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**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY**

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

# Student: Javier G. Marquez

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| **SM 7109** | **Dr. Oddi** |
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| **Sports Compliance** | **Interview a Compliance Officer** |
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Interview a Compliance Officer

Javier G. Marquez

Northcentral University

**Introduction**

Over the years, institutions have come to appreciate the importance of compliance within the intercollegiate athletics administration, which has yielded long-term success and accomplishments in the industry. It is mainly attributed to increased pressure in competitions, analysis from the media, and suspicions from the public. Institutions are adopting ways that minimize the allegations by ensuring that they have an administrator who is knowledgeable, interested, takes part in federal and compliant with rules from National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). For this course, we were required to carry out fieldwork where we scheduled an appointment to interview with the athletic administrator who was in charge of compliance operations. The selected individual for the course was the deputy athletic director at Samford University; Michelle Durban and an interview was carried out. As agreed by Michelle Durban, compliance is the responsibility of everyone as it ensures that there is a maximum functionality of the department, which includes the culture of the department.

The following is the interview that took place:

**Interviewer**: Does the institution have a website that is strictly dedicated to compliance? If not, are there any plans to have one in future? If so, kindly tell us what information you think should go to the website and the essence of such information related to compliance. If one does exist, please provide a link.

**Michelle**: Yes. Samford University has a site dedicated to compliance that is accessible to all our students. The website has information about all the compliance staff members, and this is important as it gives the students a clear understanding of the existing compliance with the rules of NCAA. The existence of the website helps the student to understand that the compliant office is active and its primary function is to recognize and reduce areas of risk in the program of athletic that could affect the university negatively. The information that goes on the website mainly is the updates of the NCAA since it is essential for the student to understand if there are new rules that may be collected for all the groups or specific to different groups, for instance, the football team. The Compliance Office ensures that the updates are regularly made, and it is our work to ensure that the students are informed if there existed a problem and how to be prevented in the future through our website. The students can access the site from <https://samfordsports.com/news/2017/8/21/welcome-to-samford-university-compliance.aspx>

**Interviewer**: What are the functions of the Athletic Compliance Office at Samford University?

**Michelle**: The Compliance office at Samford is involved in education and monitoring. As the compliance staff, we ensure that there is a regular close interaction between us, the coaches as well as the student-athletes. By doing so, our main aim is to provide information and materials that mainly focuses on the presentation of the complicated bylaws of NCAA. As we offer them the data, we also ensure that the news reaches the Samford community at large through our websites or from the coaches and the student-athletes. The compliance staff also help in monitoring of the functions of the athletic department that are ruled by the legislation of NCAA. It is also important to clarify what most individuals believe that since Samford University has a compliance office, it is a guarantee that no problem will occur. Unfortunately, we cannot always assure incidence free events. Numerous individuals are involved in the operations of the athletic program at the university. These people are included in the decision-making process that may affect the program positively or adversely thus tying down the hands of the compliance office as it cannot stop the occurrence of violations within the program. All components of the program should work effectively, efficiently and in unison to guarantee compliance. All those who are interested in the Samford University athletes should support the program by complying and being acquainted with the rules of NCAA.

**Interviewer**: Who certifies incoming student-athletes for your program?

**Michelle**: The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) accredits the Samford University Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP). The program has received recognition since it has met the national standards for the Entry-level athletic training education. However, some requirements and procedures have to be met for a student-athlete to be admitted to the program. For instance, the student should be recognized as a legitimate member of Samford University. The student-athlete should ensure that they make a written request for an ATEP application that is directed to the University's Director of Athletic Training Education. Additionally, the interested student should ensure that they complete a form and are in possession of three recommendation letters, three references, and official transcripts from the high schools or higher education institutions. All these should be submitted to the university's director of athletic training education. Since the requirements are too many, those interested in the program and would wish to join should visit the website under the link <https://catalog.samford.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=8&poid=2132>

