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INTRODUCTION

Through its 33 varsity teams and 833 student athletes, Yale Athletics plays a large role in the student experience. Undergraduate involvement takes many forms as well, from competing on a team to attending a sports event to working for the Athletics Office. Due to athletics’ large presence on campus, it is imperative that Yale ensures the well-being of its participants. Now is an opportune time for the university to reevaluate the care that it gives to this subset of students, particularly given the rising undergraduate population that the addition of two new residential colleges will bring.

This report presents the findings of the Yale College Council’s (YCC) Student Athlete Task Force, an eight-member team created to examine the relationship between student athletes and the undergraduate population at large. Based on research from the YCC’s annual spring survey, a Yale Student Athlete College Council (YSACC) survey, peer institutional practices, and conversations with individuals intimately involved in Yale athletics, this document will recommend improvements to the on-campus experience for athletes and the general undergraduate population alike.

Suggested reforms fall into four areas: medicine, nutrition, academics, and integration. The recommendations for athletic medicine include hiring more athletic trainers, investing in trainer education, expanding trainer facilities, and bettering communication. In regards to nutrition, we suggest expanding meal swipe options, creating a refueling station for athletes, and increasing knowledge of the Yale Health nutritionist. For academics, recommendations include firmly establishing the athlete liaison program, starting a tutoring program geared toward athletes, organizing information sessions for first-year athletes, creating a study space in the Ray Tompkins House, and giving athletes more flexibility in their course schedules. Finally, the section on student athlete integration proposes an athletic extracurricular bazaar, mixed housing and job staffing, weekly emails highlighting games and athletes, incentives for game attendance, and office hours with Yale’s Athletic Director, Tom Beckett.

These recommendations aim to enhance the experience of student athletes and improve the relationship between Yale’s athletes, non-athletes, and staff.
ATHLETIC MEDICINE

One of the primary concerns of a university—and of an athletics department in particular—should be the well-being of its students. Of course, administrators do their best to ensure that athletes are healthy, but there is always room to improve. A February 2017 article in the Yale Daily News, "Understaffed, Yale sports medicine struggles with student injuries," detailed many of the problems that exist within Yale athletic medicine. The university must rectify these issues to ensure the long-term health of its student athletes. In this section, we highlight Yale’s deficiencies in athletic medicine as reported by Yale student athletes, compare its sports medicine team to those at peer institutions, review proposals that the athletics department is undertaking, and recommend additional changes that we believe will improve athletes’ health.

Student Input

We have explored the current sports medicine landscape at Yale primarily through student surveys, as well as through conversations with athletes, trainers, and doctors. We will begin by presenting and discussing the results of the two surveys. The first—a January 2017 YSACC survey—polled several hundred student athletes regarding their on-campus experiences. The survey was distributed through YSACC representatives who were asked to share the survey with their respective teams. Here we will examine their responses to questions regarding trainer availability.

Of the 137 athletes who responded to the question, "Is there always a trainer present when you do walk-in strength training in Payne Whitney Gym (PWG)?", only 63% responded "Yes", meaning that over a third of athlete respondents did not consistently observe a trainer present when doing walk-in strength training. Further, these athletes come from a variety of teams including softball, hockey, swimming, lacrosse, gymnastics, tennis, fencing, football, golf, soccer, crew, and volleyball. If these responses are accurate and generalizable, they would point to a direct violation of NCAA rules. According to Article 17, Section 1, Line 6 of the Division I Manual for the 2016-2017 school year, “Sports-Safety Certified Staff Member Presence During Countable Physical Activities”, “An institutional staff member with current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automatic external defibrillator (AED) use must be present any time a student athlete participates in a physical countable athletically related activity.”
Furthermore, of the 232 athletes who responded to the question, “Is the training room staffed and/or is a trainer provided for all your practices?”, only 57% responded “Yes”, and of the 218 athletes who responded to the question, “How often do you practice without a trainer present?”, only 40% responded “Always have a trainer present.” Half of Yale student athletes believe that they do not have access to a trainer during all of their practices, again, a violation of NCAA rules, and an unacceptable situation at an institution like Yale.

In contrast to this data collected from students, Yale’s Head Athletic Trainer, Jason Cordone, says that there is in fact a trainer available at all practices, with exceptions for crew, sailing, and golf, lower risk sports that practice far from campus. Cordone believes the athlete responses reflect the fact that the athletic trainer does not have
to be physically present at the practice, only in the area so they can respond quickly if they are needed. Still, this does not explain the lack of a strength trainer present in the weight room for 37% of athletes, and Cordone admits that the athletic department has “recognized that there are certain services we could provide if we had more bodies.” For example, there is currently no trainer on site for many teams during their early morning training sessions, before the training room opens, which poses a significant risk for these athletes.

Our conversations with Yale athletes highlight the fact that Yale does not have the trainers needed to properly treat its 833 varsity athletes. Upon seeing the graphs above, one member of the Yale football team was surprised and actually believes the real numbers are much lower. He further reported that “every football player has issues seeing a trainer before practice” and he would typically have to wait at least 30 minutes to get needed medical attention. Cordone agreed, saying that the training room is often very busy between 2 PM and 4 PM, right before practices start for many teams.

We also talked with Dr. Stephanie Arlis-Mayor, the sports physician at Yale Health and the primary doctor for Yale athletes. Dr. Arlis-Mayor explained that, in her experience, athletes often don’t seek medical assistance for an injury until it becomes severe, since no athlete wants to miss games with an injury. She believes that the best way for trainers to detect problems early is to have them attend and watch practices and games in person and form personal relationships with the athletes. This is one of the motivations behind the NCAA’s rule that trainers be present at practices and another reason that Yale should offer expanded trainer services.

