who will need summer school to earn eligibility for the fall term.

2. Coaches will be provided with a list of SAs who have been identified as needing summer school to meet eligibility for the fall. This information is based on the assumption that the SAs pass all classes currently underway with an acceptable grade.

3. If a SA enrolls in classes at an institution other than MSU, the SA must submit official transcripts from that institution to MSU for those classes to be considered in the eligibility certification process. It is highly recommended that any classes not taken at MSU receive prior approval from the Registrar’s Office.

4. The Registrar’s Liaison applies any summer school completed to CAI and updates the SAs information in CAI. This will only be done once official transcripts are received from other institutions or grades are posted for MSU classes.

2.1.11. Describe your institution’s written policies and procedures related to the step-by-step sequence of actions taken by particular individuals on the institution’s campus to certify transfer eligibility for student-athletes. Provide the names and titles of individuals inside and/or outside of athletics who are involved with the certification of transfer eligibility. In addition, provide the name(s) and title(s) of the individual(s) who has ultimate responsibility in determining student-athletes’ transfer eligibility.

**Measurable Standard No. 8**

The institution must have written step-by-step policies and procedures for the certification of initial, transfer, and continuing eligibility.

The written policies and procedures for certifying student-athlete’s initial, transfer and continuing eligibility are outlined in the “Procedures for Certifying Athletics Eligibility” document which can be found at the msubobcats.com website under Compliance>Policies and Forms>Eligibility.

The final authority for certifying student-athletes as eligible is vested in the President who delegates that authority to the Faculty Athletic Representative as described in the official FAR job description.

The individuals involved with the certification of initial eligibility are:

- Bob Oakberg, Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR)
- Camie Bechtold, Associate AD for Compliance/Student Services/SWA (AAD)
- Jamie Rizzuto, Director of Athletic Academic Services (AAC)
- Johnathan Taylor, Life Skills Coordinator/ Athletic Academic Coordinator (AAC)
- Derek Johnson, Athletic Academic Coordinator (AAC)
- Jody Ogata, Program Assistant, Registrar’s Office

Head Coaches and the Athletic Director also sign the Squad List after it has been certified.

Policy:
On an annual basis:
- These procedures will be reviewed by the University Athletic Committee.
- Per NCAA Bylaw 14.10.1, the CEO/President will approve these procedures.
- The CEO/President will designate an individual on the institution’s staff to administer proper certification of eligibility.
- This document, once signed, will be posted to MSUBOBCATS.COM and distributed to all Head Coaches

ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES
Once a student-athlete (SA) has been processed through the appropriate category (initial, transfer, continuing, mid-year, international, etc) the following steps are taken to finalize the SA’s certification of eligibility:
1. All SAs must attend an NCAA Compliance meeting to sign necessary paperwork prior to practicing. Once the paperwork is completed, the Financial Aid Coordinator (FAC) or Compliance Assistant enters all participants into Compliance Assistant Internet (CAI).

2. Practice approvals will be provided to each coach before the first practice and thereafter as necessary. This approval will also be distributed to the Training Room, Equipment Room, Weight Room FAC and Academic Center (AC).

3. After the first week of class, the AC certifies that all SAs are enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours. This is monitored on a daily basis by the AC. Any changes in status are addressed by the AC and coaches are notified. Eligibility status is adjusted as necessary.

4. The Registrar’s Office evaluates if SAs are in good academic standing.

5. The Compliance Office and Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) use the information on CAI to certify the eligibility of each SA prior to competition. A squad list and eligibility certification is printed from CAI and signed by the Compliance Officer, FAR, and Athletic Director. The FAC also signs the squad list.

6. The eligibility list is forwarded to the Registrar’s office for signature by the Registrar’s Liaison.

7. The coach is required to sign both the squad list and eligibility list. This serves as official notification for the coach as to the eligibility status of each SA.

8. These documents are faxed to the conference office and filed. The documents are updated as necessary.

9. Each time the squad list or eligibility list, is updated, items 5-9 are repeated. The updated information will be highlighted.

10. As an ongoing effort, the Eligibility Certification Team (Registrar’s Liaison, Athletic Academic Staff, and Compliance Officer when necessary) will meet monthly to identify in advance any issues that may affect certification of SAs.

