

Summer academic programs for incoming freshmen will merge

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By Rick Fitzgerald
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The university will sharpen its focus on the academic success of student athletes by merging an Athletic Department summer program for incoming freshmen athletes with a similar program for all incoming freshmen in the College of Literature Science and the Arts.

The Office of the Provost has decided to merge the program for athletes, called the NCAA summer scholarship program, with LSA's Comprehensive Studies Bridge Program. For student athletes, this merger will expand the number of freshman-level courses available during the summer as they transition from high school to college.

One of the shortcomings with the current program for athletes is that not enough freshmen-level classes have been available during the summer, said Philip Hughes, who came to the university in June as director of the Academic Success Program in the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. He also serves as an assistant provost.

The limited selection of classes has led to athletes enrolling in a variety of classes, then dropping them once they realize they were not appropriate, he explained. The merger will help solve that, Hughes said, by consolidating the summer enrollment processes so that LSA will have more enrollment information earlier to plan for the needed number, size and types of summer classes.

"The intent is to have student athletes spend their summer in classes with other new freshmen doing appropriate-level class work," said Hughes. "We want our athletes to make the best possible transition and to really feel a strong student connection to the University of Michigan."

This merging of summer program is another step in a series of changes dating back to 2004 designed to facilitate the academic success of student athletes.

This summer there were 38 athletes in the NCAA program.

In addition to expanding course offerings, the university will change the academic requirements for the student athletes, going beyond what the NCAA requires.

The NCAA summer program was first offered to men and women basketball players in 2000, then expanded to all student athletes in 2005. The NCAA requires that athletes initially enroll in at least six credit hours. Athletes are allowed to drop below that level as long as they maintain enrollment.

The CSP Bridge program requires all students to maintain at least six credit hours throughout the summer. The goal is to merge the programs by the summer of 2010.

“We believe this merger will help our student athletes prepare for greater academic success because they will be plugged into a program built on decades of experience,” Hughes said.

Since 1975, the CSP Bridge program has offered intensive academic preparation, highly individualized academic advising and the personal attention of faculty in an intensive, yet nurturing environment.

For more on the program visit the CSP Web site: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/csp/>