Nevada strong in latest NCAA Academic Progress Rate Report

Eleven of Nevada’s athletic programs saw their Academic Progress Rate scores rise or hold steady in the latest report released by the NCAA.

All of the University’s 16 sports programs met or exceeded the benchmark set by the NCAA, with the Wolf Pack’s rifle team earning a public recognition award for the third consecutive year for ranking in the top 10 percent in the nation for its sport.

This year’s report measured eligibility and retention of student-athletes in the four years from 2009 to 2013. Beginning with the 2014-15 season, teams must earn a 930 four-year average APR or a 940 average over the most recent two years to participate in championships. In 2015-16 and beyond, teams must earn a four-year APR of 930 to compete in championships.

The 11 sports programs who either maintained their multiyear average or saw increases in the average are: baseball (945), men’s tennis (977), cross country (986), women’s golf (966, tied), soccer (986), swimming and diving (970), women’s tennis (991, tied), indoor track and field (976), outdoor track and field (976), rifle (1,000) and volleyball (989).

Six Nevada sports programs—cross country, women’s golf, soccer, women’s tennis, volleyball and rifle—recorded a perfect single-year (2012-13) score of 1,000 in this year’s report.

“Through their time at the University, our student-athletes are preparing for careers, citizenship and future leadership roles,” said University President Marc Johnson. “It remains our high priority to help them achieve success in the classroom and stay on the path to earn their college degrees. I extend my appreciation to our student-athletes and to the coaches, faculty and staff who support them for this continued commitment to academic success.”

In a head-to-head comparison of single-year scores from 2012-13, Nevada topped UNLV by a count of 9.5 to 5.5, earning three points for the Wolf Pack in the Governor’s Series competition, presented by NV Energy.

The APR is a real-time “snapshot” of a team’s academic success and is used by the NCAA and universities to measure current academic success by looking at the academic progress of each current student-athlete. It includes eligibility, retention, and graduation as factors in the rate calculation. Each student-athlete can add two points to the team’s overall score per semester, including one for academic eligibility and one for returning to school the next semester or graduating.
Wolf Pack Student-Athletes reach graduation goals

Forty-six Wolf Pack student-athletes representing 15 sports programs have applied for graduation at the University of Nevada, Reno this spring and summer.

Eleven members of Nevada’s spirit program are also earning their degrees, bringing the total to 57 students representing Nevada Athletics graduating this spring and summer.

“Congratulations to all of our student-athletes who are graduating this spring and summer,” said Doug Knuth, Nevada’s second-year athletics director. “Earning their college degrees is the ultimate goal for our student-athletes. We thank them for their contributions to the program and legacy of Wolf Pack athletics and we wish them the best as they leave the University and enter the next phases of their lives.”

Nevada’s graduating student-athletes represent a variety of majors, including art, biochemistry and molecular biology, biology, chemistry, civil engineering, communications, community health science, finance, human development and family studies, journalism, management, marketing, mathematics, mechanical engineering, nutrition, psychology, and wildlife ecology and conservation, among other majors.

Graduating Nevada student-athletes are given special silver and blue cords to wear at commencement in recognition of their efforts as student-athletes. Wolf Pack student-athletes are the only University students allowed to wear silver and blue cords.

Including this spring and summer’s 46 graduates, Nevada has seen 612 of its student-athletes graduate in the past nine years.
Women’s Football 101 set for Aug. 1

Wolf Pack head coach Brian Polian, his wife, Laura, the football coaches and their wives will host the second Women’s Football 101: X’s and O’s with the Pack on Friday, Aug. 1.

This fun and memorable social event will teach women basics of the game and provide them with a unique behind-the-scenes look at Wolf Pack football. Participants will also get to meet the Wolf Pack coaches and participate in fun, physical drills on the field.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Wolf Pack football program and Moms on the Run. Moms on the Run is a non-profit organization that raises funds to assist northern Nevada women with everyday living expenses while in treatment for breast and gynecological cancers.

Tickets are $100 per person and include dinner, a hosted beer and wine bar, photo booth, playbook and special gift. To purchase tickets or for more information, call (775) 682-6901 or visit www.nevadafootball101.com.