Moreover, Dr. Arlis-Mayor echoed Cordone’s sentiments, saying that she would like to be able to see more patients, but that “there is not enough of me to go around.” While other doctors in Student Health and Orthopedics will also see athletes, many of these doctors don’t have training in sports medicine primary care. This lack of Yale sports medicine specialists could explain the results from one of the questions on the YCC survey which asked: “Have you ever consulted an outside doctor after receiving improper or insufficient treatment from Yale Health or a Yale trainer?” Of the 50 respondents who were athletes, 42% found an outside doctor to be more helpful than Yale Health, while only 6% found Yale Health more helpful. This result clearly indicates that Yale student athletes are not getting the treatment they need from
Yale, and therefore they are forced to spend time and money elsewhere just to stay healthy.

Finally, we investigated non-trainer resources for athletes. Training facilities and equipment are extremely important, but Yale does not have the resources needed to allow athletes to receive proper care. For example, at the Smilow Athletic Center, home to several Yale teams, there are six ice baths that fit two people each. These 12 spots are split among football, men’s and women’s track and cross country, men’s and women’s lacrosse, men’s and women’s soccer, and field hockey. One athlete says that “it’s an hour to two hour ordeal just to do proper post-practice recovery, which no Yale student has time for.” Another athlete shared his own experience of not being able to even enter the training room at PWG to get ice after a workout. Finally, Cordone also mentioned his desire to upgrade Yale’s facilities, with larger rooms, new equipment, and new modalities.

**Athletic Medicine Resources at Peer Institutions**

We detailed above the serious medical issues that Yale needs to address for its student athletes, and we looked to other institutions for ideas and guidance.

Currently, Yale has 10 trainers, three full-time and seven full-time interns (certified trainers in a two-year program), in its sports medicine department to assist Director Chris Pecora, fewer than almost all other Ivy League schools. Harvard and Cornell each have 15 athletic trainers, the most in the Ivy League. Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown, Penn and Columbia have 13, 12, 11, 10 and nine trainers, respectively. Of course, these schools have differently sized student bodies and athlete populations, but Yale still finishes second-to-last in athlete-to-trainer ratio among Ivy League institutions, just ahead of Penn. Given Yale’s total student-athlete population of 833, the average Yale trainer is responsible for about 83 athletes. Cornell, Harvard, and Dartmouth lead the Ivy League in this statistic, with ratios of 72.4, 73.1, and 74 athletes to trainers respectively.

These numbers are only averages, and exploring the workload of specific trainers highlights the issue even more strongly. For example, a single Yale trainer is solely responsible for eight different teams comprised of 185 athletes, and the entire Yale football team, which sees a large number of injuries (to name just one statistic, Cordone says that 90 of the 110 players need something from a trainer before each
practice), is handled by just one trainer and one assistant, both of whom also work with other sports.

In addition, Yale falls short of the number of trainers recommended by the National Athletic Trainers Association’s Appropriate Medical Coverage for Intercollegiate Athletics (AMCIA) assessment. According to head athletic trainer Jay Cordone, the most recently calculated AMCIA number for Yale is 14.34, meaning Yale would need 15 trainers, five more than it currently has, to meet the minimum recommendation.

Officials in the athletic department have questioned this number due to factors AMCIA does not consider, such as the length of the season, the number of offseason workouts, and the location of training facilities. However, if anything, the inclusion of these factors would likely increase Yale’s recommended trainer count. Our data from the YSACC survey show that athletes are training year-round. Based on 229 responses, the average student athlete spends two hours per day working out in the off season, more than the number of hours of formal practice allowed by the NCAA during the offseason. Furthermore, the average student athlete’s off-season lasts just two months. Finally, any athlete here will tell you that Yale’s training facilities are not concentrated. PWG is the core complex of course, hosting several sports and a training room, but various other sports and rehab centers are spread out to Ingalls Rink, a ten-minute walk from PWG, the Smilow Athletic Complex, a 15-minute bus ride away, and the Gilder Boathouse, a full 30-minute bus ride away.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There are numerous issues within the athletic medicine system at Yale, mostly stemming from a lack of resources dedicated to the care of athletes. The athletic department seems to understand the problems and has developed a plan to address them. According to Cordone, Yale is planning to expand the sports medicine department to include nine full time trainers, four fellows, and two full time physical therapists. Furthermore, Yale Health has hired another full-time sports physician who will be starting in Fall 2017. These are clearly steps in the right direction, but more can be done, and Yale needs to continue to prioritize the health of its athletes. We urge the Yale administration to implement Yale Athletics’ currently proposed plan, as well as the following recommendations, as soon as possible for the safety of Yale student athletes.
1. Trainers: We recommend that the Provost approve the Athletic Department’s request to expand its staff to include nine full time athletic trainers, four certified interns, and two part-time physical therapists. However, this is just a first step, and we would recommend that Yale prioritize the health of its students and hire as many full-time trainers as needed, likely the 15 recommended by the AMCIA, so that every Yale athlete has access to a trainer when they need one.

2. Trainer Development: Yale should invest in continued education for its trainers and sports physicians. By certifying trainers in more advanced techniques such as cupping, dry needling, and physical therapy, fewer athletes would need to go off campus to receive the care they need.

3. Facilities: Yale should invest in larger, more accessible training rooms and new equipment to ensure they are giving their student athletes the best care possible. Most injured student athletes should have access to the things they need at Yale rather than having to go off campus to an outside doctor or rehabilitation center for treatment. Furthermore, student athletes should have access to the training rooms at all times so they can do their own treatment when they need to.