**Interviewer**: Discuss the compliance surrounding the recruiting process.

**Michelle**: The process begins with the responsibility of the coaches. The individual head coach should ensure that the allowed number of coaches are involved in training off-campus at a go. They should also make sure the training sessions take place at the appropriate times of the school calendar, which are based on the NCAA's calendar. The responsibility of head coaches is to make sure that there is a comprehensive system needed to record the training activities. Even if the information is availed to the Compliance Office as monitoring process, the head coaches should ensure that there is a copy of the files with all the required information. The second part of the recruiting process is the recruiting exam from NCAA. Coaches who have passed the NCAA Recruiting certificate Exam are the only ones who are allowed to take part in the off-campus training activities for the University. The exam is accessible during the spring season for the preceding academic year, and it is offered the whole year if new coaches are needed. These coaches should be on the list of Declaration of Staff to be allowed as off-campus trainers. The third part of the recruiting process is monitoring and reviewing the training activities. Aside from monitoring from the Compliance Office, the Assistant Athletic Director also supervises the training during the processing of the recruitment and a means of providing the official documentation. The recruiting materials are given by Bylaw 13.4.1 in the form of article and Bylaw 13.4.2 in the form of a video or audio. The NCAA reduced items that were initially provided to the student-athletes. The materials are available on the Samford University website, but they are not allowed to be printed or issued to the students. The recruiting coordination of the university is active except that of the routine clerical tasks that are performed by the head coaches. The functions of the recruiting coordination are to evaluation athletes, selection of prospects, calling the prospective trainees and preparing the general training correspondence to potential trainees.

**Interviewer**: What procedures are in place regarding transfer student-athletes?

**Michelle**: According to Bylaw 13.1.1.3, a staff-athlete or other representatives are not allowed to contact a student-athlete of another NCAA in any way without obtaining written permission from the director of athletics. However, granting of approval does not give the second institution the right to encourage transfer and should not offer financial assistance related to the athletics until the student-athlete has had a chance to attend any subsequent institution for one academic year. Permitting communication with the student-athlete also means that all other rules from NCAA should be observed. If the student-athlete makes a written request and he or she would like to be contacted by a second institution, the Samford University has a period of seven business days to either deny or grant the request of the student-athlete. Failure to respond to the request within the stipulated time, a default grant is issued, and the institution is obliged to provide written permission to the student-athlete. An entity from the institution will conduct bylaw 13.1.1.3.1 states that failure of granting the request from the student-athlete concerning transferring, the institution is entitled to provide written information that informs the student-athletes about the hearing. Upon completion of the trial, there should be written results that are issued to the student-athlete within fifteen business days from the time the request was made as indicated in Bylaw 13.02.1. Additionally, the student-athlete is allowed to actively take part, either through telephone calls or in person, in the hearing proceedings. Consequently, lack of conducting the hearing or provision of the written results within fifteen business days may lead to automatic granting of permission to contact the student-athlete. The institution is thus required to provide written authorization for the student-athlete to be conducted by a second institution.

**Interviewer**: Who handles the checking and typing of scholarships to the NCAA equivalency limit? Does Sanford University utilize the average method, actual method, or a combination of both?

**Michelle**: Athletic scholarships are awarded on an annual basis as indicated in the requirements of NCAA. These scholarships for both continuing and new student-athletes are granted at the discretion of only the head coach. The Compliance Office is responsible for monitoring of other financial aids to ensure that the teams and the individual student-athlete are within the permitted limits of the NCAA. The work of the head coach in regards to scholarships and grants is to coordinate the budget for the sports in collaboration with the Compliance Office to ensure that the received aid is within the NCAA limits. Individual coaches should ensure that there is an honest and accurate communication regarding athletic scholarships and athletic financial aid to student-athletes and the prospective student-athletes. They are also responsible for providing that the limits are within the NCAA rules and the policies of Samford University. The limitation of the scholarship is measured using the value of Cost of Attendance or Grant-in-Aid. A full grant-in-aid includes tuition, compulsory fee, room and board, and textbooks as indicated by the NCAA. On the other hand, the cost of attendance is the amount that is calculated by the university that includes the costs from grant-in-aid in addition to travel and personal expensed. The amount differs from each student since it is estimated individually. The averaging method is used to determine the NCAA equivalency.

**Interviewer**: Who handles Eligibility in Samford University and who works on final certification of student-athletes?

**Michelle**: The NCAA is responsible for eligibility at Samford University. They have established minimum limits for the academic workload of the student-athletes. The limits are inclusive of the number of credit hours that should be done within the stipulated academic term and the total hours earned within the academic year.

**Interviewer**: Who handles grade checks at Samford University? Is there any team that is charged with the responsibility of looking at the grades of student-athletes to determine eligibility issues?

**Michelle**: The current NCAA legislation is responsible for permitting the procedures involved in certification from the certifying eligibility officer, dean of students and student records office. There are instances where a student-athlete may be declared ineligible academically as per the standards of NCAA but still have good stand before as per the University’s guidelines. What the university will announce is that student-athletes who are not legible as indicated by NCAA will thus not be able to obtain athletic aid.