Three earn Give Back Like Jack awards

Softball’s Ariel Craig ’14 (human development and family studies), swimming and diving’s Nikki Longland ’14 (biology), and Wolf Pack special events director Kim Anastassatos ’97 (general studies) are the winners of Nevada’s 2013-14 Give Back Like Jack Community Service Awards.

Nevada Athletics presents its Give Back Like Jack Community Service Awards annually to the student-athlete and staff member who best exemplify the dedication to community service that was the hallmark of longtime Reno and Sparks philanthropist Jack Reviglio’s life. This year marks the first time that two student-athletes have shared the award.

Wolf Pack student-athletes volunteered a total of 3,979 hours in the community in 2013-14.

“Ariel, Nikki and Kim all share the commitment the Reviglio family has to community service, and we are thrilled to present them with the Give Back Like Jack Award,” Nevada Director of Athletics Doug Knuth said. “It is so important to give back to the people of northern Nevada who support our student-athletes, teams and athletics department so much.”

Craig earned her degree in human development and family studies this spring and has plans to pursue a career as a child development specialist. A senior pitcher on the Wolf Pack softball team, Craig performed more than 175 hours of community service this year.

Longland earned her degree in biology this spring and will start medical school at the University of Nevada in August. She is a certified emergency medical technician and has volunteered more than 350 hours in the Northern Nevada Medical Emergency Room and more than 60 hours as a volunteer in the Student Outreach Clinic on campus.

Anastassatos is the coach of Nevada’s spirit program and the director of special events. She and her team contributed 889 hours of community service in 2013-14.
Bitonio excels on and off the field

Offensive lineman Joel Bitonio ‘13 (economics) was named to the National Football Foundation Hampshire Honor Society in late April—one of just 19 players from the Mountain West conference to earn that distinction—and a week later, became Nevada’s second-highest pick in the modern era of the NFL Draft as the Cleveland Browns selected him with the third pick of the second round, No. 35 overall.

One of the best offensive linemen to play at Nevada, Bitonio was a first-team All-Mountain West selection in 2013 and a three-year starter on the offensive line for the Wolf Pack. He is the 10th Nevada player selected in the last four years, and 44th Pack player to ever be drafted in the NFL.

A three-time academic all-conference selection, Bitonio graduated in December and was a semifinalist for the National Football Foundation’s Scholar-Athlete Award.

“Joel is everything we want a Nevada Wolf Pack football player to be,” Nevada coach Brian Polian said. “I have no doubt that he will represent our University in a first-class manner for years to come.”

Burton and Huang win Doc Martie and Ruth Russell Awards

Deonte Burton ’14 (general studies) and Grace Huang have been named the 2013-14 Doc Martie and Ruth I. Russell Award winners as the University of Nevada’s top male and female senior student-athletes.

The men’s award is named for J.E. “Doc” Martie, a former Nevada men’s basketball coach and administrator, while the women’s honor is named for Ruth I. Russell, a former director of women’s athletics. Student-athletes are nominated by their head coaches and must be in their final year of eligibility and in good academic standing.

“Congratulations to Deonte and Grace for capturing these top honors amongst a number of worthy candidates,” said Doug Knuth, director of intercollegiate athletics. “They have both enjoyed tremendous careers at Nevada and leave a legacy of accomplishments.”

Burton started every game of his career at Nevada (130) and ranks second in all-time scoring in school history with 2,102 points. As a senior, he led Nevada to a pair of wins over UNLV and a third-place finish in the Mountain West while earning first-team All-MW accolades. He was also named to the All-District VIII team by the United States Basketball Writers Association. He was named the team’s Most Valuable Player in 2013-14 for the third consecutive season.

Huang captured Mountain West Diver of the Year honors at the 2014 MW Championships. She also earned honorable mention All-America honors after competing in the 3-meter event at the 2014 NCAA Championships. At the MW Championships, she won the 1-meter and the platform events while finishing second in the 3-meter. She earned All-MW honors a total of six times during her career.