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# Promoting Student Success for Student-Athletes through the IS3D Major

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## SDSU's Transition Advising Center

Inspired by the work of Steele, Kennedy & Gordon (1993), DAESA launched its Transition Advising Center (TAC) in 2019. The TAC's mission is to support all students transitioning, or considering transitioning, from one major to another, as well as students who matriculate as undeclared. We estimate this population to be roughly 4000 with each new cohort of first-year students. Services provided include student success workshops as well as one-on-one advising and mentoring. The TAC works collaboratively with partners across campus, including:

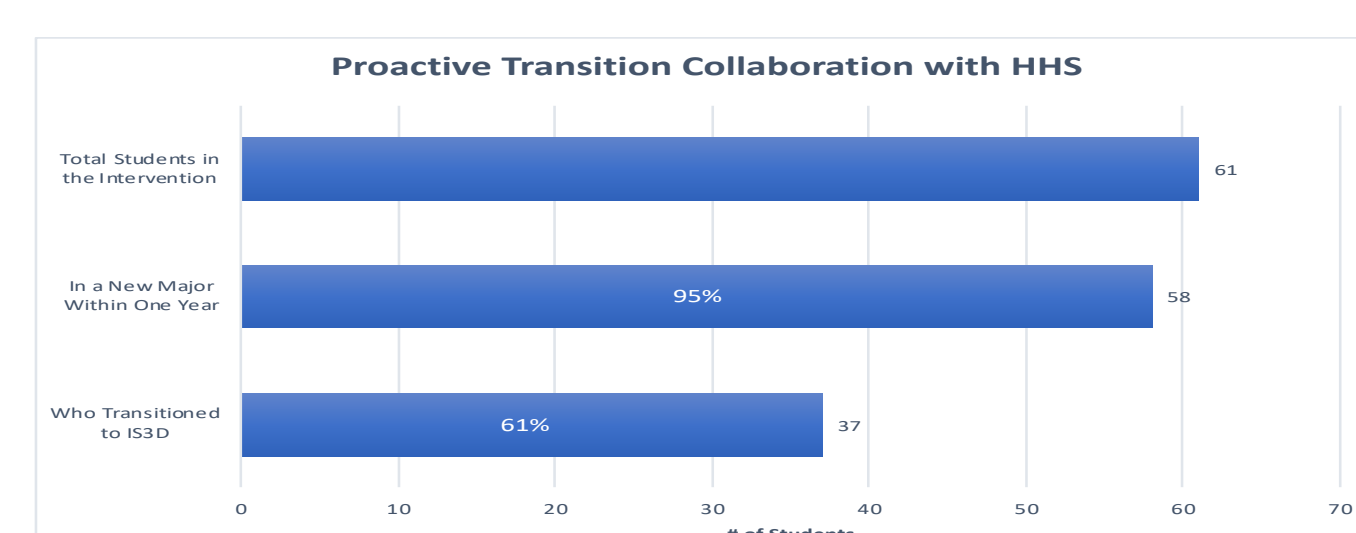
- ✓ Career Services
- ✓ Residential Life
- ✓ New Student & Parent Programs
- ✓ First year seminar program
- ✓ Enrollment Services
- ✓ All of the academic colleges
- ✓ Athletics Student Support Services



## The Interdisciplinary Studies in Three Departments Major

The TAC houses the Interdisciplinary Studies in Three Departments (IS3D) major, a custom major in which students complete 54 units across three discipline areas. IS3D is especially useful for students who have completed significant coursework towards a traditional major but must transition out of that major; this is because IS3D allows them to apply many of their completed units to their custom major, which allows for a timely graduation.

**Proactive transition advising through IS3D:** The IS3D program works with the academic colleges to help them transition students who will likely need to transition at a key transition point: 60 units earned. We use institutional data to identify at-risk students across campus and then disaggregate the data and distribute it to the individual colleges. The chart to the right shows the results of a recent collaboration with SDSU's College of Health and Human Services (HHS).

