Boston University’s athletic teams are scoring big where it matters most — off the field, in classrooms.

According to the NCAA, which tracks graduation data of students on athletic scholarships at Division I institutions, BU student-athletes are earning degrees at high rates. The athletics department earned an overall graduation success rate (GSR) of 94 percent for students intending to graduate in the classes 2003 to 2006, the most recent data available. Women’s basketball, golf, rowing, soccer, tennis, and men’s and women’s swimming put up perfect scores.

Nationwide, the graduation rate for Division I students receiving athletic aid during the same period was 79 percent, although the national figure factors in sports such as fencing, gymnastics, bowling, skiing, and football, which BU doesn’t offer.

“Another indication of the quality of student-athlete we have here at BU,” says Michael Lynch, assistant vice president and director of athletics. “They’re focused on achievement in school as much as they are on the playing field, on the ice, on the tennis court. Our student-athletes graduated 4 percentage points better than the University’s general student population, which I’m really proud of.”

Terrier men’s basketball and crew, men’s and women’s cross country and track and field, women’s lacrosse, softball, and wrestling achieved GSR scores of at least 90 percent. Of BU’s twenty-three varsity sports, rates for seventeen were reported, because cross country, indoor track and field, and outdoor track and field are compiled as one sport per gender. Women’s ice hockey did not become a varsity program until the 2005-2006 season.

Three BU teams earned GSR scores in the 80 percent range, including men’s ice hockey, at 82 percent, which Lynch says mirrors the national average. He points out that a few Terrier icemen leave school to play professionally, therefore fewer gradu- ate. Of eighteen players on athletic scholarships during the period analyzed, two left for the NHL and one graduated beyond the study’s six-year time limitation. Players who leave without attaining their degree are encouraged to come back. “Throughout their career, Coach Jack Parker will keep in touch with them about completing their degrees,” Lynch says. “We’ve had guys come back after ten or eleven years of pro hockey.”

Lynch is especially proud of men’s basketball. Nationally, graduation rates among men’s hoops and football players have been low, although those figures are slowly rising as a result of reforms. For all collegiate b-ball players who entered in 2002, 66 percent earned diplomas. For the entering class in 1995, the first year of data collection, that figure was 56 percent.

“We have a great support system in place,” Lynch says. “Our student-athlete support services group is top-notch, dedicated to making sure our athletes do what they need to do in the classroom. Our coaches follow up on student-athlete progress in the classroom and the community as well.”

Caleb Daniloff