11. Coaches may not contact academic departments concerning the eligibility of student-athletes or prospective student-athletes (PSA). All communication concerning eligibility must be coordinated through the AC Staff or Compliance Office.

INITIAL ENROLLEES
1. The AC and Compliance Officer will collect names of PSAs who have signed NLIs or FA agreements from the FAC. Names of potential walk-ons are collected from the coaches. This process is on-going.

2. The names are placed onto the Prospect Tracking Form.

3. The Academic Coordinator assigned to each team monitors the progress of the PSAs on each team. Any notes are made on the Prospect Tracking Form. This document is used to confirm admission status of the initial enrollees.

Updated 4/7/2011
4. The Academic Coordinator inputs PSAs into the NCAA Eligibility Center Database (as necessary for walk-ons) and provides status updates on the Prospect Tracking Form. Once a status decision is made by the NCAA Eligibility Center both on the amateurism and initial eligibility status, the data is entered into CAI by the AC.

5. The Prospect Tracking Form is circulated to coaches on a monthly basis in the spring and early summer and on a weekly basis beginning July 1.

6. All initial enrollees must attend an orientation session. If incoming student-athletes enroll in summer school prior to initial enrollment, the orientation session they attend must not conflict with classes.

**TRANSFER STUDENT-ATHLETES**

1. Transfer PSAs are added to the Prospect Tracker by the Academic Coordinator as the transfer PSA sign FA agreements/NLIs or when a coach indicates a PSA’s intent to enroll.

2. The Prospect Tracker is saved on a shared drive to which the AC, Admissions Office and Registrar’s Office has access. Notes to the PSAs’ status are made as necessary. This information is compiled and forwarded to coaches on a monthly basis in the spring and early summer and on a weekly basis after July 1.

3. Official transcripts are collected by Admissions from each institution previously attended. The AC also collects official transcripts from PSAs once they return a signed release statement granting permission for official transcripts to be released to the AC (Official Transcript Release Authorization). These official transcripts are forwarded to Admissions and the Registrar.

4. The Academic Coordinator collects all relevant documentation (EC status, amateurism status, transfer forms, copies of transcripts, etc) and completes the Confirmation of Transfer Form which confirms the PSA meets all transfer requirements prior to enrollment/receipt of aid/competition. The form is signed/reviewed by the Registrar’s Liaison, FAR, and Academic Coordinator. The form and supporting documents are collected in a packet and placed in the SAs file. The Registrar receives a copy of the packet.

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9. In Men’s Basketball, the Registrar’s Liaison will verify that no more than 2 physical education credits are counting toward transfer requirements (GPA and Credit Hour requirements, but not applicable to %) at the time the Confirmation Form is completed. This rule is applicable to all MBB 2-2 and 4-2-4 transfers.

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CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY
1. All SAs who were on rosters the previous academic year are certified at the end of that academic year (during the summer) to determine if they will meet eligibility for the next academic year.

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3. The Compliance Officer and the AC determine if any Progress Toward Degree (PTD) waivers should be submitted to the NCAA.

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1. Once grades are posted after the fall semester, the AC reviews GPAs. All SAs are reviewed for applicable GPA requirements by both the AC and Registrar’s Liaison.

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2. All international SAs must be accepted to the University before being issued their I-20 letter. These students are required to have a TOEFL score (or equivalent) necessary for admissions before they will be admitted.

3. Additionally, all PSAs must be certified by the Eligibility Center as a final qualifier prior to issuance of the I-20 letter.

4. See the International PSA Recruiting Policy for more information.

SUMMER SCHOOL
1. During the spring term, the AC and Registrar’s Liaison will review the needs of enrolled SAs to meet continuing eligibility. They will identify SAs who will need summer school to earn eligibility for the fall term.

2. Coaches will be provided with a list of SAs who have been identified as needing summer school to meet eligibility for the fall. This information is based on the assumption that the SAs pass all classes currently underway with an acceptable grade.

3. If a SA enrolls in classes at an institution other than MSU, the SA must submit official transcripts from that institution to MSU for those classes to be considered in the eligibility certification process. It is highly recommended that any classes not taken at MSU receive prior approval from the Registrar’s Office.

