

## **SUNY Polytechnic Institute Faculty Athletic Mentor Program**

The SUNY Polytechnic Institute Faculty Athletic Mentor (FAM) program is an opportunity to foster relationships between athletics and academics at SUNY Poly.

The program allows academics and athletics to effectively integrate and work together to bolster the mission of SUNY Poly and support the NCAA Division III Philosophy. The partnership with athletics and academics helps student-athletes understand the importance of academics as part of the team culture within SUNY Poly Athletics. In addition, the FAM Program provides an academic mentoring point of contact for student-athletes and coaches.

FAMs are nominated by each sport program and vetted by the Faculty Athletic Representative and the Assistant Athletic Director. Each team has one or two faculty members who understand and appreciate athletics as a meaningful and valuable part of the student-athlete's college experience.

The following have been established as guidelines for the FAM program:

**Identify Interest** – The Faculty Athletics Representative works with the Head Coach of each team and other Athletics staff members to identify faculty who have an interest in developing relationships with student-athletes/teams.

**Establish Involvement Level** – The level of involvement and expectations of each FAM will be established through discussion between Head Coaches and FAMs. Involvement levels tend to vary between sports and coaches. Oftentimes, the relationship develops and evolves over the course of each academic year and/or season.

**Identify and Implement Duties** – The FAM and head coach will receive a list of ideas to enhance the experience of the mentoring program. The list will provide the FAM with suggestions for building rapport with the team and how the FAM can support the academic mission of the student as well as the coach. There are also ideas on how the FAM and coach can strengthen the connection between academics and athletics. (See suggestions below.)

**Advising** – The FAM assists in directing student-athletes to access available campus resources and encourages student-athletes to meet with their academic advisor on a regular basis. FAMs may also participate in pre-season athletic orientation with student-athletes. Additionally, FAMs may consider meeting with prospective student-athletes (and parents or guardians) visiting SUNY Poly, and/or identifying faculty and staff members who would be excellent resources for prospective student-athletes to meet.

**Information Sharing** – Each coach will assume responsibility for informing the FAM of any appropriate NCAA policies to ensure there is a general understanding of these rules. Likewise, the FAM will inform Coaches of policy changes, etc. in academics.

**Have Fun** – There are many benefits to student-athletes and faculty members getting to know each other outside of their traditional roles. Developing open communication and a comfort level

with faculty members will enhance the understanding of each person's role with the college and hopefully serve to benefit everyone involved. Sharing ideas and experiences are included in the concept of the FAM's involvement with their team.

Possible duties include:

- Attend two or more practices per season; level and type of involvement is entirely at the head coach's discretion and must be respected.
- Attend two or more home contests per season.
- Attend one away game if practical.
- Serve as a role model and resource as an additional advisor/mentor to the student-athletes you are serving.
- Serve as an academic link or point of contact if there is an academic conflict or problem for a member on that team. Work collaboratively with the Faculty Athletic Representative and the Athletics Coordinator of Academic Success on these types of issues.
- Help to foster harmonious connections between the academic, athletic, and social cultures of the SUNY Poly campus.
- Serve as an enthusiastic supporter of your specific sport and sports in general at SUNY Poly.
- When possible, attend get-together meetings with other Faculty Athletic Mentors to share experiences and provide mutual support, encouragement, and best practices.
- Meet with prospective student-athletes.
- Assist with the academic monitoring and corrective action plans for student-athletes academic progress.
- Join student-athletes for lunch or dinner on campus.
- Instruct and model for students how to interact/communicate with professors in the event they need to handle academic conflicts or requests.
- Be highly accessible to student-athletes and coaches.
- Help with coordinating and participating in community service events.
- Provide an office hour specifically for student-athletes.