



At the end of Spring term, in 2004, a mechanical engineering student asked me for advice on how to balance his upcoming academic schedule with his commitment to the Men's Soccer team. Knowing that his junior year curriculum was rigorous and that each of his scheduled 16.0 units for the term were critical to later courses, I suggested that he sit out of soccer that season and commit all of his time and energy to academics. I encouraged him to talk to his family, teammates, coaching staff and friends and to take time to consider his options.

Academics trumped athletics and he 'red shirted' during his junior year. His senior year curriculum was more flexible and he managed to successfully juggle engineering and soccer that term. In January 2006, we determined that needed 12 courses to complete his degree, clearly an overwhelming load for two quarters. In mapping out his path to degree, I suggested that he solely focus on his major requirements in Winter and Spring terms and return to campus in Fall 2006 to complete his two remaining general education requirements.

Jeff's reward for putting academics ahead of soccer was participation on the 2006, NCAA, Men's Soccer National Championship team. He graduated in December, with a GPA above 3.5, a new career engineering position in his home town, a national collegiate soccer championship, and the fiancée of his dreams.

Individuals like Jeff are why U.C. Santa Barbara is ranked 3rd in the nation in scholar-athlete graduation rates.