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Head Coaches and the Athletic Director also sign the Squad List after it has been certified.

Policy:
On an annual basis:
● These procedures will be reviewed by the University Athletic Committee.
● Per NCAA Bylaw 14.10.1, the CEO/President will approve these procedures.
● The CEO/President will designate an individual on the institution’s staff to administer proper certification of eligibility.
● This document, once signed, will be posted to MSUBOBCATS.COM and distributed to all Head Coaches

ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES
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3. After the first week of class, the AC certifies that all SAs are enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours. This is monitored on a daily basis by the AC. Any changes in status are addressed by the AC and coaches are notified. Eligibility status is adjusted as necessary.

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8. These documents are faxed to the conference office and filed. The documents are updated as necessary.

9. Each time the squad list or eligibility list, is updated, items 5-9 are repeated. The updated information will be highlighted.

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8. The Registrar’s Liaison determines if the SA meets the applicable transfer credit hour requirements (satisfactory progress and transfer requirements). The Compliance Officer assists in this process, particularly in assisting to determine which requirements the SA must meet.

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11. The AC must enter the previous colleges into the CAI transfer screen. The Registrar’s Liaison enters additional information into CAI transfer screen (semesters used, transferable degree credits, transferable GPA, degree applicable transfer credits earned, etc) as applicable.

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CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

1. All SAs who were on rosters the previous academic year are certified at the end of that academic year (during the summer) to determine if they will meet eligibility for the next academic year.

2. SAs identified as deficient are evaluated for any means to make up the deficiency (see summer school).

3. The Compliance Officer and the AC determine if any Progress Toward Degree (PTD) waivers should be submitted to the NCAA.

4. By July 1, SA information is updated by the Registrar’s Liaison before the data is pulled over into the new academic year in CAI by the FAC.

5. Every semester prior to University Advising, each SA will meet with AC staff to complete the PTD Worksheet and distribute the PTD Assessment for the SAs departmental academic advising appointment.

6. During these meetings, AC staff will identify 3rd semester SAs who have not declared a major and discuss any potential future problems.
7. Additionally, SAs in their fourth semester who have not yet declared a major, will discuss degree declaration with their athletic academic advisors. The Athletic Academic advisor will assist them in evaluating PTD required in a major and ensure they declare a major prior to their fifth semester.

8. After SAs meet with their Departmental Academic Advisors and Assessments are returned and reviewed by the AC Staff. These documents are kept on file to assist with certification. Copies are forwarded to the Registrar’s Liaison.

**MID-YEAR CERTIFICATION**
1. Once grades are posted after the fall semester, the AC reviews GPAs. All SAs are reviewed for applicable GPA requirements by both the AC and Registrar’s Liaison.

2. The AC and Registrar’s Liaison determine if each SA has passed 6 hours of applicable credit the previous semester.

3. The AC and Registrar’s Liaison determine which SAs need to be certified on a mid-year basis. This includes:
   a. SAs who trigger a new percentage at mid-year
   b. SAs who did not meet eligibility standards at the beginning of the Fall term, but who wish to be reevaluated at mid-year
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4. New SAs are required to meet with the Compliance Officer to complete the required NCAA Compliance paperwork. Once paperwork is complete, it is forwarded to the FAC so the data can be entered into CAI. The procedures for their appropriate category are also followed (i.e. initial enrollee, transfer, international, etc).

5. At mid-year, the same procedures for certifying eligibility at the beginning of the academic year are followed. The Compliance officer will develop a schedule in December of deadlines for each team’s certification for the next semester.(see ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES).

**POST SEASON COMPETITION CERTIFICATION BETWEEN TERMS (including Summer)**
1. For any competition that occurs between terms, bylaw 14.1.10.2 will dictate certification of the 6 hour requirement.

2. The Compliance Office will collect the names of all students who will compete in any competitions that require certification from the head coach.

3. The Academic Coordinator will review the six hour requirement for all students who require certification and assist in identifying issues.

4. The Compliance Office will coordinate certification of the 6 hour requirement. The Registrar’s Office Liaison, the FAR and the Compliance Office will certify the application of the rule and all will sign the certification document.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES**
1. International SAs are certified in their appropriate category above; however, they are required to meet with the Compliance Officer to complete the NCAA Certification of Eligibility for International and Selected Student-Athletes Form prior to certification.

