

FACULTY PARTNER PROGRAM

(Revised 4/10/2025)

The purpose of the University of Illinois – Springfield Faculty Partner Program is to facilitate interaction between faculty, student-athletes, and coaches in a personal setting that encourages active engagement and open dialogue in order to enhance the student-athlete experience. The Faculty Partner Program is intended to promote an awareness and appreciation of the NCAA Division II Life in the Balance philosophy which emphasizes participation in high-level athletic competition within a comprehensive program of learning and development.

FACULTY PARTNER PROGRAM Goals:

- 1) For faculty:
 - a) Provide faculty an opportunity for personal mentoring with student-athletes;
 - b) Demonstrate to students and coaches that faculty are interested in student-athletes' academic and personal well-being;
 - c) Develop an understanding of the demands placed on student-athletes to balance academics, athletics, and other activities;
 - d) Develop an understanding on the demands placed on coaches.
- 2) For student-athletes:
 - a) Have an opportunity to share with a faculty member what life as a student-athlete is like;
 - b) Have student-athletes' hard work and sacrifice acknowledged by someone outside athletics;
 - c) Provide students with an opportunity to interact with faculty outside the classroom;
 - d) Learn about faculty member's academic interests
- 3) For coaches:
 - a) Demonstrate coach's philosophy of Life in the Balance and focus on coaches' interest in student-athletes' lives outside of athletics (e.g., in the classroom);
 - b) Develop an understanding of the barriers that athletic participation can pose for students' academic success;
 - c) Demonstrate to faculty the demands required of coaches;
 - d) Interact with a greater number of faculty on campus;
- 4) For all:
 - a) Enhance communication and increase common understanding of our different approaches, yet shared focus on the students' success;
 - b) Increase student-athlete retention and graduation rates

FACULTY PARTNER PROGRAM Participation:

Participation in the Faculty Partner Program is voluntary on the part of faculty and coaches. The Faculty Athletic Representative will establish a list of faculty interested in being a partner. Coaches interested in participating should contact the Faculty Athletic Representative. The Faculty Athletic Representative will set up a meeting between the participating coach and faculty partner. Once paired, it is up to the coach and faculty member to determine the extent and type of faculty involvement. The exact role that faculty serve with their team is flexible. Ideally, over time, the faculty partner will establish an ongoing relationship with the coaching staff and student-athletes that allows for open and constructive communication. At the end of the academic year, faculty, student-athletes, and coaches participating in the Faculty Partner Program will be asked to complete a brief satisfaction survey. The following guidelines are recommended but not required. The contact person and coordinator of the program is the FAR, Dr. Marcel Yoder, Professor, School of Health Sciences.

Once a year there shall be an educational meeting with the partners, AD, FAR, and compliance officer to discuss compliance issues.

EXPECTATIONS

A faculty/team pairing requires a commitment from the faculty member and the coach to the following:

1. Meeting one on one to develop common expectations of each other. An essential part of this initial meeting is a conversation regarding how often the two will talk and who initiates these conversations. Regular communication is essential for success. In addition, the coach and partner should review the suggested activities and decide which they will do (see Participation section).
2. Coach inviting the partner to a practice at which coach introduces partner and what the partner's role on the team is.
3. Partner attending as many home contests as possible.
4. Coach attending one of the partner's classes at any time during the year.

Faculty should not:

- Offer athletics advice to the coach – faculty partners are not assistant coaches.
- Contact other faculty members regarding issues or problems with student-athletes – such issues should be brought to the attention of the FAR.
- Provide extra benefits not permitted under NCAA legislation to student-athletes – see guidelines at the end of this handout for details.

Coaches should not:

- Ask your faculty partner to intervene with another faculty or staff member on behalf of a student-athlete.
- Expect your faculty partner to take the place of the student-athlete's academic advisor.
- Air grievances directed at other faculty/staff to your faculty partner.

Partner Activities

If you would like to interact with your team in ways that are not listed here, please clear them with Athletics before proceeding. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU PROVIDE STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH ANY BENEFIT BASED ON THEIR STATUS AS A STUDENT-ATHLETE.**

Coaches can invite faculty to do any of the following, but none are required or expected:

- Help with players' personal development (e.g., discuss time management issues, discuss nutrition, help with players' cope with stress, prompt discussion/help with post BA goals, review resume/personal statements/help with job search)
- Monitor study table
- Troubleshoot advising issues (e.g., help reading DARS)
- Wish luck on buses before road trips
- Attend team functions
- Meet recruits. **ON CAMPUS ONLY**
- Ride the bus with team to away games
- Attend practices

Faculty can:

- Encourage players before + after games
- Send encouraging emails/texts
- Encourage other faculty to attend the home contests of your team.
- Keep regular communication with coaches
- Invite players and coaches to your home for dinner (check with Athletics before organizing this)
- Attend away contests
- Talk with parents at games
- Like team Facebook page
- Have informal conversations around campus – planned (e.g., lunch) and unplanned. **DO NOT PURCHASE LUNCH OR ANYTHING ELSE FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES.**
- Maintain regular communication with players

NCAA GUIDELINES: BASIC RULE

Only UIS coaches who have successfully completed the NCAA Recruiting Rules Certification Test on an annual basis may be involved in the recruitment process. Representatives of our athletics interests may not make any recruiting contacts. This includes letters, telephone calls, e-mails or face-to-face contact on or off campus with a prospect or prospect's parents.

