

# Student-Athlete Success: Intercollegiate Athletics – ASU Libraries Collaboration

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## Origins of the Collaboration between Intercollegiate Athletics and ASU Libraries

*The Instruction, Outreach & Marketing unit began exploring possibilities of collaborating with previously untapped populations within the university.*

In an effort to form lasting partnerships with faculty, staff, and administrators on campus, Intercollegiate Athletics at ASU has created a “guest coaching” program which allows those who might normally be relegated to buying a ticket to an event to see how college sports work close-up. Guest coaches are given tours of the athletic facilities, presentations on the lives of student-athletes, access to the locker room, and actually sit on the sidelines with the team during a game.

Marc was invited to be a guest coach for the women’s soccer team, which provided IOM with a fortunate and exciting opportunity. Marc met Brian Richardson, Director of the Office of Student-Athlete Development at the game, and a connection was made that would lead to the creation of this project.

## What is UNI 194 – Student-Athlete Success?

Julie and Marc met with Brian to discuss how the Libraries could serve ASU’s student-athletes. Brian informed us that all freshman athletes must enroll in a one-credit mandatory seminar designed to teach them a variety of “life skills.” All agreed that this class represented the best opportunity to introduce information literacy to the maximum number of athletes possible.

## Developing an Assignment Together

The three instructors worked to develop an assignment that would integrate as fully as possible into the seminar’s curriculum. It was decided that the assignment should revolve around the life skills being taught throughout the semester, and that the assignment would serve to supplement what they are learning by getting outside perspective on what was being studied.

Life skills being taught in the class include such things as sexual responsibility, alcohol education, nutrition, financial management, and more.

## Desired Outcomes

- *Expose the athletes to the physical library*
- *Meet actual librarians*
- *Introduce a selected library resource*
- *Learn basic research skills*
- *Evaluate sources for credibility and usefulness*
- *Leave library with something tangible*
- *Get comfortable using resources other than Google*

## UNI 194 Library Article Assignment

*The primary purpose of this assignment was to supplement what the athletes were learning in class by effectively searching for a published article relating to a life skill using a library research database.*

Julie and Marc selected Academic Search Premier as the best database for use in the assignment and for demonstration searching.

- First, the librarians discussed the differences between searching in Google versus searching a research database (structured searches as opposed to internet search engines).
- Julie and Marc demonstrated boolean concepts by showing in Academic Search Premier how students could relate their research topic (one of the class’ life skills) to themselves (e.g. freshmen, college athletes, college students, etc.).
- Students were then given hands-on time to find an article and to ask a librarian for assistance.
- An assignment worksheet was given to the student-athletes, due in one week. A copy of the article they chose was required to be attached to the worksheet. Selected pieces of the assignment included:

- *Knowing the elements of a citation*
- *Summarizing the article in their own words*
- *Evaluating the credibility of the source and usefulness of the article*
- *The application of additional knowledge of their life skill*
- *The potential application of this newfound research approach for future classes and assignments*

## Preparing the Academic Coaches

*Before the classes came to the library, the librarians met with the “Academic Coaches” (a/k/a the instructors) for the UNI 194 classes in order to prepare them for this new project.*

As this library component was never previously part of the seminar, Marc and Julie met with the “academic coaches” in order to familiarize them with the assignment and determine if there were any potential stumbling blocks to success. This assured buy-in from the instructors, as they were able to fully understand the assignment and its purpose. It also allowed the librarians to articulate the desired learning outcomes before the actual library sessions.

Ultimately, a large part of the success of this project was due to the fact that the academic coaches understood the librarians’ expectations of them (e.g. students would be prepared in advance and come to class with topics already assigned and in hand) and of the students (e.g. knowing the purpose of the assignment, turning in a copy of the article with their worksheet).

## 1 Assignment, 2 Librarians, 3 Days, 9 Classes, 13 Instructors and 120 Student-Athletes

*Enrollment across the nine classes included students from all 20 of ASU’s sports teams, ranging from football to water polo.*

Thanks to the size and diversity of ASU, and the efforts of the Office of Student-Athlete Development, each class was made up of a good blend of players from different sports, and a solid gender and ethnic mix as well. Most of the students were active participants in the class and were able to leave the classroom with an article in hand. Some students who missed the class due to travel and game-related issues later contacted a librarian in order to meet outside of class to make up the assignment.

## Results and Plans for the Future

Three forms of feedback were gathered in order to best determine how to proceed with this project in future academic years.

- The librarians handed out post-class feedback forms to the students to get an initial sense of how they felt about the assignment and presentation. Results were strongly positive.
- At the end of the semester, the academic coaches handed out student satisfaction surveys about the course itself; the library component got distinctly high marks.
- The academic coaches offered direct feedback to the Director of the Office of Student-Athlete Development. The results from them were overwhelmingly positive as well. As a result: the Library makes the team! The assignment and presentation have now been permanently added to course.

## Acknowledgements

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