4. Communication: One main issue with Yale’s sports medicine is the gap between what the Athletic Department and Yale Medicine are doing and what the student athletes perceive they are doing. The Athletic Department should make a greater effort to improve its communication with athletes. We recommend that the trainer for each team and the sports physicians at Yale Health have meetings with each Yale team once a semester to check in with each athlete and remind them of the resources available to them. These meetings should take place about a month into the season when the information is more pertinent to the athletes, rather than just once at the beginning of the first year when students are overwhelmed with meetings.
There are several aspects of Yale’s athletic nutrition program that could be better developed in order to maximize athletic potential and athlete well-being. The consequences of deficient nutrition include lower quality of athlete life and athletic performance. Here we will present our findings from the YCC and YSACC surveys, interviews with the Yale Health Nutritionist and Head Varsity Weights Coach, and research regarding what other Ivy League and various successful sporting universities are currently doing to aid their athlete development. With all of this considered, we will provide several recommendations that will help Yale Athletics improve its nutrition program.

**Nutritionist Counseling**

In order to encourage better nutrition among student athletes, we must first address the lack of proper knowledge around what constitutes proper nutrition by students and coaches alike. The high demands of Division I sports require that student athletes make informed choices about how to refuel and prepare their bodies for practice and competition. Yale Athletic Medicine at Yale Health has a sports nutritionist on staff to provide consultation and dietary recommendations, but few teams or individual athletes have taken advantage of this resource. According to Dr. Lisa Canada, the Nutritionist and Dietician at Yale Health, “Yale has approximately 900 Varsity athletes and I am available to all for nutrition counseling if they would like. The numbers I actually see, vary every year, but largely, I think this is an under-utilized resource for our athlete population.” In fact, less than half of all varsity teams have scheduled team meetings with Dr. Canada in the past. One athlete on the Lightweight Crew team, a sport where proper nutrition and weight management is of the utmost importance, did not even know about the nutritionist until halfway through his sophomore year, and says he would have benefitted from earlier meetings with Dr. Canada.

Currently, meetings with the nutritionist are completely voluntary and left to the responsibility of teams and their respective coaches. Yale Athletics should institute a mandatory nutrition meeting for each sports team at least once a year. This can be accommodated at the beginning of the fall term when all teams undergo mandatory NCAA eligibility and compliance meetings. If we can make these meetings the norm
rather than the exception, we have taken a step towards bettering the nutritional needs of our athletes.

**Dining Hall Hours**

Dining hall hours are another issue for student athletes, particularly those who train off campus. Hundreds of athletes train outside of PWG, and off of Yale’s main campus, including athletes on the soccer, tennis, lacrosse, crew, sailing, football, baseball, softball, and field hockey teams. Most of these students arrive back to campus from their practices late, after the standard 7:30 dining hall closing time, and have only one option for dinner: Morse/Stiles. The common experience of arriving at Morse/Stiles following workouts, only to find it overcrowded, often causes tension, particularly between athletes and the non-athletes who are already eating there. Additionally, the Morse/Stiles dining hall is only open until 8 PM leaving limited time for those late arrivers to make educated nutritional choices.

Compared to other Ivy League schools, Yale’s dining hall operations are sub-par in terms of accessibility. Columbia, Penn, Cornell, and Brown all offer some form of dining hall access between 8 AM and 2 AM Monday through Thursday, while Harvard offers dining-sponsored “Brain Breaks” in the late evenings, and many of Princeton’s retail operations are open until midnight.

Due to Yale’s limited dining hall hours, students often miss meals. Out of 233 YCC survey respondents drawn from the entire student body, a full 42% reported that they typically missed dinner one to three times per week due to other commitments, including athletic practices. Of the 281 athletes who responded to the YSACC survey question “How many meals on average do you miss per month due to practice?” more than two thirds reported missing at least one meal and 40% reported missing five or more meals per month, while the average athlete reported missing three meals per month. Further, only 17% of athletes are always reimbursed for these missed meals, and conversations with athletes reveal that these reimbursements vary significantly between teams.
Finally, when asked which dining hall closing time would allow them to eat in the
dining hall every night after practice, 90% of student athletes who responded to the
YSACC survey indicated that a closing time of 7:30 PM is not sufficient. Instead,
most athletes responded that they would need an 8:30 PM closing time to be able to
make it to dinner each night. Clearly, the fact that only one dining complex is open
after 7:30 PM, and is available only until 8 PM, creates a difficult nutritional situation
for athletes, who need to stay regimented in their nutrition timing. According to Lisa
Canada, the Yale Health nutritionist, “nutrition is the most important ‘Performance
Enhancer’ with hydration and sleep. Making nutrition a priority keeps student
athletes competitive both academically and physically.”

Refueling Stations

Research has proven that effective optimization of athletic performance is
dependent on consuming frequent healthy foods and drinks, and in recent years
there has been a large push by schools across the nation to provide their athletes
with appropriate resources to refuel. Cornell, LSU and the University of Wisconsin are just a few institutions where “refueling stations” have been built to provide healthy snacks and beverages for athletes to supplement their dining halls. Cornell’s Big Red Refuel Stall, situated in the varsity athletics gym and staffed by a sports nutritionist, has had great success. A member of the Cornell Sailing Team said, “I think that most athletes take advantage of the station ... [the] greatest benefit is having access to healthy snacks in a location where all athletes can connect and refuel in a common place.”

In the YCC survey over 75% of respondents expressed their support for these refueling stations in athletic facilities such as PWG, Coxe Cage, and Gilder Boathouse. These refueling stations would significantly benefit athletes who train off-campus and cannot access snacks during crucial post-workout recovery periods. By including healthy post-workout snacks like trail mix, fruit, granola, protein bars, chocolate milk, and other hydration products to all in-season athletes, we can minimize current disparities in the accessibility of food options across sports.

