

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of May 2, 2012
500 Main Building**

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

Members excused: Jack Swarbrick, Ann Tenbrunsel

Board Liaisons present: Missy Conboy

Observers and Guests: Tracey Thomas (Recorder)

1. Call to order and opening prayer: Prof. Patricia Bellia called the meeting to order and invited Prof. Tracy Kijewski-Correa to give the opening prayer.

2. Chair's Announcements

Prof. Bellia reported that she approved the following schedules for spring sports: women's soccer, men's lacrosse (revised), baseball (revised—because of a weather disruption, three students missed one class slot last Friday), and softball (revised—because of a weather disruption, the team had to convert a half-day miss into a full-day miss).

Prof. Bellia also reported on post-season travel approvals: men's golf and women's golf will each miss one day to participate in the to Big East conferences tournament, women's lacrosse will miss 1.5 days to participate in the Big East conference tournament in Syracuse; and men's lacrosse will miss 1 day to participate in the Big East conference tournament at Villanova.

Prof. Bellia reported that the following teams are likely to miss scheduled exams due to post-season travel to tournaments: men's lacrosse, women's lacrosse, women's golf, men's tennis, women's tennis, rowing, and softball. The Academic Services office has efficiently distributed forms to student-athletes to make requests for exam rescheduling.

Prof. Bellia also approved some spring 2012 captaincies for the following teams: men's outdoor track & field and women's outdoor track & field. For fall 2012, she approved captaincies for men's soccer and men's swimming and diving. In addition, she approved a slate of captains for women's soccer.

Finally, Prof. Bellia noted that she approved verification notices for women's swimming and diving, as the team missed class to attend the funeral of Alyssa Barnes, Coach Brian Barnes' wife.

Prof. Bellia offered a brief NCAA update: The Board of Directors met in April, 2012, and delayed the implementation of the recently imposed new initial eligibility standards. Because of

comments from institutions concerned that the new standards were coming in “too fast,” implementation is delayed for a year.

Members discussed the challenges for Mr. Swarbrick, in the current BCS-focused atmosphere, to be able to schedule his calendar so as to attend FBA meetings. The committee requested that the Chair and Ms. Conboy convey to Mr. Swarbrick the concern of the Board.

3. Minutes of March 28, 2012

The minutes of the March 28, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

4. Mike Brey, Head Coach, Men’s Basketball

Prof. Bellia welcomed Coach Mike Brey to the meeting and invited him to speak to members about the team. She congratulated him on a great season.

Coach Brey thanked members for inviting him to speak. He noted that the 2011-2012 team was a “fun group.” Given the difficult start, they rallied and grew and had a great run to get into this year’s tournament. He mentioned the many emails he has gotten from students congratulating the team. It is clear that the win over Syracuse will be a lifelong memory for the student body and alumni. The next season will see many of the team members returning, and he anticipates a good year.

It was announced today that Tim Abromaitis will not be granted a sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA. Word on Scott Martin’s application for a sixth year is pending. It is a disappointment to lose Mr. Abromaitis; however, there had been a low expectation that this application would be granted. Coach Brey said that Mr. Abromaitis was prepared for that answer and has been making contingency plans for the next stage: it is likely that he will soon hire an agent and investigate the opportunity to enter the NBA. His injury has healed quickly, and his leg is getting strong. Coach Brey anticipates that Mr. Abromaitis will have a good chance at the NBA; the option of playing in Europe is available as a fallback. Members discussed briefly the NCAA’s procedures and recent precedents it has set in granting or denying applications for a sixth year of eligibility. There is some sense that it is more favorable for an applicant to have a degree that needs to be completed. In Mr. Abromaitis’s case, he has completed both an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree while playing for Notre Dame.

Coach Brey explained to members a scheduling difficulty he is anticipating for the year 2013. The team is finalizing an agreement with three other teams to participate in an annual multi-team event in Indianapolis, The Crossroads Classic. In 2011, the first such tournament was played. It was a surprisingly successful event for all concerned. It had “a tournament atmosphere.” Notre Dame will always play either Indiana University or Purdue (the other institution is Butler); it is an advantage for Notre Dame to play a Big Ten team, and, in addition, returning these teams to the Notre Dame schedule is pleasing for fans.

This tournament is scheduled for a weekend in mid-December each year. The contract spans three years, 2012-2014. In 2012, there are no conflicts, and there are no conflicts in 2014.

However, in 2013, the games will overlap with a study day at Notre Dame. The team is requesting permission to schedule this game on that date despite the conflict. The team will institute a study hall on either the Friday or Saturday of that weekend, and Pat Holmes will travel with the team to assist the team in meeting study needs.

