



University of  
Connecticut

**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**

**February 28, 2013**

**Public Hearing**

**Testimony**

**By**

**Warde Manuel**

**Director of Athletics**

**and**

**Marielle Vangelder**

**Associate Director of Athletics/NCAA Rules Education & Compliance Services**

**Department of Athletics**

**University of Connecticut**

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on Proposed Bill 205, *An Act Concerning Scholarships for Student Athletes at Public Institutions of Higher Education*. I would like to share information on the potential impacts as related to UConn Athletics.

**Incapacitating Injury or Illness**

Per Bylaw 15.5.1.3 *Counter Who Becomes Injured or Ill*, a student-athlete who suffers an incapacitating injury or illness which precludes any further participation in collegiate athletics can receive athletics aid without their grant counting against applicable NCAA team limitations. Therefore, a student-athlete would never have their athletic scholarship not renewed due to incapacitating injury or illness resulting from participation in the institutions athletic program.

Further, Bylaw 15.3.4.3 *Reduction or Cancellation Not Permitted* stipulates that institutional financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability may not be reduced or canceled during the period of its award because of an injury, illness, or physical or mental medical condition.

Pursuant to Bylaw 15.3.4.3, if an institution did attempt to cancel a student-athlete's athletics grant-in-aid based in any part for physical reasons associated with the student-athlete's inability to compete

due to injury or illness, the student-athlete has the right to appeal that decision to a committee outside of athletics.

Therefore, enacting such a requirement as State of Connecticut law is redundant to the NCAA policy already in place.

Institutional Aid to a Student-Athlete who has Exhausted his/her Athletics Eligibility

Bylaw 15.01.5.2 *Exception – Former Student-Athletes* permits an institution to award institutional financial aid to a former student-athlete who has exhausted his or her eligibility, but are still in good academic standing and pursuing a degree at the institution on for any term they are enrolled on either a full-time or part-time basis. Currently, when funds and resources permit, the Division of Athletics assists former student-athletes with completion of the requisite credits to achieve their degree subject to the approval of the Director of Athletics, Program Administrator and Director of Academic Support. While there is no formal regulation which requires us to provide athletics aid to former student-athlete's, we traditionally choose to do so if the student-athlete is interested in returning to the institution.

However, there are extenuating circumstances with some student-athletes that we as University need the flexibility to manage. To enact a law that requires institutional financial aid to be provided would not recognize the commitment we have made to student-athlete's to assist them in attaining a degree through our current policy.

For teams awarding institutional financial aid, the Academic Progress Rate (APR) cohort is comprised of student-athletes who received institutional financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability and are enrolled full time as of the institution's official census date. Institutions would be required to include non-counters, or individuals who have exhausted their eligibility and would receive institutional athletics aid in their fifth year based on this proposed bill, as part of their APR cohort.

Without having the discretion to determine which student-athletes should and should not receive institutional aid after they have exhausted their eligibility, an institution would be forced to include a student-athlete in their APR whom could contribute negatively to a current teams score and impact such things as play/practice hours, scholarship limitations and opportunities for post season play.