

# SPORTS

## Graduate assistants aid Athletic Dept.

By: Sean Towey

[towey@seattleu.edu](mailto:towey@seattleu.edu)

*Sports Editor*

Two years ago, Trisha Steidl arrived at Seattle University to build a track and field program. One of her first tasks was to find an assistant coach that she felt would assist her in creating a strong team.

After several conversations over the phone, Steidl chose Eric Schueffner. A graduate assistant from the Masters of Sports Administration and Leadership [MSAL], Schueffner began coaching sprinters, jumpers and multi-event athletes full-time.

"Basically, my position requires that I assist the coach in every aspect of training, recruiting, and administrative duties," said Schueffner. "I handle everything outside of distance running."

Besides his coaching responsibilities, Schueffner also attends class in order to earn his MSAL.

"Eric spends just about as much time here as I do," said Steidl. "Having a G.A. position has been extremely helpful."

Due to a dearth of facilities, the track and field program faces several problems that other varsity sports programs do not have to deal with, such as constantly having to arrange vans in order to transport athletes and equipment to other tracks for meets and practices.

"If I had to arrange for vans I wouldn't have time for anything else," said Steidl.

Graduate assistants from the Masters of Sports Administration and Leadership [MSAL] assist the Athletic Department in many ways. Beyond coaching, they also aid in administrative duties. G.A.'s are particularly helpful due to the fact they are not paid as much as full-time staff members, saving the Athletic Department funds.

However, properly compensating these assistants for their time has been an important issue within the Athletic Department in recent years. According to Schueffner, the university has covered his tuition expenses along with providing a small stipend. Last year Schueffner received under \$5,000 in stipends.

Aware that Schueffner graduates in the spring and that he will begin searching for a full-time coaching position, Steidl began asking her superiors early this year whether or not they would create a full-time assistant coaching position for the track and field team.

"I asked if they wanted a full track and field team or just a distance team," said Steidl. "If I'm going to have an entire track and field team, then I need help."

However, according to assistant athletic director Eric Guerra, it was not clear whether or not the track and field team would be able to hire another full-time coach.

"We didn't know last quarter whether we had the resources to fund assistant coaches like Schueffner as a full time coach," said Guerra. "We also don't have the facilities to accompany this new growth of the track and field team. We at the athletic department didn't expect such rapid growth in the track and field roster."

Several weeks ago, the Athletic Department was able to garner enough funds to offer another full-time coaching position for the track and field team. Though Schueffner has applied for the position, and Steidl and the Athletic Department would like to hire him, he is unsure whether or not he will stay at Seattle U.

"I would like to, but there are things that the program is lacking," said Schueffner. "For instance, we don't have a track. We don't have any facilities to host events. There are priority budgetary expenses that need to be fulfilled first though."

Schueffner mentioned that there is hardly any money in the budget for transportation as well.

"Whenever we have to have transportation for off-campus events, we deplete our very tiny budget," he explained. "I'm still discussing it with my wife."