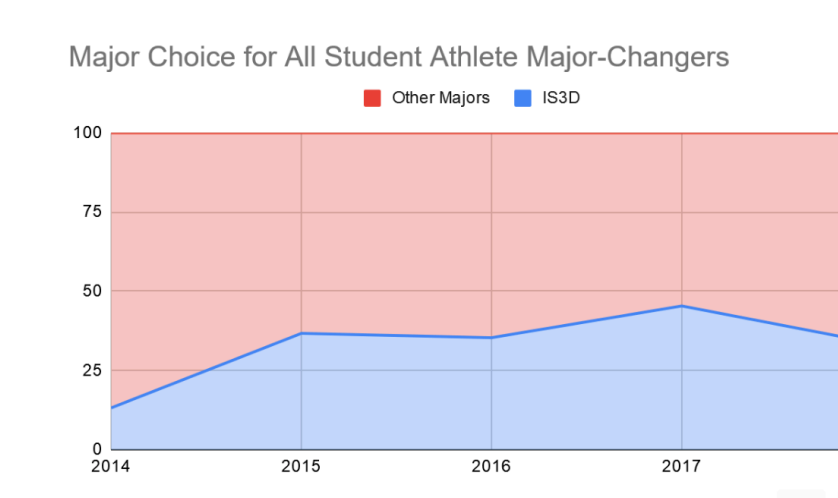


## Student-Athletes and the IS3D Major

Beginning in 2013, the IS3D program began working closely with the advising team in the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services office to help student-athletes searching for a new major make a smooth major transition to IS3D.

### IS3D's Impact on Student-Athlete Eligibility

Student-athletes present a unique challenge in that their eligibility in their sport is tied to their progress towards their degree. If a student-athlete encounters difficulty in their chosen major, the only way they can remain eligible is to change their major, but changing to a "traditional" major would result in even less progress towards their degree, which puts them in a bind. IS3D, because it allows them to build on their completed coursework, can resolve this problem immediately upon declaration if the master plan is strategically designed. The IS3D advisers have worked collaboratively with the athletics advisers to streamline the transition process, which is important given the tight eligibility deadlines that student-athletes face. As the table to the right indicates, IS3D has become the primary major that student athletes transition to.

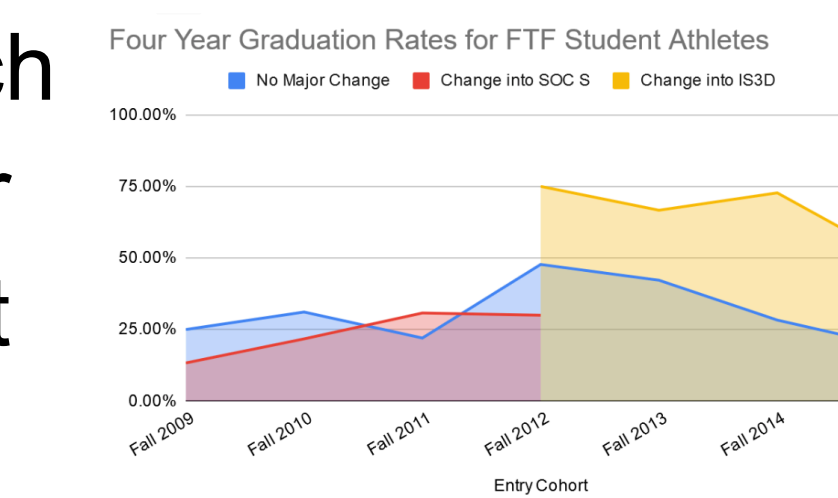


### IS3D's Impact on Student-Athlete Graduation Rates

The IS3D-Athletics collaboration also has a positive effect on time to graduation. The table to the right shows the time to graduation of the May 2020 graduating class of student-athletes in IS3D. While the number of students in this cohort is, admittedly, small (19), the percentages are outstanding.

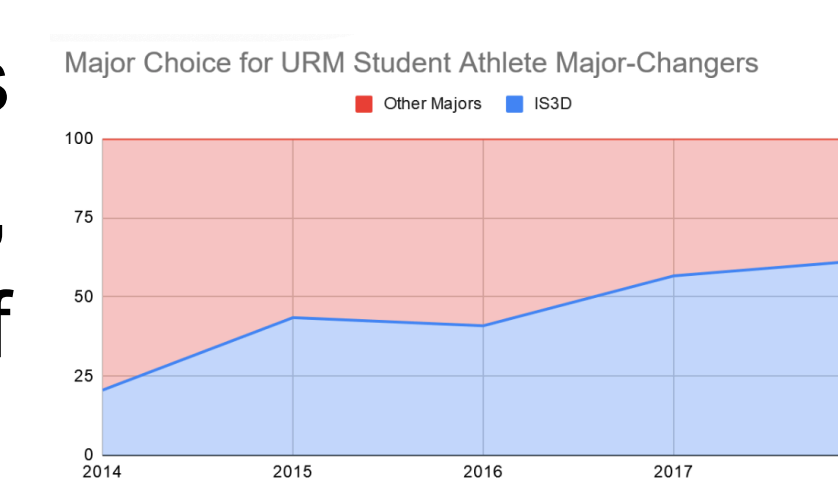
Metric	**2020 IS3D Student-Athlete Time to Graduation
Freshman 6 years	100%
Freshman 4 years	82%
Transfer 2 years	100%

The next table also illustrates the positive effect of IS3D on graduation rates of student-athletes. Here we see how graduation rates for those who transitioned to IS3D compare to those who transitioned to SOC S, which was the major that student-athletes gravitated towards for eligibility purposes prior to 2013, as well those who didn't transition at all.



