

# CAPPED OUT

## Graduate loses sports eligibility because of CAPS electives

“I’m sitting in the meeting room and they pull me out,” graduate Peter Gallo explained. “They say, ‘Peter, you’ve gotta go home.’ I just start bawling because it’s been my dream since I was a little kid.”

Gallo, who graduated from North last year, had intended to play football at the University of Kansas

as a walk-on player in the fall 2012 season.

This dream was cut short due to a ruling

by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) that the courses Gallo

had taken at Blue Valley’s Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) would not make him eligible to play in the 2012 season.

“He had enough credits to graduate, but he didn’t have the core credits to qualify for NCAA Division I eligibility,” Vicki Petersen, Gallo’s counselor, said. “I don’t know if he was aware or not. [As counselors] we will say ‘here’s what you need, let’s talk about your senior schedule,’ and we talk about what the CAPS classes are.”

“Core” credits are accredited English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Foreign Language, Philosophy, or Religion courses. The NCAA requires 16 core credits for a student to be eligible for Division I athletics.

“It seems like there might have been a question about ‘electives’ versus ‘core,’” Executive Director of CAPS Donna Deeds said. “This is a question that should be very clear, because all our marketing material says it’s either an elective credit or core - and we really have hardly any core credit.”

Gallo’s family, however, was assured the Sports Medicine CAPS class he took would be accepted as a core credit.

“[We were told] it was a core credit, but they never got it checked with the

NCAA to see if it actually was,” Gallo said. “What blows my mind is that this class has been going on for four years and they don’t know if it’s a core class or not. When they sent in my appeal was the first time in four years that they got it checked.”

“If he had the knowledge that [the course] was going to short him of opportunities, would you believe

that he would spend three hours of his day there when he could have taken one class and then left for two hours?” Asha Gallo, Peter’s mother, said.

“What they’re trying to put together for everybody to believe doesn’t make sense.”

Although the Gallos, along with the University of Kansas, submitted two appeals for re-evaluation of the course by the NCAA, CAPS was still denied as a core credit.

“What I was expecting was for the NCAA to come back and say, ‘this is a natural and physical science,’” Peter Gallo said. “Anatomy and Physiology is what the whole class is about. You’re learning how the body moves, kinesiology... it’s a college class.”

Authorities at CAPS suggest it is primarily the role of the high school counselors to inform students about course eligibility and credits.

“A student really has to work with their home high school counselor,” Deeds said. “We don’t

have a counselor here, so it’s really important.”

Petersen, however, believes that both home high school counselors and CAPS have a responsibility to educate students about their choices.

“Counselors should be providing the information that we know, and the teacher at their school should also be talking about ‘Hey, this is an elective credit, not science,’” she said. “Both ends could be discussing with the student, ‘Here’s the kind of credit you’re going to get.’”

In light of this situation, changes are being made throughout the district to make information more accessible and accurate for students.

“I was told by district office that there was going to be increased training on the way that the classes were explained, on the information the students were given,” Asha Gallo said. “It should’ve been done from the get-go. If this makes it better for another student, then I am happy for that. It is a shame that no one has stepped forward to help Peter.”

Peter Gallo is currently enrolled in two courses at Johnson County

Community College to finish his high school credits. He intends to return to KU next year and re-enter its football program.

“I could either sit and not do anything about it or I could do something about it, get better, and shove it right back in their face and just say, ‘look at me now,’” Peter Gallo said.

Though the Gallos said they do not feel supported by the district, Petersen believes otherwise.

“‘Peter Gallo is a great kid,’ she said. “When I heard that this happened to him, it really broke my heart because we had known for years that he is interested in football - he’s a great kid, a great player. The school district in general feels very badly.”

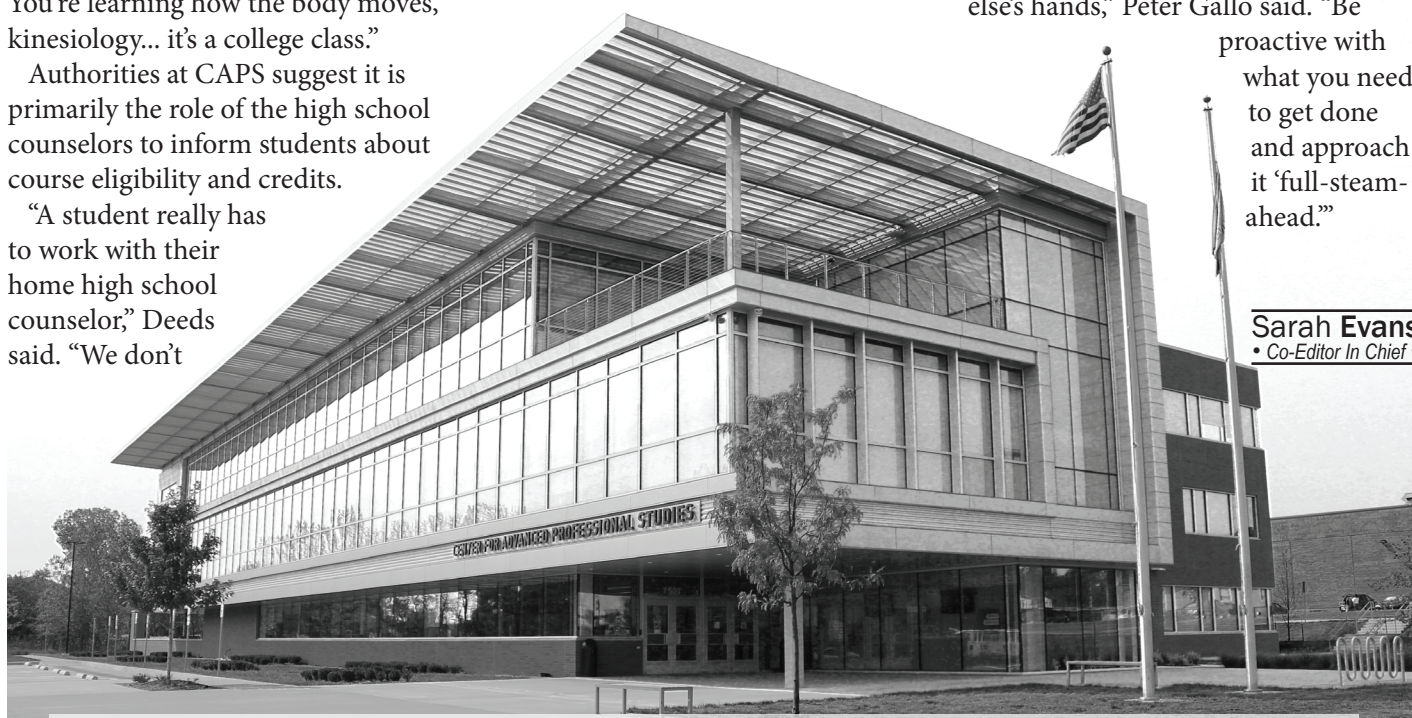
While Peter Gallo’s family feels his ineligibility was an immense hardship for their family, they also feel that they learned valuable lessons.

“We trusted an entity that was outside of our family,” Asha Gallo said. “When you have something of that great of value in your life, you need to be in charge of the situation.”

“Don’t put your dream in someone else’s hands,” Peter Gallo said. “Be

proactive with what you need to get done and approach it ‘full-steam-ahead.’”

Sarah Evans  
• Co-Editor In Chief •



928 juniors and seniors from Blue Valley schools are enrolled in the CAPS program for the 2012-2013 school year. photo by Erica Emert