Yale Athletics currently advertises an “all athlete lounge” that can offer similar benefits, but many teams are unaware that this resource exists. For example, we surveyed the 30 members of the women’s soccer team, and not one knew of the lounge. 15 were aware of a lounge specifically for the football team in Ray Tompkins House, however. Looking towards others Varsity teams, we are likely to find similar results. If introduced properly, an all-athlete lounge in RTH, perhaps in Ray’s Café, could provide a social environment, study space, and refueling station for athletes in between training, classes, and extracurriculars.

Finally, we would like to mention the University of California, Berkeley as a model university in terms of the nutritional resources it has available to its student athletes. The services they provide their students and coaches include:

- Pre-workout nutrition and post-workout recovery planning
- Body composition management
- Budget friendly ideas/meal planning
- Meal/snacking timing strategy planning
- Cooking classes
- Dietary analysis
- Education for special diets
- Supplemental education and monitoring

We believe that the implementation of even half of these services could have a large significant positive effect on the performance and health of Yale student athletes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Dr. Canada sums it up best:

“Communication is key – letting athletes know we have a resource for them, and continued outreach to coaches and trainers to facilitate better connections for our athletes, to me as a resource. In addition, networking with dining services to be sure they continue to offer healthy options, and that they attempt to accommodate the food preferences of all our active students. Currently several teams offer additional snacks and/or a fueling station to their athletes, but it might be nice to explore the possibility of expanding on that, since so many of the athletes miss meals as a result of their sport’s demands, on top of their busy academic schedules. In networking with other collegiate sports dietitians, I feel it would also be beneficial to expand more general face time with the sports dietitian for athletes whether it be in the training room, more lectures, and/or a presence at athletic clearances.”

In line with Dr. Canada’s advice, we recommend the following list of feasible solutions to the problems pertaining to student athlete nutrition.

1. Dining Hall Hours: Hours should be extended to accommodate athletes who arrive back late from practice and have to juggle extracurriculars, sections, and office hours. With the addition of new residential colleges, it seems appropriate that dining hall operating times can be more staggered. Morse/Stiles cannot remain the only late option, especially considering Yale’s increasingly large student body. In addition, Durfee’s should accept dinner swipes until closing to supplement the financial burden athletes sustain when missing meals without reimbursement.
2. Refueling Station: We recommend transforming Ray’s Café in the basement of RTH into an athlete lounge with a refueling station. This will increase transparency in the distribution of resources, as all athletes will benefit from the availability of a social space and accessibility to healthy snacks. Coaches can come here to pick up snacks for their athletes quickly and easily, perhaps from a locker dedicated to their team.

3. Nutritionist: Yale needs to actively increase knowledge among athletes of the Yale Nutritionist and Dietician at Yale Health, Lisa Canada. Currently, meetings with the nutritionist are voluntary and left to the responsibility of the athletes. Yale Athletics should institute a mandatory nutrition meeting for each sports team at least once a semester. This can be incorporated into the trainer and sports physician meeting suggested in the Athletic Medicine section. If we can make these meetings the norm rather than the exception, we will take a step towards bettering the nutritional needs of our athletes.
ACADEMIC RESOURCES

For many Ivy League student athletes, exceptional academic opportunities are considered a key motivation, if not the primary motivation, for matriculation. The pursuit of the highest level of academics coupled with the highest level of athletics is consistently cited as a main factor in student athletes’ decisions to attend an Ivy League institution like Yale.

Unfortunately, oftentimes in making this choice, student athletes forgo the academic support readily available at other schools, specifically schools that offer athletic scholarships, which Yale does not. It is clear, based on the evidence presented below, that Yale is not adequately addressing the academic needs of its student athletes. The administration and coaches need to be more informed and sensitive to the rigorous academic schedules of Yale student athletes. In order to help support student athletes, the Athletic Department needs to implement specific academic support structures, as many of our Ivy League counterparts already have done.

Student Input

Many Yale student athletes feel that athletics participation has affected their overall academic experience, and not always for the best. There is clearly a need to address academic resources at Yale to ensure that student athletes are able to take advantage of the academic opportunities that the school provides while also excelling at their sport. Athletes cite a variety of reasons for discontent such as a lack of academic support and resources and the difficulty of enrolling in certain classes due to intense practice schedules. To cite an example from the YSACC survey, over 77% of student athletes believe that athletics participation has impacted their overall GPA, and from personal experience and conversations with athletes we know this effect is almost always negative, as a result of the increased time demands placed on student athletes.
More specifically, student athletes at Yale have had to drop classes due to varying and non-standardized team practice schedules. Unlike Princeton (discussed in detail below), there is no standard practice time common to all Yale teams. As a result, different teams practice at different times and with different frequencies during and out of season, and some teams have no off-season at all. Tennis players, for example, compete in both semesters and may therefore only take classes that begin between 9 AM and 1 PM to accommodate practice schedules in both the spring and the fall. Often these athletes prefer not to take even 1 PM classes because they must often leave early to get proper treatment before practice. It is incumbent on the administration to work with professors and administrators to allow athletes priority into certain classes that work well with practice schedules, and specifically into sections convenient for athletic schedules. Furthermore, with the influx of new students from the addition of the new colleges, it will be more difficult for athletes to find available seminars and other capped courses during the few hours they are available for class, and class and particularly section admission priority for student athletes will become even more necessary.
As seen in the graph above, priority in section admission would benefit many athletes. Often student athletes sign up for a class that works with their practice schedule, but once section assignments begin, they discover either that there are no available sections outside of practice time or that convenient sections have filled with other students, many of whom are non-athletes. Some professors are not flexible in allowing students to switch among different sections, and as a result, many student athletes are not able to take the classes they wanted. Additionally, student athletes often must miss discussion sections for their sport, or be forced to join section after it starts, after running off the bus back from practice. In many instances, Dean’s excuses don’t cover section absences or tardies, and the students are penalized. There must be clearer communication among professors, Deans, and coaches in order to create a fair protocol for athletes who miss section or class due to extended athletic commitments.