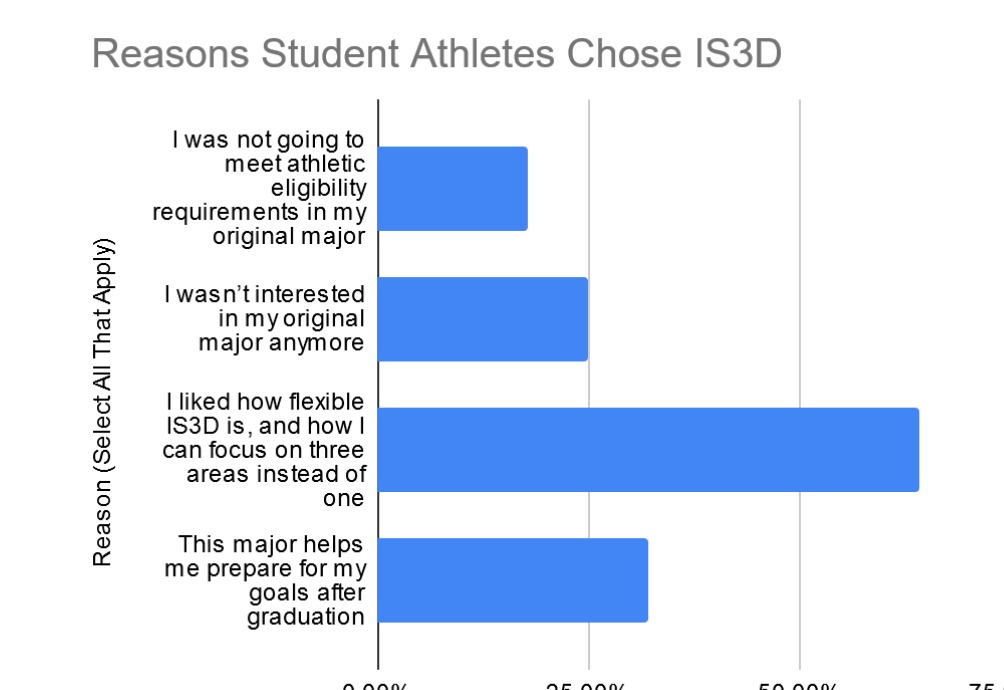
### IS3D's Impact on Student-Athlete Achievement Gaps

Another metric that the IS3D-Athletics collaboration is impacting positively is our graduation and retention of URM students. The URM % of both the overall student-athlete population and the overall IS3D population are both about 44%, which is significantly higher than the URM % for the entire campus (34%). By retaining and graduating URM students, IS3D is helping the university meet its Graduation Initiative 2025 mandated goal of eliminating the URM achievement gap. As the next table indicates, over the past five years, IS3D has become the preferred major for URM student-athletes who change their major. This fact, coupled with the previous data on student-athletes' graduation rates in IS3D, illustrate the positive impact of IS3D on multiple facets of the Graduation Initiative 2025 mandate.



## Appeal of IS3D for Student-Athletes

While maintaining eligibility is, as stated earlier, a significant motivating factor when student-athletes transition to the IS3D major, it's not the only one; in fact, it's not even the main one, according to the responses we received to a recent survey. As the graphic to the right illustrates, the most often cited response in response to the reasons why student-athletes transitioned to IS3D is the flexibility and variety it provides.



## Student-Athlete Satisfaction with IS3D

While the increasing emphasis on quantitative data and statistics, we must also consider qualitative data, especially with regard to student satisfaction. Graduating students is important, but so is ensuring a satisfying undergraduate experience. Below are some excerpts from the Spring 2020 survey we conducted with student-athletes who had transitioned to the IS3D major.

"It's different and unique in its own way. I have multiple options once I graduate, and I can allow myself to explore options after my desired career."

"It gives me a more well rounded view of what I might want to do in the future."

"I get to choose whatever I desire. I don't have to study just one specific area; I can branch out and learn so much more."

"I'm not interested in putting all of my energy into one industry."

"[I enjoy] the flexibility that I have with my classes."

## The Future of the IS3D/Athletics Collaboration

Given the success of the IS3D/Athletics collaboration, it just makes sense to continue it, but also to make improvements wherever possible. One goal going forward is to utilize EAB to share status updates. The previous method – a Google sheet – required regular maintenance outside of the usual advising protocol, which made it less than ideal. Because adding advising notes and documents to EAB is part of that protocol, it will be a more efficient and reliable form of communicating updates. This will help athletics advisers ensure eligibility deadlines are met.