2. All international SAs must be accepted to the University before being issued their I-20 letter. These students are required to have a TOEFL score (or equivalent) necessary for admissions before they will be admitted.

3. Additionally, all PSAs must be certified by the Eligibility Center as a final qualifier prior to issuance of the I-20 letter.

4. See the International PSA Recruiting Policy for more information.

**SUMMER SCHOOL**

Updated 4/7/2011
1. During the spring term, the AC and Registrar’s Liaison will review the needs of enrolled SAs to meet continuing eligibility. They will identify SAs who will need summer school to earn eligibility for the fall term.

2. Coaches will be provided with a list of SAs who have been identified as needing summer school to meet eligibility for the fall. This information is based on the assumption that the SAs pass all classes currently underway with an acceptable grade.

3. If a SA enrolls in classes at an institution other than MSU, the SA must submit official transcripts from that institution to MSU for those classes to be considered in the eligibility certification process. It is highly recommended that any classes not taken at MSU receive prior approval from the Registrar’s Office.

4. The Registrar’s Liaison applies any summer school completed to CAI and updates the SAs information in CAI. This will only be done once official transcripts are received from other institutions or grades are posted for MSU classes.

2.1.13. Analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for student-athletes who received athletics aid and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of all students.

If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for student-athletes and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for all students, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Information obtained to complete this chart:
• NCAA Federal Graduation Rates Report

Measurable Standard No. 9
The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of student-athletes as a whole and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of student-athletes and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of students generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

The difference of 4 percentage points between the SA FGR and the rate for all students amounts to 8 student-athletes out of 203, which does not suggest a pervasive trend. However, as discussed in section 14 below, we had some difficulties in both football and women’s basketball during the period under study that we do feel contributed to a lower overall graduation rate. With coaching changes in both sports plus an APR improvement plan in football that is producing significant gains, we are confident that the SA FGR will soon be equal to or better than the all student average.

2.1.14. Analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for all student-athlete subgroups (i.e., team, gender, ethnicity, ethnicity within team) and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for all students, including comparable student-body subgroups (i.e., gender, ethnicity).

If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate of a student-athlete subgroup and the most recent four-class
average Federal Graduation Rate for all students or comparable student-body subgroup, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Information obtained to complete this chart:
• NCAA Federal Graduation Rates Report

The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the corresponding Federal Graduation Rate projected by the most recent NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR) of each sports team and the most recent four-class Federal Graduation Rate of students generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between a team’s projected Federal Graduation Rate and the most recent four-class Federal Graduation Rate of students generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

As a context for this analysis the total number of students at Montana State University who describe themselves in racial or ethnic groups, other than white, was less than 11.35% in the years from 2007-2009 (2007 10.15%, 2008 10.42%, 2009 11.35%) with actual numbers of students 238, 233, 233 respectively. Applying these categories across NCAA recognized student-athlete subgroups produces an extremely small $n$ for analysis. Percentages are dramatically impacted by small changes in student numbers. Where differences exist between SA FGRs and the appropriate comparators for all students, the numbers are too small to indicate trends. For instance, most of zeros in the table represent empty cohorts. In three cases these zeros represent cohorts of one student each. There are, however, three areas that deserve special attention: football (20 out of 83 graduated; 22 left eligible); men’s basketball (2 out of 8 graduated; 4 left eligible) and women’s basketball (3 out of 14 graduated; 10 left eligible).

Football

Men’s football federal graduation rate again evidences some impact of left eligible with 22 of 83 leaving eligible, however this cannot adequately address the entire issue. Most of the racial ethnic groups have too few students to be statically relevant, however all categories, other than white, that have sufficient numbers to be significant evidence weak federal graduation rates, these include Black/African American and unknown. These data correlate with charts shown in .15,.16,.17. We are unable to compare the institutional FGR for Black/African Americans as there is considerable overlap of students.