**Academic Resources at Peer Institutions**

Academic liaisons and counselors are vitally important in bridging the athletic and academic lives of student athletes. Brown, Cornell, Columbia, and Princeton have structured academic liaison programs for athletes, and while Yale technically has one as well, many members of Yale teams are unaware that they have an academic liaison or do not know who it is. Each sports team at Yale is supposed to be designated a faculty member to serve as an advisor to the team, but the faculty
member is not given specific responsibilities in terms of assisting their team. However, a structured academic advisor program could provide the opportunity for faculty to understand the daily demands on student athletes, and allow student athletes to seek advice from a knowledgeable source about academics and other areas.

In terms of section and class times, Columbia is the only Ivy League school that gives their athletes priority in picking section. However, at Princeton, athletic commitments like regular practice never conflict with classes. Princeton’s schedule includes a daily period when athletics, as well as other extracurricular events for non-athletes, take place, and no classes or sections are allowed to meet.

Support programs, like tutoring systems and information sessions, are crucial to the overall academic and athletic success of student athletes, and many schools do offer these athlete-specific academic resources. Cornell, Columbia, Dartmouth, and Penn have specific infrastructure for course tutors that a student athlete can request under any circumstance and at no cost. At Yale, tutors are only available to students in danger of earning a C or below in a class. Tutoring is essential to student athletes’ academic achievement, especially at Yale, where over 100 student athletes miss at least one class per week during season. Travel, coupled with demanding athletic and academic schedules, can leave student athletes feeling overwhelmed, especially when they cannot attend office hours and other guided study sessions scheduled during practice or a competition. Tutoring would provide students a much-needed opportunity to stay on top of their academics.
The first year at Yale can be an overwhelming transition period for both athletes and non-athletes. However, many Ivy League institutions take steps to help their first-year student athletes adjust quickly, build good study habits, and learn to navigate multiple demanding commitments. Penn and Dartmouth have comprehension skill building institutions specifically for incoming first-year athletes to help them acclimate to the rigorous demands of Ivy League academics. Tutoring and study sessions are mandatory for all athletes at Penn starting in the fall of the first year; Penn student athlete freshmen are required to spend at least six hours per week in a supervised study hall during this first semester. Tutoring is available to all student athletes. Additionally, the Penn Athletic Department partners with instructors to create workshops tailored to assist student athletes with their unique demands. Some of their workshop topics include studying on the road, time management for midterms, and final paper and project planning. Dartmouth student athletes complete a six-week program called Academic Skills for Athletes that helps develop important study skills and connects students with deans and professors familiar with the academic challenges that student athletes face.

Many other Ivy League institutions also have academic centers specifically for student athletes. At Penn's Morgan Academic Center, student athletes can find
academic counseling, career advising, and community outreach opportunities. The center has reading and study rooms for both individual and group study, along with a traditional computer lab, classrooms, a video recording studio, conference rooms, a sports psychology mental skills training lab, and a student athlete lounge. Cornell offers a study room equipped with computers and printers specifically for athletes. While Yale advertises an all-athlete lounge in RTH, only football players have the access code and therefore they are the only students who utilize it. Student athletes at Yale would benefit greatly from more inclusive study spaces and lounging areas like the ones at Penn and Cornell.

Lastly, career services are critical for athletes, who often have trouble finding time to investigate internship opportunities, attend information sessions, and prepare for and schedule interviews while spending multiple hours a day at practice. Columbia, for example, offers an Athletics Career Development Program tailored specifically to student athletes. DP2 (Dartmouth Peak Performance) Career Connections is similarly structured to help athletes make professional connections and find internships and employment. Lastly, Penn also has a career center specifically for athletes. At Yale, one single employee, Robyn Acampora, assists athletes with finding jobs, but she naturally has limited time to attend to every student athlete’s career advising needs.
Summary of Academic Resources at Yale and Peer Institutions

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Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Academic Liaisons: Develop a program for athletes that addresses the issues they face. Each specific team should be clear who their liaison is, and the liaisons need to be aware of the academic and other resources available to students at Yale.

2. Tutors: Appropriate funds for athlete-specific tutors, perhaps from the student athlete enhancement fund, as it is unclear how that money is currently being spent. Establish a formal system for athletes to tutor other athletes and share successful study skills.

3. First-Year Information Sessions: Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to put together information sessions for first-year athletes to help
them get off to the right start. Topics should include: how to work while traveling, how to select courses and sections best suited for an athlete’s schedule, how to communicate with professors and Deans about athletic-related absences or concerns, and how to stay on top of work in and out of season.

4. Student Athlete Study Space: Create a study and lounge space for athletes in RTH. Either make the student athlete lounge open for all student athletes, or look to revitalize Ray’s Café in RTH and work with the nutritionist to provide healthy snacks for athletes (see the Nutritional Resources section above).

5. Class and Section Selection: Yale must reevaluate its class registration and scheduling given the expansion of the student body, and we strongly urge administrators to keep the demands of the student athlete in mind throughout this process. We recommend considering a daily block period solely for extracurriculars and athletics modeled off of Princeton’s. This change would benefit not just student athletes, but all students who engage in intensive extracurriculars that may interfere with class and section attendance.

