

Learning Skills for Student Athletes: The First Year Experience Course

The primary goal of The Life Skills Program at the University of Connecticut is to provide information, knowledge, and confidence that will help you feel secure in your new environment and promote the successful transition from high school to college. The course will help you develop a set of adaptive, coping, critical thinking, and problem solving skills and acquaint you with available resources to enable you to balance the myriad of academic, athletic and social demands and adjust to college life. It is important that you learn to identify your attitudes and behaviors and discover ways that you can confront them in positive ways. The course will help you develop a sense of yourself as part of the student-athlete community and part of the larger, human, community.

You will be introduced to the notion of the university being a polishing ground where you can (regardless of your background) become engaged in the academic challenge of higher education. You will be exposed to the idea of learning for learning sake, for personal enrichment, to become comfortable with the life long process of intellectual exploration.

You will also be confronted with the varied, and sometimes conflicting, aspects of your lives, and taught ways to make those seemingly disparate parts blend in a way that makes you unique and ultimately satisfied with your life. Along these lines, you'll be asked to explore some of the ethical, moral, and behavioral choices you will make that will shape you into the adult you will become. You will be given ways to help resolve both internal and external conflicts while still remaining true to who you are: which is a central theme in the course. This is a vital aspect of your personal growth.

You will be introduced to academic advising and the vast array of campus resources in order to help you extract the most from your college experience. You will be encouraged to become involved in other activities beyond your academic and athletic pursuits. The course will help you develop self-advocacy skills and teach you social skills that will help you become more independent. Students' holistic development and uniqueness will be emphasized so that you will be better able to clarify your reasons for being in college and identify your personal preferences, enabling you to establish realistic major, career, and personal goals.

You will also be introduced to university academic expectations and taught ways to enhance your chances for educational success. In addition, you will be exposed to health issues that affect student-athlete performance and well-being. Because of the diverse cultural make-up of a large public university and the changing demographics of the nation, it is essential that you become sensitive to a diverse population and aware of cultural differences. You will be asked to participate in community outreach programs and take on leadership qualities.

Most importantly, you will learn to balance your new freedom with a sense of responsibility as part of the process of enhancing and promoting self-confidence and self-knowledge.