In favor of this plan, Coach Brey noted that this tournament is helpful to the team in in-state recruitment. It generates a lot of Indiana excitement. In addition, there is no plane travel for this event, which makes the tournament easier for the students. Also, he noted that the team has created a strong academic culture, with the assistance of Mr. Holmes, and has become very efficient academically. Part of the team culture includes upperclassmen mentoring freshmen regarding the importance of competing in the classroom as well as the court. Another favorable point is that the tournament generates a sizable financial profit.

Coach Brey also noted that the team has very little flexibility in developing schedules: the conference sets the start date for conference games, and the NCAA sets the start date of the season. Between the two, there are very few open dates for scheduling those pre-conference games that get the team up to speed. Part of the scheduling challenge for Notre Dame is the need to accommodate the women's basketball schedule and volleyball's hold dates for possible tournament competition.

Prof. Bellia asked if locking into this tournament would mean that the team would not need to make other requests for study day games (in 2012 or 2014). Coach Brey said yes; there likely would not be requests to play a game on a study day during the years when this tournament does not conflict with study days.

In response to questions, Coach Brey discussed the conference landscape for men's basketball. He noted that the team has an identity in the Big East; "we have earned our stripes." He mentioned the advantage of getting to play in a centerpiece location such as Madison Square Garden. He discussed the advantages and disadvantages of other conference options.

Prof. Gaski complimented Coach Brey for the tremendous accomplishments he elicits from the team year after year; despite the self-imposed limitations, he gets the team into the top tier of college athletics. Mr. Brey thanked members for their time.

After Coach Brey's departure, members briefly discussed the request to schedule a game on a study day, December 14, 2013. Prof. Bellia wondered whether Coach Brey will in fact need to request a game on one of the years that this tournament does not conflict with study days (2012 and 2014), despite his hope that that would not happen. She suggested that the committee should not assume that no study day game would be requested in 2012 or 2014. Ms. Conboy noted that there is more flexibility when one is scheduling a single game rather than a tournament; Mr. Holmes agreed, noting that a single game can often be placed on Monday through Wednesday dates.

The motion to approve the request was made and seconded; the vote was unanimous in approval of the request.

Ms. Conboy noted, in conclusion, that Coach Brey is one of the most accommodating and easygoing of Division I basketball coaches; Prof. Bellia added that he is adept at developing a team that can compete in the league as it is now arranged.

5. Request for Exception to Housing Policy for Summer Session

Prof. Bellia referred members to the written request by a student-athlete for an exception to the Faculty Board on Athletics housing policy in summer session 2012. The student-athlete is a former member of the women's swimming and diving team; she is no longer a student-athlete (having been barred from the team for violating team rules) but she is still receiving grant-in-aid (GIA), on the decision of the coach, who did not want to deprive her of the educational opportunity the scholarship represented. However, she will not receive a GIA for the summer 2012 session. The question before the Board is two-fold: 1. Does the policy apply to a non student-athlete who is still receiving GIA? And if so, then 2. Is the student-athlete entitled to a waiver for the summer session?

Prof. Bellia provided members with the text of the rule in question: student-athletes are required to live on campus if they receive GIA; they can apply for an exception in the senior year. It was also noted that in the normal course, someone who receives GIA in the academic year will continue to receive it in the summer session. Members discussed the variations in GIA awards, in part for sports that are "equivalency" sports, such as swimming and diving. Many student-athletes in those sports receive only partial awards.

It was noted that the student states that on-campus residency is more expensive than living off-campus. Member surmised that this is true, in part because on-campus residence requires the student enroll in a full board plan as well. It was also noted that the decision to continue this student-athlete's GIA after the rules violation was made, in consultation with Jen Vining-Smith, Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance, because it was determined that the Athletics Department might not win an appeal if the student challenged the non-renewal of her GIA.

Ms. Firth asked what, if any, documentation is typically submitted in support of a request for an exception to the policy. That is, if the student claims off-campus housing is more expensive, should the student be required to document that claim? Prof. Fallon asked members about the underlying rationale for the rule in question: is it that the student-athlete participate in dorm life, or that the student-athlete be more available to supervision and support of campus resources? Prof. Bellia, noting that she was not a member of the subcommittee that "deregulated" this rule to permit more students to live off-campus, said that the original rule was behaviorally driven. High-profile athletes living off campus can sometimes make mistakes in a very public way that reflects upon the University. Concerns for this issue were a significant part of the original rule. In addition, from a financial perspective, when student-athletes live on campus, a portion of the scholarship funds returns to the university. The rule was revised in 2008 to remove a GPA requirement for seniors moving off-campus. The intent of the revision was to treat student-athletes more like other students, who are allowed to move off campus after the freshman year.

Prof. Bellia reported that the coaches and sport administrator for swimming and diving do not have a preference about this request. Ms. Conboy noted that the decision could be in favor of a

narrow precedent for students receiving GIA who are not members of a team. Members were in agreement that the FBA policy links the requirement to live on campus to the GIA. The student-athlete in question is not receiving GIA in this summer session nor is she an athlete.