STUDENT ATHLETE INTEGRATION

Yale, like all Ivy League institutions, seeks to strike a balance between top-tier, Division I athletic programs and academic excellence. Student athletes are expected to succeed in both spheres of campus life, taking full course loads while spending dozens of hours each week with their respective teams. This situation can erect barriers, and too often, we find that student athletes feel isolated from the rest of the Yale community, or that non-athletes have misconceptions or even negative opinions about their athlete classmates. Such a dynamic is antithetical to Yale’s values, which profess an appreciation for “diversity in all its forms,” including talents and interests. For that reason, a report on the state of student athletes at Yale would be incomplete without addressing the issue of athlete integration into non-athlete campus life.

Integration between athletes and non-athletes is perhaps the most unique challenge discussed in this report because it represents a cultural rather than an administrative norm. Nonetheless, we feel that YCC and the administration have a role to play in this facet of campus life, and we believe that Yale can improve the
extent to which student athletes and non-athletes interact with and learn from one another.

**Current Environment**

We do not wish to paint an overly negative or hyperbolic picture of the relationship between student athletes and non-athletes at Yale. In fact, according to the 2017 YCC Spring Survey, 59% of students say that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I have a positive opinion of Yale student athletes.” It would be a mistake to trivialize this majority of students who are generally supportive of student athletes at Yale.

That said, explicit prejudice against student athletes exists to an uncomfortable extent. A full 17% of the non-athlete survey sample disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement. Such outward bias is alarming. General animosity towards members of any specific group is contrary to Yale’s mission, yet it seems to be tolerated in the case of student athletes.

In fact, these views are not just tolerated but actively promulgated by certain members of the Yale community. Most recently, an opinion column in the YDN by
Cole Aronson entitled “Admissions and Athletics” overtly questioned student athletes’ place at Yale. This op-ed was just the latest instance of a repeating trend. In 2014, hundreds of students signed a petition to defund the Yale football team, and in 2008, Ned Fulmer wrote a YDN op-ed entitled “Either go big, Bulldogs, or just go home,” criticizing student athletes for being “apathetic toward collegiate academia” and “barely surviving gut classes.” As student athletes, we maintain that any such opinion should be offensive to all Yale students. Yale’s student athletes are held to high academic standards, and many choose to come to Yale in large part because they are very dedicated to their studies in addition to their athletics.

The prevalence of these negative opinions affects student athletes and non-athletes very differently. Among non-athletes, 17% “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement, “In my opinion, the Yale student body supports student athletes,” while the rate is nearly twice as high among student athletes, at 33%. Thus, not only do a third of student athletes feel unappreciated by their peers, but only a handful of non-athletes recognize that this is a problem in the first place. YCC and the administration need to work to reverse both of these trends.
Steps Forward

Fortunately, Yale prides itself on fostering diversity of every kind, and the residential college system is specifically designed to bring together people from vastly different walks of life. For that reason, we believe the infrastructure is already in place to
combat the tendency among some Yale students to discount the achievements and commitments of student athletes.

Housing offers one especially important example. Yale requires all first-years and sophomores to live on campus, and it encourages students to be actively involved in residential college life. Residential college living provides ample opportunities for student athletes and non-athletes to interact more closely than is possible at many other institutions. Promisingly, such mingling tends to go hand-in-hand with more positive views of student athletes. Among non-athletes who don’t live with athletes, 18% “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that they have a positive opinion of student athletes at Yale, and only 53% “agree” or “strongly agree.” For those who live with one or more student athletes, these numbers change to 13% and 55%, respectively.

This trend was even true among first-years, who don’t get to choose their roommates. For the first-year non-athletes who don’t live with any student athletes, 15% had negative opinions and 49% had positive opinions. These numbers become 7% and 56% among those who live with one or more athletes. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that living or frequently interacting with student athletes (even by virtue of random assignments) makes Yale non-athlete students more favorably disposed to athletes. In light of this fact, residential college heads and deans should do everything in their power to ensure that student athletes and non-athletes mix within their colleges, especially in first-year living arrangements.

Furthermore, the positive experience of athlete and non-athlete first-year rooming will likely encourage continued relationships even once students have finished the first year. At present, many student athletes move into team-specific houses in their junior or senior years which exist for basketball, hockey, crew, sailing, track, and baseball, among other teams. While we have no objection to this in principle, and believe it to be completely analogous to off-campus houses for non-athletic activities such as radio and a cappella, we hope that a renewed emphasis on integrated housing would give student athletes and non-athletes alike more integrated housing options later in their Yale experiences.

Social life is another area where exposure can lead to more positive opinions. Among non-athletes who attend an average of zero games each month, 20% harbor negative opinions toward athletes. For those who attend one or more games each month, this falls to 12%. These results lead us to believe that greater non-
athlete exposure to athletic events will elicit greater appreciation for student athletes at Yale.

Although we have focused so far on the ways in which non-athletes could better relate to student athletes, the student athletes on this task force and our teammates recognize that this relationship is a two-way street and that athletes have a role to play in bridging this campus cultural divide. For example, student athletes can and should make a larger effort to attend a cappella concerts, plays, and art installations of our friends and peers. It would be hypocritical to suggest that Yale students not participating in varsity athletics who are involved in a multitude of extracurriculars have a greater responsibility to attend athletic events than their student athlete counterparts have to attend non-athletic events. We are optimistic that mutual effort on the part of both athletes and non-athletes will create a virtuous circle in which everyone feels acknowledged and respected for their unique contributions to campus life.

**Integration at Peer Institutions**

The entire Ivy League strives to create a culture of Division I athletics that creates a “healthy balance between the pursuit of athletic excellence and the academic mission” of its students. The conference implements additional rules, such as a weekends-only conference schedule and strict recruiting and admission guidelines, that go beyond the mandatory NCAA regulations in an attempt to support the goal of balance. While the rules specific to the Ivy League may seem only pertinent to student athletes, an understanding of these guidelines by the entire student body could help reduce misconceptions about Ivy League student athlete life.

