Student-Athlete Experience

Purpose Statement

Supporting the departmental mission of **Building Champions and Razorbacks for Life**, **Flagship** equips our student-athletes with the **skills, knowledge, and resources** necessary to succeed today and in the future.

Programming Overview

Our programming efforts are organized into three key pillars:

1. Career Development

- **Career Education** – Equipping student-athletes with essential career skills.
- **Networking** – Connecting with employers, alumni, and industry leaders.
- **Career Placement** – Preparing for life after athletics through practical experiences.

2. Brand Management

- **Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)** – Education and guidance on NIL opportunities.
- **Financial Education** – Building knowledge of personal finance and long-term planning.
- **Rules Education** – Understanding compliance requirements related to NIL and beyond.

3. Community Engagement

- **Youth Literacy** – Promoting reading and education among local youth.
- **Healthy Lifestyles** – Encouraging physical fitness and wellness.
- **Underserved Communities** – Giving back to those in need across the region.

Our Program Promise

"We strive to provide every student-athlete with a remarkable and meaningful experience in every program, every time."

Flagship Program Areas

Career Development

The **Career Development pillar** focuses on preparing student-athletes for life beyond college athletics. Our staff **guides, coaches, and supports** each athlete as they:

- Explore career interests
- Build professional skills
- Gain real-world experiences

Programming prepares student-athletes for **traditional careers**, **professional sports**, and/or **graduate school**.

Through workshops, company site visits, and networking events, participants learn:

- Resume and cover letter writing
- Interview preparation
- Workplace professionalism
- Dining etiquette for professional and formal events

The **Razorback Ready Career & Personal Development Plan** provides a year-by-year roadmap to help student-athletes achieve post-graduation success.

Brand Management

The **Brand Management pillar** educates student-athletes on how to **understand, develop, and leverage their personal brand**, with a strong focus on NIL opportunities.
Key outcomes include:

- Building a marketable personal brand
- Learning to negotiate and manage contracts
- Maintaining professionalism in business relationships
- Developing long-term marketing and financial skills

Workshops and networking opportunities give student-athletes the chance to **practice hands-on skills** that benefit both their athletic and professional journeys.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement provides opportunities for student-athletes to **give back** and **develop leadership skills** through meaningful service.
Programming focuses on:

- **Youth Literacy**
- **Healthy Lifestyles**
- **Underserved Communities**

Over the years, Razorback student-athletes have impacted more than **100 local organizations** through initiatives such as:

- **RazorCalls:**
  Virtual visits with Arkansas elementary schools, where student-athletes answer questions, read books, and call the Hogs.
- **Book Hogs:**
  Visits to Fayetteville elementary schools to promote reading. Students who read 360 minutes in February earn membership in the Book Hogs Club. Grand Prize winners have lunch with Razorback student-athletes.
- **Healthy Hogs:**
  Promoting physical fitness and healthy choices during visits to local schools.
- **Shop with the Razorbacks:**
  Student-athletes raise funds to take children holiday shopping, each receiving a $100 gift card.
- **Special Olympics Area Games:**
  Student-athletes assist participants with stretching, event prep, and cheering during competitions.
- **Razorback Canned Food Drive:**
  Collecting food donations at Walmart for local agencies supporting underserved communities.
- **Children's Fun Run:**
  Volunteering at kids' running events, distributing medals, and facilitating contests.

- **The Fearless Food Fight:**
  Partnering with The Pack Shack and Blue Cross Blue Shield to pack meals for underserved families in Northwest Arkansas.

Student-Athlete Leadership Organizations

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

SAAC represents all Razorback student-athletes and serves as a liaison to the University, Athletic Department, SEC, and NCAA.
The committee focuses on:

- **Leadership development**
- **Personal growth**
- **Community service**
- Enhancing the overall student-athlete experience

2024–2025 SAAC Executive Committee:

- **President:** Maddie Jones – Gymnastics
- **Vice President & HOGSPY Awards Chair:** Zoi Evans – Volleyball
- **Secretary:** Tucker Holland – Baseball
- **Marketing Chair:** Allie Thome – Swimming & Diving
- **Community Engagement Chair:** Van Fitch – Soccer
- **Campus Outreach Chair:** Brandon Battle – Men's Track & Field

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W.H.O.L.E. (Women Helping Others Lead & Empower)

A peer group for **female student-athletes**, facilitated by female staff from the Office of Student-Athlete Success (OSAS).
Purpose: To foster **authentic relationships**, promote **empowerment**, and build **self-esteem and unity**.

