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To: Sports Desks

From: Jeff Griesch, Nebraska Media Relations

Re: Nebraska Athletic-Academic 2008-09 Highlights

Husker Academic Tradition Thrives in 2008-09

Nation-Leading CoSIDA Academic All-America Total Climbs to 269

Husker student-athletes produced another stellar year at the University of Nebraska, continuing NU's tradition of academic success. Nebraska increased its nation-leading total of CoSIDA Academic All-Americans across all sports to 269 with six honorees in 2008-09, while also setting a conference record with an astounding 172 academic All-Big 12 selections during the year.

Nebraska's Academic All-America success continues to set the standard for the approximately 1,400 NCAA member institutions. The Husker football team leads all individual sport programs in the nation with 98 all-time Academic All-America awards, while the NU volleyball program has captured more CoSIDA Academic All-America awards (35) than any other women's team across all sports in the nation. The Husker softball program trails only the volleyball team in its number of CoSIDA Academic All-America awards (26) across all female sports.

Hill Becomes Nebraska's 59th Two-Time CoSIDA Academic All-American

Husker softball star Molly Hill, a two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American, helped lead Nebraska's strong academic performance. Hill, a native of Wayne, Neb., pitched NU to a berth in the NCAA Tournament while earning her bachelor's degree in speech language pathology. The first-team academic All-American finished her career with a 3.955 grade-point average. The first-team All-Big 12 pitcher was also a three-time academic all-conference selection for the Huskers, and became the 59th student-athlete in Husker history to be a two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American.

On the field, Hill finished with a 25-15 record and a 1.66 ERA. She tossed six shutouts and struck out 185 opposing hitters on the year. In her career, Hill ranks fourth in school history with 75 victories, while ranking sixth in the NU record book with 703 strikeouts.

Gates, Sullivan Capture Prestigious NCAA, Big 12 Postgraduate Scholarships

Hill was joined as an academic standout on the women's side by Nebraska Female Student-Athlete of the Year Amanda Gates, who earned the first CoSIDA Academic All-America award of her career while leading the Husker volleyball team to the NCAA semifinals. A first-team academic All-American, Gates has posted a 3.965 cumulative GPA in her career as a communication studies major at Nebraska. The Columbus, Neb., native earned a prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship worth \$7,500 and was one of just 13 females nationwide chosen to receive an NCAA Women's Enhancement Postgraduate Scholarship worth \$6,000. She was also Nebraska's female recipient of the Dr. Prentice Gautt Postgraduate Scholarship from the Big 12 Conference worth \$7,500. A four-year member of Nebraska's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Gates was also an honorable-mention All-Big 12 selection on the court.

Gates' Husker volleyball teammate Kori Cooper gave Nebraska three first-team CoSIDA Academic All-Americans on the women's side. The junior middle blocker earned the first CoSIDA Academic All-America award of her career while helping the Huskers to a Big 12 title and a trip to the NCAA semifinals. Cooper, a native of Amarillo, Texas, had her season come to an end after suffering a knee injury 27 matches into the season. She finished the season as NU's leader in hitting percentage (.396), while earning academic All-Big 12 honors for the second time in her career as a speech language pathology major.

Jordan Larson gave Coach John Cook's Nebraska volleyball a trio of CoSIDA Academic All-Americans for the second straight year. The three-time AVCA All-American on the court capped her career as a second-team CoSIDA Academic All-American. Larson, a native of Hooper, Neb., was the Big 12 Co-Player of the Year and the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year while leading the Huskers to the NCAA semifinals and a Big 12 title. Academically, Larson earned her bachelor's degree in communication studies in just 3 1/2 years from Nebraska, picking up her diploma in December of 2008.

On the men's side, Grand Island, Neb., natives Todd Peterson and Tyler Wortman added to Nebraska football's prestigious academic tradition. Peterson and Wortman both earned second-team CoSIDA Academic All-America honors for Coach Bo Pelini's Husker football team, giving Nebraska 98 all-time academic All-Americans in football. To put that number in perspective, Texas ranks second in football academic All-Americans among Big 12 Conference schools with 30, while Oklahoma is the only other Big 12 school with more than 20.

Nebraska's Male Student-Athlete of the Year Nick Sullivan also enjoyed a strong career in the classroom as a member of the Husker baseball team. Sullivan earned his bachelor's degree in finance with a 3.78 GPA in May. He was a three-time academic All-Big 12 performer on the field and was a member of Nebraska's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee for four years. Sullivan captured a prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship in June and was also Nebraska's recipient of a Dr. Prentice Gautt Postgraduate Scholarship from the Big 12 Conference, with each scholarship carrying a value of \$7,500.

Nebraska Leads Conference with Record 172 Academic All-Big 12 Selections

Across all sports, Nebraska student-athletes claimed a Big 12-leading 172 academic All-Big 12 selections, including an astounding 145 first-team academic All-Big 12 honorees. Nebraska's academic All-Big 12 total marked an increase of 52 honorees over the the 2007-08 academic year, when the Huskers ranked second in the Big 12 with 120 honorees. Missouri ranked a distant second with 135 academic All-Big 12 honorees this year, while the Tigers increased their total by 10 from a year ago. In fact, the Big 12 honored 112 more student-athletes with 3.0 grade-point averages who met league athletic participation requirements in 2008-09 than it did in 2007-08. Six league schools showed double-digit increases in honorees, including Nebraska, Oklahoma, Baylor and Texas Tech which all posted increases of 25 or more honorees.

