

**Faculty Board on Athletics  
Meeting of December 14, 2010  
500 Main Building**

**Members present:** Patricia Bellia (Chair), Thomas Frecka, Umesh Garg, Patrick Holmes, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, Richard Pierce, Clark Power, Kevin Richards (student representative), Ann Tenbrunsel

**Members excused:** Eileen Botting, Rev. Tom Doyle, C.S.C., Stephen Fallon, William Kelley, Frances Shavers, Jack Swarbrick

**Board Liaisons present:** Missy Conboy, Charmelle Green, William Scholl

**Observers and Guests:** Jill Bodensteiner—Associate Athletics Director, Compliance and Legal Affairs; Jen Vining-Smith, Assistant Athletics Director, Compliance; Tracey Thomas (Recorder)

**1. Call to order and opening prayer:** Prof. Patricia Bellia called the meeting to order and invited Professor Tom Frecka to give the opening prayer.

**2. Minutes of November 22, 2010**

The minutes of the November 22, 2010, meeting, incorporating a modification by Mr. Holmes, were unanimously approved.

**3. Chair's announcements**

Prof. Bellia announced that she had approved captaincies for men and women's fencing and for men's and women's track. She approved post-season class misses for the women's soccer team, which competed for (and won) the College Cup during the previous month. Prof. Bellia approved individual class misses for two student-athletes: Kristy Frilling, a women's tennis player who traveled to a tournament in France featuring top collegiate tennis players; and David Ruffer of the football team, who traveled to the ceremony announcing the winner of Lou Groza award for the top collegiate place-kicker, for which he had been nominated.

Prof. Bellia also noted that two student-athletes have been named first-team Academic All-Americans in their sports: David Ruffer (football) and Lauren Fowlkes (women's soccer).

Prof. Bellia reported to members concerning faculty complaints that arose during the process instituted by the Athletics ticketing to inform faculty and staff about the opportunity to purchase football bowl tickets. An announcement was made through an automated call procedure involving a recorded message by a current student-athlete. Some faculty members believed that they received this message on numbers provided to the University exclusively for emergency purposes and objected on this basis; these objections were brought to Prof. Bellia's attention and to the Faculty Senate. While it is not entirely clear who, if anyone, received calls on numbers which should have been restricted for emergencies only, it is clear that calls were received by some faculty who have never or have not recently purchased football tickets. In an effort to

address the faculty concerns, Prof. Bellia consulted with Ms. Conboy and Josh Berlo, Senior Assistant Athletics Director for Guest Relations and Event Management, who both provided helpful information.

Prof. Bellia had shared this information with affected faculty and staff and with the Chair of the Faculty Senate, but wished to share it with the Board in the event that Board members received inquiries about the issue from other faculty or staff. The opportunity to purchase bowl tickets is extended to faculty and staff as one of the benefits of employment; the Athletics Department uses a Human Resources database that collects employee contact information to inform faculty and staff of the availability of this benefit. This database was the source of the contact numbers used to transmit the automated voice message. As a result of discussions on this subject, the Athletics Department has adopted some changes to its approach to automated voice messages. Only those who have purchased football tickets in the previous two years will be called with bowl ticket purchasing opportunities; purchasers will be provided with an opportunity to “opt out” of voice messaging on future ticket applications; and every effort will be made to remove from the call database any faculty and staff members who use this opt-out procedure (or who otherwise contact the Athletics ticketing office to opt out). In addition, Athletics and Human Resources will cooperate to ensure that any emergency-only information is removed from the database or is clearly identified, so that such numbers are not used for ticket notification purposes.

#### **4. Graduation and Grade Reports—Pat Holmes**

Prof. Bellia invited Pat Holmes, Director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, to provide reports on graduation rates and grades.

##### Graduation Rates:

Mr. Holmes reported on two graduation rate measures for student-athletes, the Federal Graduation Rate and the NCAA’s Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Both rates measure the percentage of first year (FY) student-athletes who received athletics grant-in-aid (GIA) at any time during their first year who graduated within six years.

The federal rate is a simple calculation, dividing the number of FY GIA graduates by the number of FY GIA students who enrolled. Student-athletes who transfer into an institution are not counted as graduates and all student-athletes who leave the institution are counted as non-graduates, regardless of their academic status when they departed. Under the federal measure, for the freshman cohort that entered Notre Dame in Fall 2003, 90 percent of all student-athletes graduated. Notre Dame’s four-class average (Fall 2000-Fall 2003 cohorts) of 91 percent is the highest of all NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions.