The Graduation Rates for football student-athletes is 20% points lower than the student graduation rate and 21% points lower than the male student rate. Compared to other student-athletes, the football rate lags behind by 20% points and is 11% points lower than all male student-athletes. Montana State recognizes that the football team has significantly underperformed. The underperformance seems to be systemic and across all ethnic groups except Black/African American where the student graduation rate was 16% and the student-athlete rate was 19%.

The institution recognizes this issue and has taken steps to address and improve Federal graduation rates, NCAA graduation success rates, and academic performance rates in football. The current four year average APR of the men’s football program (through 2009-2010) predicts a federal
graduation rate of 40%. As the APR continues to improve and the lower APR years drop out of the 4-year averages, the graduation rates will predict at a higher rate. The annual APR scores for football are:

- 2003-2004 878
- 2004-2005 869
- 2005-2006 848
- 2006-2007 899
- 2007-2008 941
- 2008-2009 936
- 2009-2010 954

Relevant factors to the improvement in APR include:

- MSU was subject to third phase historical penalties after the submission of the 2007-2008 data which resulted in a four year average APR of 892.
- A campus-wide committee developed an improvement Plan for the football program. The Improvement Plan has been approved by the NCAA and was implemented fully as evidenced in significant APR improvement. More information about the improvement plan can be found in 2.2.12.
- The Improvement Plan required significant changes in the following areas that impacted the improvement in APR and will impact the Federal Graduation Rates: recruiting, academic support and tracking of post eligibility student-athletes, improvement in academic support services and programs, and hiring of additional academic support personnel in the athletic department.
- MSU hired a new football coach in the summer of 2007.

As APR improves, graduation rates will follow in subsequent years. MSU is committed to the graduation of all student-athletes and has made this clear in its approach to improving the football graduation rate across all ethnic/racial subgroups.

**Men’s Basketball**

The men’s basketball federal graduation rates show the white male basketball players graduate at a higher rate than male students and all students generally. However, MSU has struggled to retain and graduate freshmen basketball players of other ethnic/racial subgroups. It is important to note that the graduation rates again reflect a very low number of student-athletes as the nonwhite student-athletes who enter MSU as freshman are less than 11.35% of the student body.

While the federal graduation rates of student-athletes who are not white are low and unacceptable, MSU points to two factors that are significant in the evaluation of the federal graduation rates: the graduation success rates (GSR) which are much higher than the federal rates and the improvement in the men’s basketball academic progress rate (APR).

Graduation success rate data indicates that of the five student-athletes in the cohort, four left MSU eligible. The general issue seems to be retention which is a campus-wide problem concerning the retention of students who are not white. The GSR in 2008-2009 reports a 60% GSR for blacks and
a 33% rate for others.

The second explanation for the poor graduation rates is the correlation to the APR of the men’s basketball squads. In 2004-2005 the men’s basketball annual score for APR was 889 and in 2005-2006, the annual APR was 804. These poor numbers were reflected in a 900 four-year average in 2007-2008 and the creation of an APR Improvement Plan. The institution took significant steps to improve APR and the culture of the men’s basketball program which included:

- A head coaching change in April 2006. For the past four years, the new head coach has had an APR above 925 each year.
- Increased academic support services and staffing which included the hiring of two minority staff members in the Athletic Academic Center.
- A concentrated effort to integrate students of diverse backgrounds to Bozeman and the MSU community. This included a commitment to community service.
- A change in the recruiting philosophy which considered the support necessary to retain student-athletes and the academic preparedness to assist the student-athlete in succeeding at MSU.

These efforts produced a current (2009-2010) four-year average APR for men’s basketball of 967 which, according to the NCAA, predicts a federal graduation rate above 45%. MSU has every reason to believe that MSU’s federal graduation rate and graduation success rate will improve for all men’s basketball cohorts including student-athletes in diverse ethnic/racial subgroups.

Women’s Basketball

The women’s basketball program’s federal graduation rate was impacted by significant turmoil within the program from the 2002-2003 academic year until the head coach was dismissed in the spring of 2004. The program underwent significant scrutiny from the spring 2003 until the head coach’s termination. MSU conducted internal inquiry of player treatment, practice time, and overall conduct of the program. The termination resulted in many years of litigation.