The following motion was made: A student who is not receiving GIA and is not a student-athlete is allowed to do what s/he wants in relation to summer off-campus housing. The motion was seconded. The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

Prof. Bellia reported that a related problem has arisen with a student who has signed a lease for off-campus housing in the sophomore year and then been awarded GIA (for the first time). Ms. Conboy noted that this kind of problem may occur more frequently as students arrange off campus housing a year and more ahead of the move-in date. It would be unfortunate for the student to lose a scholarship opportunity under such circumstances. Members agreed to revisit this issue in the fall.

6. Academic Profile/Academic Performance Reports

Pat Holmes gave a report on the Student-Athlete Profile for the 2011-2012 academic year. He reported on the following categories: population; grant-in-aid; gender; ethnicity; religion; colleges; majors; test scores (SAT); GPA; 2011 Graduation Success Rate and Federal Rate Report. Overall, he noted that most data had not changed or had changed only slightly since the last report. There are currently 687 student-athletes on 26 varsity teams, which represent 8% of Notre Dame's undergraduate population. 41% of the student-athletes are female.

The number of minority students at Notre Dame has remained fairly consistent over the past four years. However, the minority composition of student-athletes has decreased. 17% of student-athletes are minorities. 8% of student-athletes are African-American; 10% of male student-athletes are African-American. 31% of the African-American male undergraduates at Notre Dame are student-athletes. The concern is that it may be more difficult to recruit minority student-athletes if the environment is not diverse. Mr. Holmes noted that all need to be aware of this data and need to be transparent when recruiting.

Student-athletes are disproportionately represented in the Mendoza College of Business. Of those students-athletes who have chosen a college, 47% are enrolled in the Mendoza College of Business, as compared with 28% of all Notre Dame undergraduates.

Asked if he has spotted any areas of concern, Mr. Holmes said that while for the past ten years, the data on incoming student-athletes has been steady, a number of current incoming student-athletes have lower test scores. It concerns him that the University will not be able to deliver the education it has promised these young people. He noted that his office needs to continue a very pro-active approach with these students to assist them in developing strong foundational skills. He noted, however, that eventually the student-athletes need to learn how to be successful and to manage at Notre Dame on their own. His office has a role; the FBA provides a lot of support.

Mr. Holmes reported on GPAs. Congratulations go to women's golf, which posted the highest GPA—3.65—for any varsity team in Notre Dame's history (since data has been collected). They

continue to impress above and beyond any team. Mr. Holmes complimented the coaching staff for the “good culture” of the team. Women’s golfers have “really taken advantage of their Notre Dame opportunity.”

Women’s cross country also posted a commendable GPA, a semester GPA of 3.433 and a cumulative GPA of 3.424. Women’s swimming posted its highest single semester GPA at 3.289.

Manti Te’o was named a 2nd team **Capital One** Academic All-American in Fall, 2011. Ms. Conboy noted that Sports Information generates nominations for this award; they are very proactive and do “a great job.”

Sixteen full-time student-athletes had perfect 4.000 GPAs. 12.1% of student-athletes were on the *Dean’s List* and 33.3% had GPAs greater than 3.400. 61.7% of student-athletes had GPAs greater than 3.000.

Mr. Holmes spoke about trends in grade performance. The numbers “have come down a bit” for both the high-end performers and the low-end performers. The challenge is to continue to guarantee the student-athletes are getting the education they have been promised. Prof. McKenna noted that there is a campus-wide effort to adjust grade inflation. This presents some concerns for both students and faculty, particularly non-tenured faculty whose evaluations may be affected by grade distribution rates.

Mr. Holmes reported that the numbers for all undergraduates have not changed as much as those of student-athletes. One possible cause is that student-athletes are opting at a higher rate for Science, Business and Engineering Majors. There are “a lot of moving pieces.”

Prof. Kelley asked if information from the exit surveys of student-athletes have provided any indicators of their response to the academic experience. Ms. Conboy said that information can be extracted from the survey results and shared with the Board. All agreed that the test score trends are an area of serious concern and should be closely monitored.

Prof. Bellia thanked Mr. Holmes for this informative report.

As an aside, Prof. Botting mentioned that it is unfortunate that Notre Dame students are sometimes tagged as “undeclared major” when identified on television productions of games. This is due to the institutional policy of leaving the declaration of major until at earliest the sophomore year. Prof. Bellia offered to discuss this with Sports Information.

Prof. Kijewski-Correa reminded members that a student-athlete, Kevin Randall, is eligible for the Lowe’s Senior Class Award. Mr. Randall is a Civil Engineering major and significant contributor to the men’s lacrosse team. She encouraged members to consider a vote for him.

Prof. Bellia concluded the meeting by thanking members for their continued hard work throughout the academic year; it is much appreciated.

The meeting was adjourned.