In the previously mentioned op-ed “Admissions and Athletics,” author Cole Aronson’s criticism of the recruitment of athletes and their "seemingly counterproductive" impact on the university highlights an asymmetric understanding of Yale student athletes. Even though Aronson’s article is one of many from the Ivy League questioning the value of student athletes, we are glad that many more students take the opposing view. A number of op-eds rebutting Aronson were published in the YDN by athletes and non-athletes alike. This debate on our campus spurred conversations at other institutions as well. Over half of the other Ivy League schools directly responded to Aronson’s article, deconstructing his argument and explaining how athletics play a positive role in their universities. Within the Ivy
League, Yale is clearly not alone in its struggle to unify the student body and foster respect for all students’ extracurricular pursuits.

**Administrative Backing**

Various student organizations focus on improving Yale Athletics for the benefit of the entire community, including the YSACC, The Whaling Crew, and the Yale Athletic Department. There are events and incentives in place, such as Yale Up, tailgates, prizes at games, and free admission to most games to encourage the student body to support their fellow classmates as well as to create a fun and exciting Yale sports culture. However, despite continued investment by a wide array of student athletes and non-athletes, these incentives still fail to generate the spectator attendance and positive perspective toward athletes that the university strives to create and that athletes and non-athlete supporters would like to see.

In an interview with this Task Force, Tom Beckett, the Yale Athletics Director, explained his desire to improve the integration of student athletes by strengthening their ties to the Yale community as a whole. Mr. Beckett reassured the task force that the administration was “all in,” willing to invest in any event or reward system that tries to reconcile the gaps between athletes and non-athletes. Moreover, in a letter to a member of the task force, President Salovey said that he wholeheartedly believes in “the importance of athletics to the college experience” and that “student athletes inspire us to be resilient and to constantly improve.”

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Improved unity between athletes and non-athletes positively impacts the entire Yale community and could end an unnecessary divide within the student body. The administrative backing of Yale Athletics and the creation of this Task Force already demonstrates forward progress.

Even though student athletes dedicate a great deal of their time to their respective sport to earn the title of Division I athlete, other Yale students also invest large amounts of time and energy into their extracurriculars. However, we have found that other non-athletes are not so sternly classified by their chosen extracurricular(s). The successful integration of student athletes at Yale will not be complete until athletes are respected for their hard work and dedication to their
chosen extracurricular activity but not defined by their sport. The Ivy League prioritizes academics first, and student athletes, like all other undergraduates, are students first. Understanding this “student first” mentality of Yale athletes is key to successful campus integration.

We recommend that the University take the following steps to improve student athlete integration into Yale campus life.

1. Athletics Bazaar: In lieu of “Yale Up!”, Yale Athletics should sponsor an official Camp Yale event for the first home sports weekend of the academic year. At this envisioned Old Campus event for all students, varsity teams could run carnival games related to their sports, such as a quarterback challenge for football or a wiffle ball game for baseball and softball. Varsity teams that actively recruit walk-ons, like crew, could also set up booths. Meanwhile, other organizations related to athletics, such as club and intramural sports, the YDN sports section, The Whaling Crew, and the Yale Sports and Analytics Group, would be encouraged to participate and recruit members. We imagine this event serving as an Extracurricular Bazaar for sports and an early forum in which student athletes and non-athletes are encouraged to mix. The event could then migrate over to a sports game with entertainment, prizes, food, and games.

2. Increased Mixing: Deans should, to the greatest extent possible, mix athletes with non-athletes when assigning first-year housing. We recommend that no suite have a majority of athletes in the first year. Further, non-athletes should be encouraged to work jobs during athletic events to encourage participation, and student athletes should be encouraged to take non-athletics-related jobs.

3. Weekly Sports Email: Yale Athletics should send out a weekly email to all students containing information about home games taking place that weekend to ensure that every Yale student has easy access to such information. This newsletter could also highlight athletes who had noteworthy performances in the previous week so that non-athletes are more aware of the athletic accomplishments of their peers.

4. Better Incentivize Attendance: Incentives for attendance at games and on Bulldog Rewards should be increased by adding additional apparel, gift
cards, and prizes that students can win. Similarly, the Athletic Department and individual coaches should incentivize their athletes to attend other student organizations’ shows and performances, as well as College Teas and other speaker events on campus.

5. Athletics Director Office Hours: We ask that Mr. Beckett increase his availability to student athletes and the entire Yale community. We propose he hold a regular, once a month meeting with the YCC and/or YSACC, an idea to which he has agreed, and begin holding office hours twice a month.
CONCLUSION

To conclude, Yale's student athletes are an important component of the University, and they put in a large amount of time and work, physical and mental, in order to represent the University in a respectable manner. We hope that this report has shown the importance of the well-being of Yale's 833 athletes and the problems they face in maintaining their health, eating right, thriving in school, and fitting in with their classmates. The proposed recommendations all aim to create and maintain an environment at Yale that allows both student athletes and the general student body to succeed in and out of the classroom, and take advantage of and enjoy all areas of the college experience.

Consolidated Recommendations

Athletic Medicine

1. Trainers: We recommend that the Provost approve the Athletic Department's request to expand its staff to include nine full time athletic trainers, four certified interns, and two part-time physical therapists. However, this is just a first step, and we would recommend that Yale prioritize the health of its students and hire as many full-time trainers as needed, likely the 15 recommended by the AMCIA, so that every Yale athlete has access to a trainer when they need one.

2. Trainer Development: Yale should invest in continued education for its trainers and sports physicians. By certifying trainers in more advanced techniques such as cupping, dry needling, and physical therapy, fewer athletes would need to go off campus to receive the care they need.