DEFINITIONS

Prospective Student-Athlete (Prospect)

A prospective student-athlete, or prospect, is any student who has started classes for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grade becomes a prospect if the institution provides such an individual (or his/her relatives or friends) any financial assistance or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally.

Recruiting

Recruiting is any solicitation of a prospect (his/her family or legal guardian) by a coach or by a representative of the institution's athletics interests for the purpose of securing the prospect's enrollment (and ultimate participation) in the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. A recruited prospective student-athlete triggers recruitment when an institution's staff member(s) or an athletics representative do any of the following:

- Provide the prospect with an official (expense paid) visit to the institution;
- Arrange an in-person, off-campus encounter with the prospect (or his/ her parents or legal guardians); or initiate or arrange a 2nd telephone contact with the prospect (or family member or guardian).

Contact

Any face to face encounter between a college representative and a prospect, a member of the prospect's family, or legal guardian when the conversation entails reference to the athletics department and goes beyond a greeting. A greeting is considered "contact" if it occurs at the prospect's home, school, during a prospect's competition, or is pre-arranged. Any contact that occurs at a prospect's home, school, or competition site is never considered incidental and will be considered a violation of NCAA regulations.

Unavoidable Incidental Contact

Sometimes boosters come in contact with prospects unavoidably, for purposes not related to recruiting. These contacts cannot occur in a prospect's home, school, or at the site of an athletics practice or contest that involves the prospect. During an unavoidable incidental contact, any conversation with a prospect can involve only ordinary civility, and no recruitment can take place. For example, if you meet a high school student prospect or their parents, you can talk about anything that doesn't relate to the athletics department.

Offers and Inducements

Institutional staff members or representatives of athletics interests may not directly or indirectly provide, arrange for the provision of, or offer any financial aid or other benefits to a prospect (or the prospect's relatives, guardian or friends) other than expressly permitted by NCAA regulations. This shall apply regardless of whether similar financial aid benefits or arrangements are available to prospective students in general.

NCAA COMPLIANCE GUIDE FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF ATHLETICS INTEREST

OFFICE OF ATHLETICS COMPLIANCE

The University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) is fully committed to complying with all NCAA rules including those that apply to representatives of athletics interest. As a member of the NCAA, the college is responsible for the actions of its coaches, student-athletes, faculty & staff, alumni,

donors, boosters, and friends. As a representative, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with these important items concerning NCAA rules.

RULES TO REMEMBER

- Only Coaches and Athletics department staff are permitted to be involved in the recruiting process. All inquiries regarding an institutions athletics program must be referred to the institution's athletics department.
- An athletics representative may observe a prospect's athletics contest on his/her own initiative, but may not contact the prospect on such an occasion.
- A prospective student-athlete remains a prospect even after he or she signs a letter of intent or financial aid agreement to attend UIS. The prospect remains classified a prospect until the first date of class or the first practice whichever occurs first.
- If a student-athlete accepts any benefit or special consideration based on his or her status as an athlete or because of athletics ability, the student-athlete will lose eligibility for intercollegiate participation. Please contact the Compliance Officer prior to providing any form of benefit to a student-athlete.
- Representatives of Athletics are reminded that all NCAA rules regarding enrolled student-athletes remain in effect throughout the entire year, including summer breaks. Upon completion of a student-athlete's final season of eligibility, they must abide by NCAA rules until the completion of the academic year or until the student-athlete no longer receives athletics financial aid.
- An unavoidable incidental contact made with a prospect by an athletics representative is permitted provided:
- The contact is not prearranged by the athletics representative or athletics department staff member;
- The contact does not take place on the grounds of the prospect's educational institution or at practice or competition sites involving the prospect or his/her team.
- The contact is not made for the purpose of recruitment of the prospect, and Involves only normal civility

Extra Benefits to Enrolled Student-Athletes

An extra benefit is any special arrangement by an institutional employee or athletics representative to provide a student-athlete (or his/her relatives, guardian or friends) a benefit not generally available through the institution (or their relatives, guardian or friends) or not on a basis related to athletics ability. Extra Benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Cash or loans in any amount
- Co-signing or arranging a loan
- Gifts or free services (e.g., Christmas presents, restaurant meals)
- Use of an automobile
- Rent free or reduced cost housing
- Money for, or a guarantee of, bail or bond

- Employment of a student-athlete at a higher rate
- Payment to a student-athlete for work not performed
- Transportation aside from that which is related to an occasional meal
- Tickets to an athletics, institutional or community event
- Financial aid for a post-graduate education
- Promise of employment after college graduation

As a Representative of Athletics Interest, What Can You Do?

- You may provide an occasional meal in your home to a student-athlete or an entire team.
- You may provide transportation to your home for a student-athlete who will be receiving an occasional meal there.
- You may provide a summer job to a student-athlete as long as it is at a normal rate of pay for that position and the student-athlete is paid for work actually performed, but remember to check with the Compliance Officer before doing so.

Gambling

A student-athlete, coach and or an employee of UIS may not provide information to individuals involved in any type of organized gambling concerning sporting events. In addition, student-athletes, coaches and employees of UIS may not solicit or accept any wager on any intercollegiate or professional athletics contest. If a student-athlete has violated NCAA gambling regulations he or she will be immediately ineligible.

For Additional Questions

Please contact Scottie Moller, Associate AD for Compliance; E-mail: smole@uis.edu