**Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**The Counseling Center**

**Responding to Academic Distress for Student-Athletes**

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- For most students, college is challenging. Not only do you have to do the work, but when you leave home, you also have to navigate a broad range of other challenges.

- You leave the safety or security of “home,” and have to find your way in the world

- You leave your known support network, regardless of how big or small it may be

- You have to meet new people, and make new friends; you may experience some success

with this, but you may also experience some failure or hurt

- You have to figure things out, to make your own decisions, and to solve your own problems

- You have to manage your own time, and your own environment

- You have to choose your own major/minor, career, and direction

- You have to figure out “who you are,” and who you are independent of your family and your

upbringing

- For student-athletes, there are additional challenges.

- There are additional demands on your time with training; matches, meets, or games; meetings,

and even out-of-season training and preparation

- You may have less choice in the people who become your “friends,” the people you spend the

most time with; while it can be great if you get along well with them, that is not always the

case; your identity may not align well with the “culture” of the team

- You may feel pressure to do “team” activities, even those that are not required or expected by

coaches

- You must maintain your grade point average in order to remain eligible to participate

- Travel for matches, meets, or games can be exhausting, and can throw off a student’s routine

or normal “rhythm”

- It can be hard to find time and space to study, particularly when an athlete is in-season

- Sometimes, student-athletes can struggle to keep up, particularly with their academics. It is often the case that a drop in grades is an indicator that a given student-athlete is struggling, not just with academics, but with the overall balance in her/his life. Academic distress can also be a sign of more significant mental health issues such as depression.

- Like most colleges and universities, IUP has a number of resources to support the academic success of all students.

- Academic Success Center (<https://www.iup.edu/success/>) Sutton Hall, 205

- Disability Access and Advising (<https://www.iup.edu/advisingtesting/>) Pratt Hall, 216

- University Testing Services (<https://www.iup.edu/universitytesting/>) Pratt Hall, 107

- Writing Center (<https://www.iup.edu/writingcenter/>) Eicher Hall, 218

- Learning Enhancement Center

([https://www.iup.edu/developmental-studies/learning-enhancement-center/](https://www.iup.edu/developmental-studies/learning-enhancement-center?)) Pratt Hall 202

- IUP Libraries System (<https://www.iup.edu/library/>) Stapleton Library

- IT Support Center (<https://www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/>) Delaney Hall, Ste. G-35

- Career and Professional Development Center (<https://www.iup.edu/career/>) Pratt Hall, 302

- Major and Career Exploration Center (<https://www.iup.edu/exploremajors/>) Pratt Hall, 212-C

- In addition, talking with your professor(s) (or academic advisor) directly is almost always the best, first approach to dealing with your academic concerns.

- Your coaches also have information on academic support services provided by IUP, and if you are not sure where to begin to address an academic concern, they might be able to point you in the right direction.