In the spring of 2003, the university created an ad hoc committee of individuals outside the department to investigate the departure of student-athletes from the program. During the 2002-2003 academic year, 6 student-athletes departed the program. These departures significantly impacted the federal graduation rate, but it is significant to note that 10 of the 14 departures in the 4-class average federal graduation rate left while eligible. The culture and atmosphere of the program were impacting the retention and not the student-athletes’ academic experience.

The events described above significantly impacted the federal graduation rate. MSU feels these events were isolated to the situation which was investigated and resulted in the head coach’s termination. Since 2004-2005, the women’s basketball program has retained players at a significant rate and overall, has only lost 7 retention points (in APR) in the last six years.

MSU expects the federal graduation rates to increase significantly in the near future due to the incident listed above being isolated to a limited period of time.

2.1.15. Analyze, explain and address any differences between the corresponding Federal Graduation Rate projected by the most recent NCAA Division I Academic Progress Rate (APR)
for each sports team and the most recent multiyear four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for all students.

If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between a sports team’s projected Federal Graduation Rate and the most recent four-class average Federal Graduation Rate for all students, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Information obtained to complete this chart:
• NCAA Academic Progress Rates Report (APR multiyear rate column)
• NCAA Projected Federal Graduation Rates Conversion Chart

[Note: Use the supplied chart (Academic Progress Rates on Page No. 43) to analyze data.]

Measurable Standard No. 11
The institution must analyze, explain and address any deficiencies between the most recent four-cohort average Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of each sports team and the most recent four-cohort average GSR of student-athletes generally. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-cohort average GSR of any team and the most recent four-cohort average GSR of student-athletes generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

As described in response to Item No. 14, men’s basketball and football have been making significant strides in improving their APRs. The most recent 4-year averages are 967 (basketball) and 932 (football). This projects an FGR above 45% for basketball. The four-year average for football remains below the appropriate threshold, but the rates for the last three years (941, 936, 954) indicate that the improvement plan is working, and we anticipate that the four-year average will exceed 942 next year. We do not believe that any additional improvement plans are warranted at this time.

2.1.16. Analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-cohort average Graduation Success Rate (GSR) for each sports team and the most recent four-cohort GSR for all student-athletes.

If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-cohort GSR for any sports team and the GSR for all student-athletes, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

If the data in the charts on Page No. 44 include sports that are not used by the institution for NCAA sports sponsorship and/or sports in which the NCAA does not conduct a championship, the institution may provide an explanation of how the inclusion/exclusion of the sport(s) impacts the analysis of the data.

Information obtained to complete this chart:
• NCAA Graduation Success Rates Report
• NCAA Federal Graduation Rates Report
Measurable Standard No. 12
The institution must analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class retention rate of student-athlete subgroups (i.e., sport, gender, ethnicity) and the most recent four-class retention rate of all student-athletes. If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class retention rate of any student-athlete subgroup and the four-class retention rate of student-athletes generally, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Graduation success rates for all sport with the exception of football are above 50% and in all but men’s basketball they are above 60% with several teams at 100%. The average of 59% for all student-athletes while significantly lower than the overall Division I GSR of 79% (for the same time period) is primarily influenced by these two teams.

Consistent with other data the weakest numbers are exhibited in two sports: Men’s basketball, although still at 53% and most significantly deficient is Men’s football at 34%. These issues are being addressed through our APR improvement plan. The plan and results as explained in 2.1.14.

2.1.17. Analyze, explain and address any differences between the most recent four-class retention rate for student-athlete subgroups (i.e., sport, gender, ethnicity, ethnicity within team) and the most recent four-class retention rate for all student-athletes, including comparable student-athlete subgroups (i.e., gender, ethnicity).

If there is a difference that cannot be adequately explained between the most recent four-class retention rate for any student-athlete subgroup and the retention rate for all student-athletes or comparable student-athlete subgroup, the institution must develop a plan for improvement to address the issue.

Information obtained to complete this chart:
• NCAA Academic Progress Rates Report (retention multiyear rate column)

Measurable Standard No. 13
The institution must have established, written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition to minimize student-athletes' conflicts with class time and final examination periods due to their participation in intercollegiate athletics. Please note, if an institution develops a plan for improvement in this area, the plan must be implemented prior to the completion of the certification process.

