Turning Athletic Success into Academic Success

Elyzabeth Holford, Director, Virginia Tech

http://juno.atech.vt.edu
What Is It?
A program designed to address the special challenges faced by student-athletes at Virginia Tech.

Who Are the Staff?
Faculty from several colleges in cooperation with the faculty and academic advisors from Athletics.
Financing and Administration

- A TECH is administered through the Provost’s Office and Athletics.
- A TECH is funded through money earned by the Virginia Tech football team’s 1996 post-season Bowl victory.
- Donations to the program.
• Over 100 student-athletes have participated in aTech courses, and more classes and students are expected this year: aiming eventually for one-hundred percent course participation.

• All student-athletes are participants in the program.

• There are about 20 faculty and staff people currently assisting with the project. Many are volunteering their time to the program.
Goals

• To significantly improve graduation rates, especially for student-athletes who are “at-risk” academically.

• To further challenge those athletes who are academically gifted so that they strive to achieve ever-higher goals.

• To foster the sense of a learning community, lead to self-education, and outreach among participants.
• To increase job placement of students who will have acquired new skills.

• To fully utilize the potential of the new technologies to improve the quality of student learning.

• To enable student-athletes to compete in the technology-oriented 21st-century.
aTECH options

Core Courses
Student Road Warriors
Peer Mentoring
Service-Learning
Training

Students may combine these options.
Core Course Options

• Core course options with small classes (e.g. Freshman English).

• Taught by award-winning faculty volunteers in close collaboration with academic colleges and athletic advisors.

• Core course options include traditional as well as online courses, taught face-to-face as well as in computer-enhanced environments.
Student Road Warrior Option: Learning on the Road

• Macintosh PowerBook's can be loaned to students to take with them on team road trips.

• These can be used for communication with faculty, advisors, and peer study groups; for self-paced study purposes, research papers, synchronous webchats, and asynchronous interaction via e-mail and NetForum.
Peer Mentoring

- Selected student athletes with strong aptitude or interest will act as peer helpers in the lab and on the road to increase questions and participation.

- Individual training program through aTECH Classroom monitors.

- Self-paced learning modules and web-guides for mentors and students made available.
• Students in ATECH can take service-learning courses for credit, thereby integrating community service with academic coursework.

• This reinforces the student-athlete’s ties to the community and fosters a sense of civic responsibility that is combined with academic rigor.
Training

- Technology workshops for student athletes
- Technology workshops for participating faculty
- Trained monitors for the Computer-Integrated Classroom in Cassell Athletic Center
The Virginia Tech Athletic Complex
• Cassell 207 (2nd Floor)
• Newly Renovated
• Capacity for 35 fully networked workstations
• Laser printer
• Scanner
• Computer and video projection
• Class-room and self-directed activities
aTECH at Work
Through innovative course design and with assistance from the Center for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, a TECH provides students with special sections of regular university courses required for their field of study. These special a TECH sections are limited in class-size, taught by outstanding faculty members, and incorporate computer labs and online teaching and learning when appropriate. The a TECH sections allow flexibility for the student-athletes travelling in-season to keep up with their course work by using laptop computers.
aTECH courses

Spring 1997

- English 1106/Theater Arts
- Black Studies 1714
- Psychology 2974

Fall 1997

- Psychology 2984
- English 1105
- English 3524

Spring 1998

- Entomology 2004
- English 3764
- Women’s Studies 1824
- English 1106
• Totally online coursework
• Partial online coursework
• Student Road Warrior Program
aTECH Student Road Warrior Program

- Loaning Apple PowerBooks to student athletes for athletic road trips
- Access to faculty, advisors, and student peers
- Full access to the Internet: email; Web-based course materials; online interactive environments
- Completing homework assignments remotely
- Discussions with class members in “real time”
a TECH has the potential to become a nationally-recognized program that can help us attract the finest scholar-athletes. . . . It is a way to establish lifelong learning habits among graduates. It is our reinvestment in the education of student-athletes so that we can better prepare them for the future.
CONTACTS

• Elyzabeth Holford       Director  aTECH  
  (holforde@vt.edu)

• Jerry Via       Head of Athletic Advising

• David Taylor  aTECH Assessment Coordinator

• Len Hatfield  aTECH Technical Coordinator

• Dan Yates  aTECH Lab/Laptop Coordinator
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