



SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas State University System

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To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to nominate Coach Barry Derickson for the Academic Excellence in Coaching Award for the 2022-2023 academic year. Coach Derickson has the largest group of student-athletes to manage, and he has worked diligently throughout the year to keep his student-athletes in class and eligible.

Starting in the summer of 2022, Coach Derickson was working around the clock trying to help new student athletes get registered for Summer II. Due to his efforts, the university experienced an enrollment boost for the second summer term. He also reached out to me for assistance connecting students with professors when they were struggling in summer courses.

At the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester, he helped students who had struggled with their first college classes in the summer to complete eligibility appeals. It should be noted that he did NOT support the appeals for all students that were ineligible, only those that had a compelling reason for not performing as expected. In addition, in those cases where appeals were granted, he was following up with students on a biweekly basis to monitor progress in each of their classes.

Because I teach core classes each semester, I usually have several student-athletes in my classes each semester. Throughout the semester, I will see members of the football coaching staff pop their heads in to check and see if the football team members are in class. I am not aware of any other coaches that make this extra effort to check in on students to make sure they are attending class.

At the beginning of the fall semester, at the compliance meetings, I informed all teams of their team GPA from Fall 2021 and challenged all of them to improve the team GPA. Five of our 12 teams were NOT successful in improving their team GPAs from the previous fall. However, the football team was successful in accomplishing this goal!

Something else that Coach Derickson does with his team members is sit down with them and go through each of their Blackboard course shells to monitor progress. Although I am aware that other coaches have done this as well, Coach Derickson does this consistently, and again, with a larger group of student-athletes. Earlier this semester, a faculty member stopped by my office to tell me that he had noticed a difference in the student-athletes in his class with the football coaches checking their Blackboard progress.

Under Coach Derickson's leadership, the football team has about 70 players from the fall that are still part of the team. This is fantastic retention!

It should be noted that I think all of our coaches and athletics staff members are working hard to promote the best for our student-athletes. However, I do feel that Coach Derickson's efforts deserve special recognition given the size of his team and the types of efforts he has made throughout this academic year.

Sincerely,

Jessica Velasco

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