The four-class retention rates for student-athlete subgroups reflect the same issues addressed in 2.1.14 on Federal Graduation rates. The percentage of students within NCAA recognized student-athlete subgroups produces small n for analysis. However, Montana State recognizes that the football and men’s basketball teams significantly underperformed during the period of study. As addressed in great detail under our response to 2.1.14, Montana State has had APR improvement plans in place for both sports, and the results have been very positive. The most recent APR for football was 954 while basketball now has a four-year average of 967. These are significant improvements over that last half decade and impact all racial and ethnic groups. These successes
can be traced to coaching changes as well as systemic changes in recruiting practices, team cultures, and academic support.

2.1.18. Describe the department of athletics written policies and procedures related to scheduling competitions and practices to minimize student-athletes’ conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to participation in intercollegiate athletics, including how the institution monitors this area.

Measurable Standard No. 14
The institution must analyze and explain missed class time for the last two years for each sports team and address, through a plan for improvement, any missed class time that is deemed significant or excessive in nature.

MSU’s coaches are responsible for scheduling practice and competition so that conflicts with academics are minimized. Athletes are responsible for arranging their class schedules so that conflicts with practice are minimized. Instructors are notified by the athletes of possible conflicts due to competition at the beginning of each semester. Athletes hand deliver a printed season schedule to their instructors. The form is Appendix 2.1.18.a.

Instructors are not asked to be flexible with regard to practice, but competition only. Instructors decide how to resolve these conflicts. Mandatory team practices are not scheduled during the week set aside for final exams.

Head coaches submit a form to the compliance officer annually showing which class days will be missed for competition as soon as possible before the season begins. This form is available at http://www.msubobcats.com/documents/2009/12/14/Travel_Approval_Form.pdf?id=153

Class attendance is monitored by the department’s academic advisors for all students below a 2.65 GPA, all freshmen, and entire squads at the request of the coaching staff. Most of this monitoring depends on the athlete to deliver a grade check form to instructors. This form requests a report on attendance as well as overall grade. Athletic academic advising staff also request information directly from instructors as needed.

Further monitoring is accomplished by academic advising staff through frequent scheduled meetings with freshman and athletes with a GPA below 2.65, or any athlete who requests assistance. Also, some coaching staffs personally check to see that the student is attending class. A final evaluation is made through exit interviews when athletes complete their eligibility. Data from these interviews taken over the last three years includes an opportunity for athletes to rate their experience in the following category: Commitment of institution to minimize the number of classes missed. Sixty-four respondents indicated that MSU Athletics exceeded their expectations, 24 that it met their expectations, and two felt that it delivered below their expectation. None indicated that this commitment was unsatisfactory.

Pages 17-19 of the current MSU Athletics Operating Manual clearly state policies related to scheduling competitions and practices to minimize conflicts with student-athlete’s classes, exams,
and final exams. The Operating Manual may be found online at http://www.msubobcats.com/documents/2010/5/27/BobcatOperationsManual_0209.pdf?id=386. The pages pertaining to this Self Study item can also be seen as Appendix 2.1.18.b.

2.1.19. *Describe the institution’s written missed-class policies for all students, including any exceptions or differences that exist for student-athletes.*

Absence from class is covered in the 2010-2012 Catalog, and applies to all students. It may be found at: http://www.montana.edu/wwwcat/academic/acad10.html

It states that:

“When students enroll in a course, they enter a contractual agreement with the instructor for the duration of the course, and both the student and the instructor are expected to honor the specified terms of that agreement. It is important, therefore, for the student to understand the attendance requirements in each course. The instructor should communicate these requirements during the first or second class meeting in writing in the course syllabus. Absences from classes are handled exclusively within the purview of the individual instructor. If you have an accident, fall ill, or suffer some other emergency over which you have no control, you should gather what documentation you can (e.g., copies of repair or tow bills, prescriptions, accident reports, or statements from physicians) to show to your instructor. In some instances, you may wish to explore the options available by petitioning for I grades.

The provisions for making up missed class work may vary from one instructor to another. Most but not necessarily all instructors provide for some opportunity to make up missed work: for example, if one is absent from campus to participate in university-sponsored events. If you know that you are going to be involved in such activities during the semester, you should advise your instructor of these plans at the outset of the course and determine then what arrangements are available to make up missed class work.”

