Student Athletes in Honors

NCAA Division I Colleges and Universities field nearly 6,700 athletics teams and provide opportunities each year for 192,000 student-athletes to compete.

At UWM, 450 students are Division I athletes, and 700 students on campus are enrolled in the Honors College. However, there are only seventeen students who overlap these categories, making them stand out as some of the most dedicated and hardworking on campus.

For these student-athletes, keeping up with studies between training and events can feel like a full-time job.

“On the average day, I have about five hours of time outside of class, homework, and soccer,” explains Women’s Soccer athlete Senya Muerer (Communications Sciences and Disorders).

“Athletics and academics require a lot of mental toughness and problem solving as we navigate the many obstacles and pathways that confront us, and I feel supported by the infrastructure in both areas.”

Women’s Track and Field athlete Aubrie Gorski’s (Psychology) time commitment to her sport varies depending on the season.

“During the heart of our meets season, practice, travel, and recovery demands take up most of my time,” she shares.

However, Aubrie tries to take advantage of her time off when she has it.

“I love hanging out with friends, reading, going for walks, or traveling to visit my family, just like everyone,” she confirms.

Practices and competitions require these busy students to adopt sometimes complicated time management strategies.

Women’s Track and Field athlete Isabel Roloff (Accounting) adjusts her course schedule to fit with the demands of her two-season sport.

“From an academics standpoint, I take a smaller course load in the Spring semester when track is in season and more courses in the Fall to balance it out.”

Like many students, Men’s Swim and Dive athlete Ben Lorenz (Astrophysics) uses a planner to keep up with everything.

“I’ve used a planner for my entire time at UWM, and it has helped me keep track of my assignments, even when my schedule becomes full of competition and training,” he says. “The planner I use is nothing more than a small notebook, but it has helped me balance my schedule very effectively.”

Course loads and planners are just one aspect of keeping up for a student-athlete in the Honors College.

Men’s Track and Field athlete Chris Dobbie (Architecture) understands that he needs specific strategies for balancing all his obligations, but the advantages of being part of the Honors College community outweigh the scheduling demands.

“I can have intellectual conversations with the people in my seminars that I’m not able to have in other settings,” he says. “The pure amount of creativity and walks of life that are offered in our seminar discussions make for interesting discourse a vast majority of the time.”

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Similarly, Women's Soccer athlete Clara Broecker's (Mechanical Engineering) motivation is an attitude to do the best that she can in all aspects of her life.

“Balancing soccer and academics can be challenging, but it's rewarding to know that I put my best effort forward in both aspects,” she shares.

Another motivator for student-athletes to stay engaged is the sense of community shared in each of those spaces.

“I value my commitment to both communities, and I would never want to put it at risk,” Chris shares.

Aubrie feels that the differences between Athletics and the Honors College support her own multifaceted interests.

“In the Honors College, I encounter more individuals who are passionate about making a difference than in any other avenue of my life,” she says.

“The athletics community does amazing things; however, we tend to be much louder in what we do and have more of a media presence. In my experience, the Honors College is a community of silent mountain-movers, and athletic teams are campus’ passionate and prideful students.”

The benefits of being in these two distinct communities are as diverse as the athletes themselves.

“My favorite part about being a student-athlete is having a built-in friends. The first day of school I already had 60 friends to count on,” says Women's Swim and Dive athlete Brianna Homontowski (Nursing).

“I love having the opportunity to travel, represent Milwaukee, and be surrounded by other athletes who have such strong goal pursuing behaviors,” she states.

These students represent UWM at the highest level of athletics and academics. Their hard work does not go unnoticed, and their efforts will undoubtedly send them sprinting/diving/kicking into a promising future.

Director’s Note

Honors at UWM is not only our seminars and activities in Honors House. As this issue of The Aggregate reminds us, Honors College students are deeply embedded throughout UWM: in athletics, study abroad, volunteering, social justice work, and research.

We’re particularly proud of being represented on the playing field by our student-athletes, who are featured in this issue.

Did you know that student-athletes at UWM carry a higher-than-average GPA year after year? Or that they have to balance school, work, practice, travel, and meets or matches in order to maintain their GPA and eligibility to compete?

Over the years, I have had student-athletes in many of my seminars and have every time been deeply moved by their commitment to excellence.

Throughout this issue, you can see how social justice and volunteering are growing parts of the UWM Honors experience: another successful spring break trip to New Orleans; a new conference on race, power, and justice; deep work in near South Side non-profit organizations through our Community Embedded Experiential Learning program; exhibitions and courses supporting and celebrating LGBTQ+ issues.

Surveying the current state and activities of our Honors College should remind us all of how far we’ve come as a community and how hard individuals and groups are working to continually improve us for the next generation of students.

You'll see toward the back of the issue a list of outstanding students graduating and a recognition of scholarship and writing awards winners.

Your excellence as students is seen and recognized, and we hope that you'll all be here, as alums or continuing students, in the fall, ready to extend a helping hand to UWM, the Milwaukee community, and our new students!