

## ***“Utilizing Student Athletes as Peer Educators in First-Year Seminars and Academic Support Programs”***

**Presenters: Dr. Darrin Sorrells, Learning Assistance Specialist and Mr. Bryce Law, Graduate Assistant  
Philadelphia, PA      19<sup>th</sup> Annual Students in Transition Conference Session R-65 October 15, 2012**



### **Information about the University of Southern Indiana (USI):**

The University of Southern Indiana (USI) is located in Evansville, Indiana. Evansville is located in the far southwestern tip of Indiana along the Ohio River. Evansville is the third largest city in Indiana in terms of population. USI is one of Indiana's public institutions of higher education. USI's total student enrollment for Fall 2012 was just under 10,500 students. The institution offers baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate degrees. The athletic teams belong to NCAA Division II, and they play in the Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC). Nearly 300 USI Student Athletes compete in the following sports: men's and women's basketball; men's and women's soccer; men's and women's tennis; men's and women's cross country; men's and women's track and field; men's and women's golf; baseball; softball; and women's volleyball.

### **Overview of USI Athletic Peer Coach Program:**

The Athletic Peer Coach Program is in its third year at USI. The goal of the program is to assist USI student athletes both academically and with the overall adjustment to college life. While all athletes are welcome to participate, a specific focus is on freshmen and upperclassmen that may be experiencing challenges/difficulties (low grades, poor time management, etc.). Participants are assisted by fellow student athletes who have been selected to serve as peer coaches. Peer coaches are positive role models, both athletically and academically. Peer coaches are also trained to serve as study skills tutors and content tutors for the general student population in addition to assisting student athletes.

### **Benefits for Students Participating in the Program Include:**

- Improving Overall Academic Performance
- Enhancing Study Skills
- Developing Routine Study Schedules
- Increasing Motivation for Classes
- Studying in a Structured Environment with Supportive People
- Becoming More Connected to Campus and Adjusting to College Life
- Learning about Available Resources at USI
- Enhancing Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Getting to Know Other Student Athletes on Campus

---

### **Campus Collaborations that Have Been Strengthened through Peer Coach Program:**

- Enhanced Collaboration between University Division and the USI Athletics Department
- Enhanced Collaboration between University Division and Physical Education Faculty
- Enhanced Collaboration within University Division (Advising and Academic Skills Offices)
- The Academic Skills Learning Assistance Program has been Strengthened by the Addition of Top Student Athletes who are Trained as both Peer Coaches and Tutors

### **Integrating Peer Coaches into UNIV 101: “Freshman Seminar for Student Athletes”:**

- Peer Coaches Meet Freshmen Student Athletes in Class During Week Two of Semester
- Peer Coaches Work with Freshmen Student Athletes Outside of Class throughout Semester (assisting with goal-setting; time management; study strategies; etc.)
- Peer Coaches Maintain Contact with Freshman Athletes through Face-to-Face Meetings, E-mails, and Tutoring Sessions
- Peer Coaches Lead Small Group Discussions in UNIV 101
- Peer Coaches Return to UNIV 101 at the End of the Semester for a Culminating Activity with the Freshmen Athletes

***For additional information about the program, please contact Dr. Darrin Sorrells ([ddsorrells@usi.edu](mailto:ddsorrells@usi.edu)) or Mr. Bryce Law ([blaw2@eagles.usi.edu](mailto:blaw2@eagles.usi.edu)).***