The NCAA GSR was developed in response to college and university presidents who wanted graduation measures that more accurately reflect the mobility of college students today. In the GSR calculation, GIA student-athletes who transfer into an institution are added to the cohort and those student-athletes who leave the institution in good academic standing are removed from the cohort. The GSR is a four-class average. Notre Dame’s GSR of 99 percent for 2010 is also

the highest among NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) institutions; Notre Dame's GSR has been ranked first or tied for first each of the last four years.

Mr. Holmes also provided information on the federal rate and the GSR by individual sport. In every sport with the exception of football, hockey, and men's tennis, the 2010 GSR rate at Notre Dame is 100. Mr. Holmes provided a chart comparing the GSR and federal rates for men's basketball, women's basketball, and football among institutions in conferences affiliated with the BCS. Notre Dame's GSR and federal rates are 100 and 75 respectively for men's basketball; 100 and 85 respectively for women's basketball; and 96 and 85 respectively for football. Notre Dame's GSR for each of these three sports is either ranked first or tied for first.

Members discussed the usefulness of these measures. The recognition in the GSR of the impact on graduation rates of transfers and of student-athletes who move to the professional leagues is helpful. In baseball, it is typical for athletes to be drafted after the junior year, for instance. This is also increasing in the hockey program, as the program improves in quality. Mr. Holmes noted that most of these athletes leave the university in good academic standing, and Academic Services works with them to insure that the coursework left for a student-athlete is manageable. Mr. Holmes noted that the rates do not track athletes who return to complete a degree outside of the six-year window.

Members noted that the information that Mr. Holmes has gathered from the NCAA site provides an interesting picture of academics at Notre Dame's BCS competitors for recruiting and for tournaments and bowl bids. The landscape differs greatly among the sports: 60 percent (44 of 73) of women's basketball programs have a GSR of 90 percent or better, which would indicate a solid academic culture throughout the BSC conferences, while men's basketball has only 11 percent (8 of 73) of the programs at 90 percent or better and football has 6 percent (4 of 66).

Members asked how this information is used, if at all, in the recruiting process; some members observed that since this information is public, it would not be inappropriate to circulate it. Notre Dame has an undeniably strong record for graduation. Mr. Holmes said that student-athletes are looking to find the "right fit" in terms of athletics and academics. His office concentrates on presenting the academic services program offered at Notre Dame, supporting that with Notre Dame data, without focusing on other institutions' data. He noted that across the board at Notre Dame, a consistent message is sent that an athlete at Notre Dame is a student as well as an athlete.

Members discussed the significance of the GSR. Prof. Tenbrunsel asked if it is informative as a metric if one-third of institutions have a 100 GSR in a given sport, as in women's basketball. Mr. Holmes and Ms. Conboy noted that 100 is the expectation at Notre Dame, so the fact that many Notre Dame sports have attained that indicates achievement of an institutional goal. They noted, particularly, that all women's sports at Notre Dame have a strong achievement of graduation.

Members noted that this kind of data is rarely widely reported or discussed in the media.

## Grade Reports:

Mr. Holmes reported on team grade point averages for Spring 2010 and for the academic year 2009-2010. The average semester GPA for student-athletes in Spring 2010 was 3.176; the cumulative average GPA was 3.145. All but three teams had semester and cumulative GPAs over 3.0. Women's Tennis achieved its highest recorded cumulative GPA, 3.522. Women's Tennis also achieved its highest recorded semester GPA, 3.584. Of the 689 student-athletes, 7 full-time student-athletes achieved 4.00 GPAs. 10.6% of student-athletes were on the Dean's List, and 38.5% achieved GPAs at or above 3.400. In addition, six student-athletes earned *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-America honors in 2009-2010. Since 2000, 90 ND student-athletes have earned this honor, tied for first with Nebraska. Three student-athletes also received Big East Scholar-Athlete Sport Excellence Awards, awarded by the Big East Faculty Athletics Representatives. Finally, two student-athletes received postgraduate scholarships as institutional nominees for the Big East Scholar-Athlete of the Year Awards.

