

Student Assembly

Resolution 50: Ensuring Fair Course Access for Student Athletes

Abstract: The Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) proposes early enrollment for student-athletes in the form of gaining access to eight (8) credit pre-enrollment one hour earlier than their respective class year.

Sponsored by: President Zora deRham '27, Caroline Grove '26, Maddie Ferreira '26, Christian Flournoy '27

Type of Action: Resolution

Originally Presented:

Current Status: 20 – 6 – 4

Whereas, pre-enrollment is a 3-day period during which students may add, drop, or swap classes before the add/drop period. Time slot assignments are determined by class year seniority, whereby seniors register first, juniors second, sophomores third, and freshmen last.

Whereas, pre-enrollment creates stress and anxiety for all students, especially first and second year students trying to fulfill core and major requirements.

Whereas, approximately 9% of Cornell undergraduates are varsity athletes.

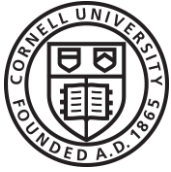
Whereas, assuming equal shares for all class years, 4.5% of Cornell undergraduates are first or second year varsity athletes.

Whereas, student-athletes at Cornell often face additional, contentious dilemmas regarding fulfilling academic requirements and meeting athletic commitments because of inflexible lecture, discussion, and lab scheduling.

Whereas, many prerequisite-level courses are large lectures with multiple lecture blocks. Later lecture periods fill up first, resulting in underclassman student-athletes enrolling in lecture periods that conflict with morning practice times. Common examples:

CHEM 2070 (General Chemistry 1), MATH 1110 (Calculus 1), ECON 1110 (Intro Microeconomics), and CS 1110 (Intro Computing) have multiple lecture choices between 8am and 11:15am. Freshmen student-athletes overwhelmingly attest that they were enrolled in the 8am lecture blocks.

Whereas, unnecessary conflicts between athletics and academics as experienced by Cornell student-athletes create risks that students may not graduate within eight semesters or may not



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fulfill graduate school admissions requirements within a standard timeframe. Such delays create a mental and financial burden for these students.

Whereas, increasing the likelihood of enrolling in required courses would enable students to plan their course loads around competition seasons more effectively, thereby improving student-athlete attendance and academic performance throughout the year.

Whereas, student-athlete-specific course registration policies are observed at peer institutions, no matter how large or small their student-athlete population is relative to the whole undergraduate population. Students polled attest:

Columbia University (12% student-athletes) SAAC President Noelle Ann DeMarinis attests that Columbia has successfully implemented their early enrollment system where student-athletes register one hour earlier than the rest of their class year. Columbia has implemented this policy as they have a strict core curriculum and this structure of early enrollment “allows student-athletes to secure a spot in their preferred section of classes that are offered at multiple times throughout the day.”

An anonymous Brown University (14% student-athletes) SAAC Representative reported getting into “full” classes and being able to request that her schedule be moved to accommodate practice.

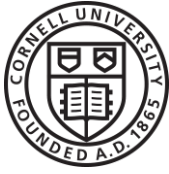
An anonymous University of Wisconsin (3% student-athletes) Men’s Heavyweight rower reported, “at Wisconsin the athletes get significant priority in terms of enrollment. Rarely do athletes have trouble getting into classes or creating a reasonable schedule as a result of this.”

When we asked: “Do you receive academic enrollment benefits?” an anonymous Yale University (16% student-athletes) Women’s Squash player replied “yes”, the Chair of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (3% student-athletes) SAAC replied “yes, early enrollment”, and the Vice-Chair of the University of Oregon (3% student-athletes) SAIC replied “yes, early enrollment”.

Whereas, unnecessary conflicts between athletics and academics as experienced by Cornell student-athletes create gaps in training and fellowship between teammates, jeopardizing the successes of Cornell Athletics programs and varsity teams.

Whereas, the potential for block enrollment is restricted as such a program requires the employment of specialized athletic academic advisors and specialized enrollment software, which would unfairly advantage student-athletes.

Be it therefore resolved, the Office of the University Registrar integrates with the salesforce platform and the athletic rosters to create a “student-athlete” layer for course enrollment.



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Be it further resolved, rising freshman and sophomore, student-athletes have the option to enroll one hour earlier than their respective class year, allowing them to choose courses that satisfy major requirements and accommodate athletic requirements.

Be it further resolved, that during this hour of advanced enrollment, student-athletes may enroll in no more than eight (8) credits, and only in course sections that have not exceeded thirty percent (30%) of their maximum enrollment capacity, in order to ensure equitable access for the broader student population.

Be it further resolved, SAAC recommends that the Office of the University Registrar conduct a poll of incoming students – both first-years and transfers – prior to course registration, asking them to identify the specific courses they need to enroll in during their first semester to remain on track within their declared major or intended pre-veterinary or pre-medical pathways.

Be it further resolved, the 2024-25 Student Assembly recommends that the 2025-26 Student Assembly investigate need for a course enrollment petitioning process for all undergraduate students with immovable time constraints to be simultaneously implemented at the time of the above policy proposal.

Be it finally resolved, any exploratory committees on this topic include input and membership from the Student Assembly and Student Athlete Advisory Committee so the two organizations may relay firsthand information and receive updates from Athletics and Academic administrations.

Respectfully Submitted,

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