

**Faculty Board on Athletics  
Meeting of November 14, 2011  
500 Main Building**

**Members present:** Patricia Bellia (Chair), Eileen Botting, Rev. Tom Doyle, C.S.C., Stephen Fallon, Ann Firth (for Frances Shavers), Maudess Fulton, John Gaski, Patrick Holmes, Anthony Hyder, William Kelley, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, James McKenna, Richard Pierce, Ann Tenbrunsel

**Member excused:** Jack Swarbrick

**Board Liaisons present:** Missy Conboy, Bill Scholl

**Observers and Guests:** Tracey Thomas (Recorder)

**1. Call to order and opening prayer:** Prof. Patricia Bellia called the meeting to order and invited Father Doyle to give the opening prayer.

**2. Approval of the October 24, 2011, Minutes**

Prof. Bellia introduced Ann Firth, who is filling in for Frances Shavers; she also introduced Anthony Hyder, who is serving for one year of Prof. Umesh Garg's term, while Prof. Garg is on sabbatical.

The minutes of the October 24, 2011, meeting were unanimously approved.

**3. Chair's Announcements:**

In keeping with the practice of the fall 2011 season, the following football game day captains were approved: for the Wake Forest game—Chris Salvi; for the Maryland game—Darius Fleming.

Prof. Bellia approved the following schedule changes. At the last meeting, she had explained that the men's soccer team needed an extra MWF class miss because of a weather rescheduling. This game was again rescheduled because of the unexpected snowstorm on the east coast. The game was, finally, played on a Tuesday, so the team's MWF class misses are now back within the limit.

Prof. Bellia approved one class miss for the men's and women's cross country teams to participate in the NCAA meet in Terre Haute. The women's soccer team had a 3-day miss due to Big East tournament play.

**4. Report of the Committee on the Drug-Testing of Student-Athletes—Mirella Riley**

This presentation was postponed due to an unanticipated conflict that prevented Ms. Riley from attending.

## 5. Captaincy

The Department of Athletics brought forward for discussion the nomination of a student-athlete to serve as a captain. After the Board discussed and reaffirmed its standards for captaincies—academic eligibility, clearance by Student Affairs, and a demonstration of high standards of conduct and strong leadership—and of how those standards might apply in this case, the Department of Athletics withdrew the request. The committee then considered a motion to clarify the Chair's delegated authority to consider a future request concerning this student-athlete, should the Department of Athletics choose to bring forward the nomination at a later date. The vote was five in favor and five opposed; the motion failed and the status quo remains in effect. The status quo of this situation is that the Chair has the power to approve a captaincy nomination that “clearly” meets the Board’s standards for captaincy (set forth above).

## 6. Grade and Graduation Rate Reports—Patrick Holmes

Pat Holmes, Director of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, gave a report on the Spring 2011 student-athlete GPAs.

Three teams—Golf (W), Rowing, and Tennis (W)—had semester GPAs greater than or equal to 3.400. Golf (W), Rowing, Soccer (M), Swimming (W), and Track (M) had their highest semester team GPA ever. Golf (W) and Track (M) currently have the highest cumulative team GPA ever in their respective sports. Fourteen full-time student athletes earned perfect 4.000 GPAs. 16.2% of the student athletes made the Dean’s List, while 44.6 % earned GPAs equal to or greater than 3.400. 72.5 % of the student-athletes had GPAs equal to or greater than 3.000. Five Notre Dame student-athletes earned Capital One/CoSIDA Academic All-America honors in 2010-2011. This data represents a continuation of trends in the recent past. The GPAs are steadily shifting toward higher numbers, both in the general student population and in the student-athlete population. The median GPA of the spring 2011 semester, at 3.314, is significantly higher than in the past. At the same time, the GPAs of the bottom 10% and 5% of student-athletes are trending lower, indicative of the widening gap that has been the subject of repeated discussions in the FBA.