International Hogs

A group designed to help **international student-athletes**:

- Celebrate their heritage and culture
- Navigate campus life and the local community
- Connect with campus and community resources

Black Leadership Athletic Committee (BLAC)

BLAC fosters a sense of **belonging and inclusion** for black-identified student-athletes. The group amplifies their voices while creating educational and engagement opportunities.

2024–2025 BLAC Executive Committee:

- **Activism Chair:** Jada Lawson – Volleyball
- **Campus Involvement Chair:** Romani Thurman – Volleyball
- **Community Engagement Chair:** Imani Carpenter – Women's Track & Field
- **Marketing Chair:** Brandon Battle – Men's Track & Field

Additional Programs & Services

Financial Education

Each team participates in annual workshops covering essential financial topics, such as:

- Banking and budgeting
- Credit cards and credit scores
- Taxes
- Long-term financial planning

Healthy Choices

Specialized programming addresses important life topics, including:

- Drug and alcohol awareness
- Reducing risky behaviors

- Sexual assault prevention
- Bystander accountability

Housing and Dining Services

Student-athletes living on campus must follow all **University Housing policies** and:

- Respect the privacy and rights of suitemates.
- Follow the guidance of **Residential Assistants (RA)**.
- Complete proper checkout procedures at the end of each semester.

Important Notes:

- On-campus residents must have a **meal plan** during the fall and spring semesters (optional for summer).
- Off-campus housing resources are available at www.offcampushousing.uark.edu.
- Questions may be directed to **Lydia Haj, Compliance Coordinator** at 479-575-4673.

Failure to comply with housing policies or disrespecting university staff may result in referral to the **Office of Standards and Conduct**.

NCAA & SEC Awards and Scholarships

Numerous awards and scholarships are available to student-athletes demonstrating excellence in **academics**, **athletics**, **leadership**, and **service**.
The **Student-Athlete Development Coordinator**, Krista K. Smith, provides guidance on these opportunities.

NCAA Opportunities

- **Career in Sports Forum:**
  A three-day event for selected student-athletes exploring careers in intercollegiate athletics. All costs are covered by the NCAA.

- **Elite 90 Award:**
  Recognizes the student-athlete with the **highest GPA** competing at an NCAA Championship finals site.
- **Ethnic Minority and Women's Enhancement Graduate Scholarship:**
  $10,000 award for minority or female graduates entering sports administration or related fields.
- **Today's Top 10 Award:**
  Honors ten exceptional senior student-athletes nationwide.
- **Woman of the Year Award:**
  Celebrates female student-athletes excelling in academics, athletics, leadership, and service.
- **Postgraduate Scholarships:**
  126 annual awards ($10,000 each) for student-athletes pursuing graduate studies.

SEC Opportunities

- **Brad Davis Community Service Postgraduate Scholarship:**
  $7,500 award for outstanding community service achievements.
- **H. Boyd McWhorter Postgraduate Scholarship:**
  $10,000 award recognizing academic and athletic excellence over a college career.
- **John McLendon Memorial Minority Postgraduate Scholarship:**
  $10,000 award for minority students pursuing graduate studies in athletics administration.
- **Honda Collegiate Women Sports Award:**
  Recognizes top female athletes in 12 sports, with winners considered for the Honda-Broderick Cup.

Summary

The **Student-Athlete Experience Program** at the University of Arkansas is designed to:

- **Prepare student-athletes for success** beyond their college careers.
- **Foster leadership, integrity, and service** to the community.

- **Enhance personal growth** through education, engagement, and opportunities.

By participating fully, Razorback student-athletes not only represent the University with pride but also build a foundation for a lifetime of achievement.