NU student-athletes also earned a league-leading 626 spots on the Big 12 Commissioner's Fall and Spring Academic Honor Rolls, 58 more than

the 2007-08 academic year and an astounding 147 more than the 2005-06 campaign, when NU also led the conference. To earn a spot on the honor roll, a student-athlete must earn a 3.0 grade-point average during the semester. During the fall and spring semesters combined, a Big 12-leading 90 Husker student-athletes produced perfect 4.0 semester GPAs.

Nebraska's men's and women's track and field programs headlined the Huskers' success in the classroom, combining for an amazing 58 academic All-Big 12 awards, including 51 first-team selections. The track and field team alone surpassed Colorado's entire athletic department in the total number of academic All-Big 12 picks (55) across all sports and matched Kansas State (58).

Huskers Honor 241 at Student-Athlete Recognition Banquet

The University of Nebraska Athletic Department took one special night to honor its own student-athletes on April 26 at the 19th annual Student-Athlete Recognition Banquet. A total of 241 student-athletes were honored during the banquet at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

In addition to Sullivan and Gates earning Nebraska's top individual honors as Student-Athletes of the Year, Coach Jay Dirksen's men's and women's cross country teams swept the 15th annual Herman Awards honoring the Husker teams with top team grade-point averages. It was the women's cross country team's eighth all-time award, while the men added their seventh award including their sixth in the past seven years.

The hard work, dedication and commitment of Nebraska's student-athletes in the classroom resulted in 71 current or former student-athletes earning degrees from August of 2008 through May of 2009.

In fact, the Huskers continued to set the graduation standard among Big 12 Conference with an Exhausted Eligibility Graduation Rate of 93 percent. The Exhausted Eligibility Rate surveys the graduation rate of scholarship student-athletes who entered the University of Nebraska from 1992 through 2001 and exhausted their athletic eligibility at Nebraska.

Innovative Life Skills Program Continues to Set Standard in Community

In the community, Husker student-athletes reached nearly 100,000 people throughout the state of Nebraska in 2008-09. Cornerstone outreach programs included the statewide Tour of Excellence, American Education Week and "School is Cool" assemblies. In addition to those programs, individual student-athletes volunteered more than 3,000 hours of service, making countless appearances in classrooms and community groups statewide throughout the year.

The 2008-09 season marked the sixth year of the Huskers' innovative Life Skills Award of Excellence Team Competition, which honored the single team demonstrating the strongest commitment to all phases of the life skills program, including outreach, education and leadership. Coach Pablo Morales' Nebraska swimming and diving program captured the team trophy for the first time, narrowly edging the volleyball and women's gymnastics teams. The Life Skills Award was presented at the annual Nebraska's Student-Athlete Recognition Banquet in April. Thirty Husker student-athlete leaders were also recognized at the annual Hero Leadership Breakfast, honoring those who have consistently gone above and beyond establishing themselves as excellent leaders and role models. Betsy Miller of the NU cross country and track and field program was named the Gerard Postgraduate Scholarship Life Skills recipient.

2008-09 Academic Highlights

- ▶ 269 All-Time CoSIDA Academic All-Americans across all sports [leads nation]
 - 98 Football Academic All-Americans (leads all sports, all time)
 - 35 Volleyball Academic All-Americans (leads all women's sports, all time)
 - 26 Softball Academic All-Americans (No. 2 among all women's sports, all time)
- ▶ 6 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans (3 first-team, 3 second-team)
 - First-Team: Kori Cooper (Volleyball), Amanda Gates (Volleyball), Molly Hill (Softball)
 - Second-Team: Jordan Larson (Volleyball), Todd Peterson (Football), Tyler Wortman (Football)
- ▶ 2 NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship Winners (2 of 87, \$7,500 each)
 - Amanda Gates (Volleyball), Nick Sullivan (Baseball)
- ▶ NCAA Women's Enhancement Postgraduate Scholarship Winner (1 of 13, \$6,000)
 - Amanda Gates (Volleyball)
- ▶ Dr. Prentice Gautt Big 12 Conference Postgraduate Scholarship Winners (\$7,500 each)
 - Amanda Gates (Volleyball), Nick Sullivan (Baseball)
- ▶ Big 12-Leading 172 Academic All-Big 12 Selections Across All Sports (3.0 GPA or above)
- ▶ Big 12-Leading 145 First-Team Academic All-Big 12 Picks Across All Sports (3.2 GPA or above)
- ▶ Big 12-Leading 626 Student-Athletes Honored on Big 12 Commissioner's Fall and Spring Honor Rolls (3.0 GPA or above)
 - 58 more honorees than 2007-08; 147 more honorees than 2005-06
- ▶ Big 12-Leading 90 Student-Athletes Earned Perfect 4.0 GPAs in either the Fall or Spring Semester (leads Big 12)
- ▶ 71 Student-Athletes Earned Degrees from August 2008 through May 2009
 - (39 in May, 26 in December, 6 in August)
- ▶ 93 percent - Nebraska's Exhausted Eligibility Graduation Rate (1992-2001) (Leads Big 12)
- ▶ Male Student-Athlete of the Year - Nick Sullivan, Baseball (3.78 GPA, Finance)
- ▶ Female Student-Athlete of the Year - Amanda Gates, Volleyball (3.965 GPA, Communication Studies)
- ▶ Men's Herman Award Winner - Men's Cross Country Team (3.309 Cumulative GPA in 2008)
- ▶ Women's Herman Award Winner - Women's Cross Country Team (3.671 Cumulative GPA in 2008)
- ▶ Life Skills Team Award Winner - Women's Swimming and Diving Team