

Student-Athletes Enjoy Council's Camaraderie

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The Tulane Student-Athlete Advisory Council is, by and large, a happy group. But if one wish could be granted to council members and their teammates, it would be more fans in the stands during athletic competitions.

The council deals with issues of interest to student-athletes, bringing these concerns to the athletics administration. And one subject arises again and again: how can Green Wave teams get more Tulane students excited and involved?

"That's one of SAAC's main concerns," says Liz McGehee, a junior volleyball player from Lafayette, La., and a community service representative on the council. "Our primary goal is to get more student involvement. And it's tough, no matter how many T-shirts you give away."

The Student-Athlete Advisory Council comprises two representatives — appointed by their coaches — from each of Tulane's varsity teams. The council meets every two weeks during the school year.

Council meetings may include discussions with athletics director Rick Dickson or sessions exploring ways to encourage attendance at games, such as promotional T-shirts and designation of student sections in Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse. The council also coordinates community-service projects and promotes career-preparation workshops.

In 2007-08, the council sponsored Wave Days in which local elementary-school-age children came to campus to interact with Tulane student-athletes. Shadow a Student-Athlete Day also was a hit with young students from a New Orleans public school who, singly or in pairs, accompanied Tulane student-athletes from practice to class and study for a day.

Brian King, a community service representative on the council, is a junior from Slidell, La., and wide receiver on the football team. He says that he most enjoyed Wave Days with "all the kids out there on the football field. It was a lot of fun being

out there running around with the kids. They wanted to wear our jerseys and wanted us to play with them."

Ashley Langford, all-time assist leader for Green Wave women's basketball, is vice president of the council. She's a junior from Harrisburg, Pa., and says that she is pleased with how council members from the various sports teams work together. The council is "a way to tie all our athletes together," says Langford. "If it starts with us, then hopefully it will filter down to our teammates, and we will be a whole united community."

Langford appreciates the opportunities she's had serving on the council, especially the chance to meet so many people. "It's a great place to start your networking," she says.