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# Give coach Watson credit for his graduates

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We believe the March 8 Free Press article "Unscathed -- Detroit Mercy's Watson retires after career on edge," regarding basketball coach Perry Watson, misrepresented certain key facts in the area of Watson's student-athlete graduation rate.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The graduation rate reported in the article as 50% for the four-year period ending in 2001 is the federal graduation rate, not an NCAA statistic. During the same four-year period, however, UDM men's basketball had an 87% graduation success rate (GSR), the number the NCAA implemented and currently uses to better measure academic success. The GSR measures graduation rates at Division I institutions and includes students transferring in, while also allowing institutions to subtract student athletes who leave prior to graduation as long as they are academically eligible at the time and successfully maintaining progress toward a degree.

Additionally, throughout his entire career, only one student athlete to whom Watson provided athletic aid failed to graduate upon exhausting eligibility. The percentage of those student athletes who finished their collegiate career under Watson and graduated is indeed over 90%.

Additionally, since the inception of the NCAA's academic performance program, UDM's men's basketball team has been recognized as the top program in Michigan and for ranking in the top 10% nationally for its academic performance rate.

We believe that coach Watson's commitment to the education of his student athletes should be celebrated

rather than questioned.

**Keri Gaither**

*Director of athletics*

*University of Detroit Mercy*

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