



## NCAA Selects Wilmington College for Concussion Study

*PHOTO: Terry Rupert observes as Brian Dykhuizen conducts a post-concussion test on freshman Taylor Priest, who sustained a concussion after being hit in the eye with a softball.*

The NCAA selected Wilmington College to participate in the largest and most comprehensive study of concussion and head impact exposure ever conducted.

Wilmington is among 30 colleges and universities — most of which are Division I — named to the Concussion Assessment, Research and Education Consortium, which is gathering data for the study whose goal is to change concussion safety behaviors and the culture of concussion reporting and management.

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This research is part of a \$30 million, NCAA–U.S. Department of Defense–sponsored initiative.

The study is enrolling an estimated 25,000 male and female NCAA student–athletes over a three–year study period. Wilmington College officially will join the consortium this summer for the study’s third and final year.

Terry Rupert, vice president for athletic administration at WC, said the NCAA wished to expand the study group by nine institutions for the third year with a special interest in enhancing Division III participation.

WC is the only Ohio institution in the study that includes such Division I heavyweights as the universities of Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh and Florida, as well as UCLA, Princeton, Virginia Tech and all the U.S. military academies.

Rupert said that WC was especially appealing for the study as a result of its “history and reputation” in athletic training education, partnership with Beacon Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine’s concussion specialists and the type of facility embodied by the College’s new Center for Sport Sciences.

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Rupert called WC’s selection to the study a “prestigious opportunity” and described it as another manifestation of the vision for the Center for Sport Sciences that places the College at the center of “being involved in education and care for student–athletes” on the highest levels.

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"It's opening new doors in quality care, and it relates directly to the College's commitment to care for our student-athletes — this represents another criteria on which we can look parents in the eye and say, "We care about the health of your son or daughter,"" he added.

"We're a cutting edge place for sport sciences and the NCAA is recognizing that."

The NCAA was impressed with the athletic training area's emphasis on student-faculty research as a hands-on learning component of athletic training students' education. Program director Larry Howard emphasized this academic component as carrying a lot of weight in the NCAA's selection.

"During the last three years, several semester-long, student-faculty research studies dealt with concussions," he said noting these 50-plus page research theses included a study involving the Cincinnati Bengals and the others dealt with collegiate student-athletes, one of which focused upon anxiety experienced following concussions.

"We listed our research in the application — this is what they were looking for, experience with this type of research," Howard added.

Erika Goodwin, professor of athletic training and vice president for academic affairs, teaches the research course that is required of all senior athletic training students. She mentioned this NCAA study should illustrate for her students — each of whom is required to complete an individual research thesis project — how research advances the profession and provides for a more enlightened society.

"This study shows the importance of research and how it can be used to effect change through better practices," she said.

Goodwin noted the specific WC research to include: "Perceptions of General Concussion Knowledge, Concussion Management, and Return to Play Protocol of High School Football Coaches," by Morgan Holmes, Erika Smith-Goodwin and Jennifer Walker; "Knowledge and Attitudes of Certified Athletic Trainers on New EMS Spine Boarding Protocols," by Taylor James, Erika Smith-Goodwin and Linda Tecklenburg; "NFL Players' Knowledge and Perceptions of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)," by Nick Brannon, Erika Smith-Goodwin and Larry Howard; and "Anxiety Levels of Athletes Returning to Play From Injury," by Matt Wright, Erika Smith-Goodwin and Robbie Oates.

WC's clinical staff of certified athletic trainers will play the key role in gathering the data. Headed by primary investigator Brian Dykhuizen, the team of ATs also includes investigators Alex Rhinehart, Cathy Williams-Hays and Robbie Oates, each of whom will receive stipends for their work.

"Everyone on our AT staff will be involved with collection of data," Dykhuizen said, noting that athletic training students also will have opportunities to join in the data gathering as another component of their hands-on learning experience.

"It's a great opportunity for our clinical staff and athletic training students to be involved in collecting outcome-based measures that will be used by the researchers to develop evidence-based practices.

"Ultimately, it will help those of us in the profession to better treat and manage concussions and head impact exposure for the benefit of all our student athletes."



# Wilmington College

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