A view from the Falcon’s Nest:

When Daytona State College Athletic Director Will Dunne answers a school term phone call from his daughter, Kelsi Dunne, the second question he asks is, “How are your classes?” That’s right... after making sure all is well on the home front, the head of Daytona State athletics wants to know if the 2010 SEC Softball Pitcher of the Year is taking care of her University of Alabama class assignments as well as she does opposing batters.

For Dunne, making academics a priority at Daytona State is a no-brainer. Why? Well, to date, only one Falcon athlete has ever gone on to make a successful career out of playing a sport. Conversely, hundreds, if not thousands, of former DSC student athletes have gone on to successfully pursue careers, or obtain advanced degrees. With this in mind, Dunne and his coaches are tasked with preparing student athletes for life after college as well as the next opponent on the schedule.

Their work is paying off. At the conclusion of the 2010 NJCAA sports season the Daytona State College Baseball, Women’s Golf, and Softball squads were awarded All-Academic Team honors and 13 individual athletes were named as Academic All Americans. That’s pretty impressive when you consider that there are over 525 NJCAA member colleges!

Need an example of how well academics and sports success can be combined? Just take a look at the Falcon Women’s All-Academic Golf team – they also won the NJCAA National Championship last year.

Entering into the new school year, Dunne continues to see room for improvement, “We had a great year last year both in competition and in the classroom. The challenge for me and the coaching staff is to continue to build on this momentum and push our kids to better themselves academically and physically. Competing for titles is exciting but seeing our athletes mature into successful members of our community is much more rewarding.”

This year, the Falcons are once again expected to vie for a number of regional and national titles. But for Dunne the real measure of success will be seeing each of his athletes cross the finish line – the finish line that includes a diploma, a robe and a tassel.