A recent review to determine if “clustering” of student-athletes in specific academic majors and classes occurs at Appalachian State University found that it is not existent within any of Appalachian’s 20 varsity sports programs or

the student-athlete population as a whole. The findings of the review, which was conducted by the University’s office of internal audits, were presented to the Appalachian State University Board of Trustees on Friday, Sept. 21.

“Clustering” is defined as a large percentage of student-athletes (25 percent or more of any given team) sharing one major, having been steered by coaches or athletics administrators towards courses and majors that will keep them eligible to compete by NCAA standards.

In the review, Michael D. Stanley, Appalachian State’s director of internal audits, concludes that “Appalachian State does not show indications of academic clustering among its student-athlete population” and that Appalachian student-athletes “pursue a diverse and varied course of study” with “sufficient institutional oversight and governance concerning the student-athletes and the policies and procedures concerning Appalachian’s program of intercollegiate athletics.”

The study found that Appalachian’s student-athletes, which represent 3.4 percent of the University’s total student population, have declared 96 different majors (44.5 percent of the majors offered at Appalachian). In the sports where clustering has been found to be the most prevalent nationwide — football and men’s basketball — Appalachian’s football program has an average of 3.02 student-athletes per major with 40 different majors represented and men’s basketball has an average of 1.08 student-athletes per major with 10 different majors represented.

“I am very proud of the integrity and commitment to academics that our student-athletes, coaches and staff consistently display,” Appalachian State director of athletics Charlie Cobb said.