3. Facilities: Yale should invest in larger, more accessible training rooms and new equipment to ensure they are giving their student athletes the best care possible. Most injured student athletes should have access to the things they need at Yale rather than having to go off campus to an outside doctor or rehabilitation center for treatment. Furthermore, student athletes should have access to the training rooms at all times so they can do their own treatment when they need to.
4. Communication: One main issue with Yale's sports medicine is the gap between what the Athletic Department and Yale Medicine are doing and what the student athletes perceive they are doing. The Athletic Department should make a greater effort to improve its communication with athletes. We recommend that the trainer for each team and the sports physicians at Yale Health have meetings with each Yale team once a semester to check in with each athlete and remind them of the resources available to them. These meetings should take place about a month into the season when the information is more pertinent to the athletes, rather than just once at the beginning of the first year when students are overwhelmed with meetings.

**Nutritional Resources**

5. Dining Hall Hours: Hours should be extended to accommodate athletes who arrive back late from practice and have to juggle extracurriculars, sections, and office hours. With the addition of new residential colleges, it seems appropriate that dining hall operating times can be more staggered. Morse/Stiles cannot remain the only late option, especially considering Yale’s increasingly large student body. In addition, Durfee's should accept dinner swipes until closing to supplement the financial burden athletes sustain when missing meals without reimbursement.

6. Refueling Station: We recommend transforming Ray’s Café in the basement of RTH into an athlete lounge with a refueling station. This will increase transparency in the distribution of resources, as all athletes will benefit from the availability of a social space and accessibility to healthy snacks. Coaches can come here to pick up snacks for their athletes quickly and easily, perhaps from a locker dedicated to their team.

7. Nutritionist: Yale needs to actively increase knowledge among athletes of the Yale Nutritionist and Dietician at Yale Health, Lisa Canada. Currently, meetings with the nutritionist are voluntary and left to the responsibility of the athletes. Yale Athletics should institute a mandatory nutrition meeting for each sports team at least once a semester. This can be incorporated into the trainer and sports physician meeting suggested in the Athletic Medicine section. If we can make these meetings the norm rather than the exception, we will take a step towards bettering the nutritional needs of our athletes.
Academic Resources

8. Academic Liaisons: Develop a program for first-year athletes that encompass issues facing student athletes. Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to put together information sessions for first-years to help them get off to the right start. Topics should include: getting work done on buses, how to pick classes within the allotted time frame due to practice, how to email professors to get into the right section, and how to stay on top of work in and out of season.

9. Tutors: Look into funding tutors for athletes, perhaps from the student athlete enhancement fund, as it is unclear where that money is currently being spent. Establish a formal system to allow athletes to tutor other athletes and share study skills that have worked.

10. First-Year Information Sessions: Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to put together information sessions for first-years to help them get off to the right start. Topics should include how to get work done on buses, pick classes within the allotted time frame, email professors to get into the right section, and stay on top of work in and out of season.

11. Student Athlete Study Space: Create a study and hang out space for athletes in RTH. Either make the student athlete lounge open for all student athletes, or look to revitalize Ray's Café in RTH and work with the nutritionist to provide healthy snacks for athletes (see the Nutritional Resources section above).

12. Class and Section Selection: While reconsidering its class schedule due to the expansion of the student body, we strongly urge Yale to keep the demands of the student athlete in mind, and recommend considering a block schedule like at Princeton. This would benefit not just student athletes, but the entire population of students who wish to pursue the highest education as well as devote time to their extracurriculars.

Student Athlete Integration

13. Athletics Bazaar: In lieu of “Yale Up!”, Yale Athletics should sponsor an official Camp Yale event for the first home sports weekend of the academic year. At this carnival of sorts, varsity teams could run games on Old Campus for all
students, such as a quarterback challenge for football or a wiffle ball game for baseball and softball. Varsity teams that actively recruit walk-ons, like crew, could also set up booths. Meanwhile, other organizations related to athletics, such as club and intramural sports, the YDN sports section, The Whaling Crew, and the Yale Sports and Analytics Group, would be encouraged to join. We imagine this event serving as an Extracurricular Bazaar for sports and an early forum in which student athletes and non-athletes are encouraged to mix. The event could then migrate over to a volleyball game where various prizes would be awarded.

14. Increased Mixing: Deans should be prohibited from concentrating many athletes in a single suite. A good rule of thumb is that no suite can have majority athletes in the first year. Further, jobs during games should be made available for non-athletes to encourage participation, and student athletes should be encouraged to take alternative jobs, at the library, theater, cultural houses, etc.

15. Weekly Sports Email: Yale Athletics should send out a weekly email to all students containing information about which home games are taking place that weekend to ensure that every Yale student has easy access to such information. This weekly newsletter could also highlight specific athletes who had noteworthy performances and encourage students to congratulate those athletes.

16. Better Incentivize Attendance: Incentives for attendance at games and on Bulldog Rewards should be increased by adding additional apparel, gift cards, and prizes that students can win. Similarly, the Athletic Department and individual coaches should incentivize their athletes to attend other student organizations’ shows and performances, as well as Master's Teas and other speaker events on campus.

17. A.D. Office Hours: We ask that Mr. Beckett increase his availability to student athletes and the entire Yale community. We propose he hold a regular meeting with the YCC or YSACC, an idea he has verbalized his support, and start a bi-weekly office hours system.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was authored by Chris Gunther (Morse ’17, Chair), Ashley Perselay (Morse ’17, Chair, Women’s Lacrosse), Carol Finke (Pierson ’18, Women’s Tennis), Gabby Nelson (Ezra Stiles ’19, Women’s Basketball), Adam Lowet (Ezra Stiles ’18), Ben Mallet (Davenport ’18), Hannah Coy (Berkeley ’18, Women’s Soccer), and Lenny Jenkins (Pierson ’20, Men’s Heavyweight Crew).

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