MSU Athletics Student-Athlete Handbook includes policies for class attendance. These policies clarify procedures for coaches and athletes to follow in resolving class conflicts that arise from practice and competition. These policies make it clear that it is the student’s responsibility to negotiate with their instructor to resolve conflicts, and that the instructor has final say in these matters. These policies make it clear to athletes and coaches that athletics participation may not be used as an excuse for absence.

These policies are stated on Page 22-23 of the Handbook, which is given to all athletes no later than the first day of class. They may also be found at http://www.msubobcats.com/documents/2010/9/8/2010-2011_Montana_State_SA_Handbook_Revised_6-3-10.pdf?id=462

2.1.20. *Provide supporting data to analyze, explain and address missed class time for the last two years for each sports team.*

*Measurable Standard No. 15*
The institution must analyze and explain missed class time for the last two years for each sports team and address, through a plan for improvement, any missed class time that is deemed significant or excessive in nature.

Specific limits are not stated in MSU Athletics Operating Manual for absence due to team travel and competition. Each sport travels varying numbers of athletes depending on the competition. Some sports may only qualify a few athletes to the NCAA Championships, for example. This explains the higher percentage of classes missed by the skiing team, who travel the longest using mostly ground transportation while competing with only five teams in the Western Region. The ski team averaged 3.16 gpa for Spring semester 2010. So it does not seem necessary to declare a certain percentage excessive at this time.

Summary of Class Days Missed by Sport: 2008-2009 Season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Fall Term 2008</th>
<th></th>
<th>Spring Term 2009</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># Class Days</td>
<td># Days Missed</td>
<td>%</td>
<td># Class Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Spirit Squad</td>
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<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*only a few athletes travelled to some events
2.1.21. Describe the means by which the department of athletics policies and procedures regarding the scheduling of athletics competition and practices (as described in Self-Study Item No. 18) and the institution’s missed-class policies (as described in Self-Study Item No. 19) are directly communicated in writing to student-athletes, department of athletics staff members and appropriate faculty and administrative staff.

Measurable Standard No. 16
The institution's established, written policies regarding the scheduling of practices and competition must be directly communicated in writing (e.g., provide hard copy of document, provide Web link via e-mail) to student-athletes, department of athletics staff members and other appropriate faculty and administrative staff (e.g., published in the institution’s student-athlete handbook or department of athletics policies and procedures manual, an e-mail with an attachment or link to the posting on the institution’s Web site). Please note, if an institution develops a plan for improvement in this area, the plan must be implemented prior to the completion of the certification process.

This policy is stated on pages 22-23 of the 2010-2011 Student Handbook, which is given to all student-athletes with an explanation before they are cleared for practice. The handbook is also available online at MSU Athletic’s official website at http://www.msubobcats.com/documents/2010/9/8/2010-2011_Montana_State_SA_Handbook_Revised_6-3-10.pdf?id=462
This same policy is stated in the Operations Manual, which is available online at http://www.msubobcats.com/documents/2010/5/27/BobcatOperationsManual_0209.pdf?id=386
Policy is also addressed during athletic department staff compliance meetings, which are held every month, and during head coach meetings which are held every two weeks. Policy is also presented sporadically in the form of e-mails sent by the compliance officer to coaches and staff.

2.1.22. If the institution has developed a plan(s) for improvement during the current self-study process for Operating Principle 2.1, describe the institution’s efforts to ensure the plan(s) for improvement was developed through a process involving broad-based participation and has received formal institutional approval.

There are comprehensive written policies and procedures related to scheduling competitions and practices to minimize student-athlete’s conflicts with class time and/or final examination periods due to participation in intercollegiate athletics, including how the institution monitors this area. These policies, addressed in 2.1.18 require student-athletes to notify their instructors of possible conflicts due to competition at the beginning of each semester. The policies are well understood in the department but they are not systematically communicated to all academic instructors.

ISSUE: Faculty Members are not systematically informed of athletic department policy or directives given to student-athletes concerning missed class time and absences from classes.

GOAL: Distribute the student-athlete policy on games missed during the academic semester to the faculty.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE: Send the policy to the Provosts office for distribution via email.