**Interviewer**: What are the fundamental academic requirements for eligibility for student-athletes?

**Michelle**: The student-athlete should have pleasing general requirements from the university. This means that the student-athlete should have a good academic standing in addition to progress that is satisfactory. Good academic status implies that the student-athlete should have at least twelve or more hours with an average quality point of 2.000 in the university’s grade point average. Lack of this will lead to the student being placed in a warning. For student-athletes to be eligible in the NCAA, there should be an enrollment of at least the lowest full-time study program that will lead to any degree of the baccalaureate. During the competition period, the student-athlete is enrolled in fewer hours but should not be less than 12 hours out of the total semester hours. If this is done, the student-athlete is categorized as a full-time student. When a student has been issued with a warning and fails to achieve the cumulative GPA required at Samford University at the end of the term, the requirement is to withdraw from the university for one full term. After the entire semester of not being in school is over, readmission of the student-athlete is not automatic since the re-entry is expected to be made at least six weeks prior the start of the next semester. The application for readmission should be through the office of admission. Also, the rule of Samford University is that the student should not join any other academic institution for the period that they were withdrawn from the institution.

**Interviewer**: Could you please describe the methods employed to alert student-athletes of the NCAA rules, the rights they possess as student-athletes and any policies and procedures on student-athletes. (If a student-athlete policy and procedure manual is available, request if a copy of examination is permissible)

**Michelle**: Each student-athlete who acts as a recruiting host during the academic year is required to sign the Student-athlete-host code of conduct form. The form is expected to be approved before hosting their first recruits of that academic year. It is vital for the recruits, and the host is not required to sign the form every time the arrangement is made. Individual student-athlete host fills the form once a year to ensure that they are certified as hosts. The Compliance Office will assess the rules of NCAA that relate to the official visits and converse about the usage of Samford University’s visit policy and the money used for entertainment by the host. This is part of the necessary process by the university’s systems as well as the NCAA rules. Addition to the signed Code of Conduct, the students receive the guidelines of NCAA before the visits happen and after receiving the entertainment money from the host. The official visit approval form is required to be filled and approved by the Compliance Office before the arrangements for the visit are made for two weeks prior. Approval is not granted until the form is completed. The importance of the form is to ensure that there is processing of any expense that is connected to the visit as well as starting the process of eligibility for the prospective student-athletes.

Violation of the Campus Visit Recruitment Policy may be lead to the NCAA enforcing an action towards the student-athlete. Additionally, the university has the authority to execute penalties when the violation occurs. This may include suspension of the student-athlete from being part of athletics until an investigation within the institution is completed. The student-athlete is allowed to provide information that will help clear the allegations or any other information that is appropriate and pertinent to the charge. When there is a confirmation of the violation of the Campus Visit Recruiting Policy, then the student-athlete is no longer fit to be a host anymore or may lead to suspension from the team or competition. Another consequence of the violation may be sanctioned according to a breach of the Student Code of Conduct from the university. Lastly, violation of the Campus Visit Recruiting Policy may lead to the student-athlete host being ineligible as indicated by the NCAA rules.

**Interviewer**: What is the athletic scholarship appeal process?

**Michelle**: The rule of NCAA is that the student-athlete must be informed annually on July 1st if they have received their scholarships, if they are canceled or if they are reduced. Cancellation or reduction of the award can be appealed by the student-athlete to try and change the decision that was already made. There are steps involved when the student-athlete wants to request an appeal regarding cancellation or reduction of the scholarship. Firstly, the student-athlete writes a request and submits it to the Director of Financial Aid within ten business days after receiving the notification. The application will act as an appeal and will be notified to the board of appeal. The written request will include a statement of why the student-athlete finds the decision to be unfair. Secondly, the committee of appeal, which consists of the Director of Financial Aid and other representatives from the Financial Aid Office, will forward the request to the coach to prepare a response. As indicated before, the coach is the one responsible for the issuance of the scholarships or the financial aid. Lastly, the Director of Financial Aid will create a timetable for the hearing of the appeal. The conference will also include the student-athlete who wrote the request, the coach, and the Director of Athletics. The student and the coach are allowed to bring others who will act as moral support or may be used as witnesses. Both the coach and the student-athlete will be given an opportunity to present their understanding of the terms and conditions of the athletic award and renewal of the scholarship. The board of appeal may ask questions that will help in understanding the situation.

**Conclusion**

The NCAA provides rules and regulations for the Compliance Office and student-athletes that promotes overall compliance in Samford University. It also helps in monitoring of the athletic programs to ensure that compliance is maintained at all times. From the interview, it is clear that Samford University has an active Compliance office, which observes the rules and regulations of NCAA. This can be attributed to the good athletic performance that is seen in the university.

References

(M. Durban, personal communication, April 12, 2018).