Notre Dame, at 221, and Nebraska, at 293, are the only two institutions that have had more than 200 Academic All-Americans. In spring 2011, the following Notre Dame student-athletes were named Academic All-Americans:

Tim Abromaitis—Basketball (M)—1<sup>st</sup> Team  
Reggie Bentley—Fencing (M)—1<sup>st</sup> Team  
Tyler Davis—Tennis (M)—2<sup>nd</sup> Team  
Lauren Fowlkes—Soccer (W)—1<sup>st</sup> Team  
David Ruffer—Football—1<sup>st</sup> Team

In addition, Lauren Fowlkes earned an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship, and Chris Stewart, Football, was named one of sixteen National Scholar-Athletes by the National Football Foundation.

Members discussed the data. It was noted that there was a jump in the number of student-athletes on academic probation. Mr. Holmes said the goal is about 1% or about 8 student athletes on probation; there were 13 in Spring 2011. Prof. Botting asked what kind of services and counseling are being offered to the high achieving student-athletes; specifically, she wondered if these students are being advised about the Rhodes and Marshall fellowships. Mr. Holmes said that the students attend a seminar at which this information is presented. A significant number of student-athletes do attend graduate schools of some sort. He noted that a more proactive approach could be used; a necessary factor is an expressed interest by the student-athlete in graduate work. Members discussed a former program by which faculty mentored academically high achieving student athletes; it was agreed that further exploration of reviving this program would be desirable but that there is no budget for this kind of activity currently.

Mr. Holmes also reviewed the data on the GPAs of GIA (grant-in-aid) student-athletes who have moved off campus. The data corroborate recent trends: 79 of 107 student-athletes, or 74%, earned an increase in overall GPA. Off-campus student-athletes earned a weighted 3.250 GPA. They took an average of 14.10 credit hours in fall 2010 and an average of 11.22 credit hours in spring 2011. In response to a question about why the spring credit-hour average was below the 12 credits required for full-time status, Mr. Holmes noted that many student-athletes take summer school courses to complement their coursework in the regular academic year, and that they have fewer than 12 credits to complete in spring of the graduation year. NCAA rules permit student-athletes in their final semesters to enroll in only the number of credit hours needed for graduation.

After a brief discussion, committee members agreed that Mr. Holmes should continue to provide this report on student-athletes living off-campus.

Mr. Holmes presented data on the eleven 5<sup>th</sup> year student-athletes in the 2010-2011 academic year. These eleven represent seven different sports, and overall they had good academic achievement.

Mr. Holmes postponed his report on graduation rates until the next meeting.

## **7. Request to Re-Schedule Final Exams**

Prof. Bellia briefly reviewed the policy for rescheduling final exams for student-athletes in the event of post-season competition. In the spring, for instance, tennis and lacrosse often face conflicts between exams and post-season competition schedules. In such cases, by virtue of a longstanding agreement between the FBA and the deans, the rescheduling of exams is mandatory for faculty. This rescheduling policy does not apply when the student-athlete is not participating in post-season competition. For a student invited to participate on a national team, the FBA manual notes that the post-season rescheduling policy should be used as a model, but that the final decision lies with the relevant dean. A fall 2011 exam conflict has arisen for a member of the men's swimming and diving team who has been invited to participate in the pan-European championships as a member of the Serbian national swimming team.

A request to the dean to reschedule the student's exams cannot be made without the FBA first voting on whether to seek special consideration for the student. Accordingly, a motion was made to present a request to the student's dean, Ava Preacher, to reschedule the student's exams. The motion was seconded; the vote was unanimously in favor. The Chair noted that she recently approved an exam rescheduling request for a member of the women's swimming and diving team. The rescheduling is again discretionary for the student's dean, because the competition is not a post-season competition. Because the student is competing on behalf of Notre Dame and not as a member of a national team, however, the request did not require full FBA consideration.

The meeting was adjourned for subcommittee discussions. The next meeting will be December 5, at 3:30 pm.