Mr. Holmes referred members to the detailed data comparing GPAs to previous semesters' trends. Mr. Holmes briefly discussed some factors that affect GPAs. Freshman class GPAs often are lower, reflecting the exploratory nature of academics at that level. In addition, more members of the first year class are enrolling in pre-professional, science and engineering programs, which impact GPA. Some teams have a concentration of student-athletes in a given program: Men's Fencing has a high number of business students; men's swimming has a high number of engineers. A high number of student-athletes enrolled in the College of Arts and Letters tends to result in a higher team GPA. Mr. Holmes noted that the average Spring 2010 GPA for certain teams is lower than in Spring 2009 or Spring 2008 and discussed factors influencing that development. Academic Services is committed to monitoring the quality of the education being received by these student-athletes in particular, to insure that they continue to get the education that was promised to them.

Mr. Holmes briefly reported on the academic record of the 5<sup>th</sup> year student-athletes. In 2009-2010, there were 11 5<sup>th</sup> year student-athletes. The Fall 2009 GPA was consistent with past trends.

The annual GPAs of grant-in-aid seniors living off campus was also reviewed. 72 percent (63 of 87) of the student-athletes raised their cumulative GPAs during the academic year. The 72 percent with an increase is also consistent with past trends.

Prof. Bellia thanked Mr. Holmes for his annual report on graduation rates and grade point averages of student-athletes.

## **5. Class Miss Report for 2009-2010**

Prof. Bellia presented a 2009-2010 class miss report. Prof. Bellia noted that she had provided a similar report last fall and the Board had requested an annual presentation. Because of the transition in Board leadership in summer 2009, her report last year could not convey the full picture for the prior academic year. Prof. Bellia noted that she had attempted to formalize the report and incorporate certain information requested by Board members, particularly a

distinction between M/W/F and T/R class misses and a representation of when during the semester class misses occurred. She invited members to critique the format of the report, which uses color-coding to categorize the kinds of class misses incurred (such as conference versus post-season misses) and attempts to show how the class misses are distributed across a given semester.

Prof. Bellia invited comments. Mr. Holmes noted that the document is easy to read and provides a wealth of information not easily accessible previously. Prof. Kijewski-Correa requested correlation of GPAs to class misses, since sports have a varying number of competitions. This information might indicate something about the team's academic culture.

Members thanked Prof. Bellia for the improved report.

## **6. NCAA Legislative Proposals**

Prof. Bellia welcomed Jill Bodensteiner and Jen Vining-Smith, of the Athletics Compliance Office, who have been invited to present information on upcoming NCAA legislative proposals. This discussion precedes the annual NCAA convention during which conferences will vote on a large and varied slate of proposals, and thus provides an opportunity for the Board to weigh in on particular proposals. Notre Dame will meet with other members of the Big East conference to determine the votes to be made by the conference at the January 2011 convention.

Ms. Bodensteiner said the current legislative cycle has been shaped by two dominant themes, recruiting and financial aid. She reported that the recruiting cabinet sought input from all institutions, examining all the "touch points" between athletic department staff and recruits (e.g., contacts and evaluations, telephone calls, campus visits), with the goal of identifying where the system is broken. A major overhaul of the system did not occur, however. The legislation on the table represents piecemeal changes to the process. The piecemeal changes met with a mix of support and opposition from Notre Dame coaches. Ms. Bodensteiner does not believe that any of the proposals currently in the cycle will have a major impact on recruiting even if adopted.

In the area of financial aid, Notre Dame is very supportive of the direction indicated by the proposed legislation. One problem that student-athletes who are not on full scholarship face is having to turn down supplemental financial aid offers because otherwise the amount is counted against the team maximum allowed. This is a hardship to students, so Notre Dame is supportive of the majority of the legislation proposed, which will make some changes to this system.

Ms. Bodensteiner turned to a discussion of proposals that she and Prof. Bellia had identified as being of particular interest to the Faculty Board, with a focus on "nontraditional courses," eligibility rules, and class misses.

Ms. Bodensteiner described several proposals to address the emerging issue of nontraditional courses, that is, courses that in some way do not involve face-to-face classroom experiences with instructors. Proposal 2010-51-A would replace a dated provision on "extension courses" with a new provision on "nontraditional courses," and would provide that such courses may be used to satisfy the full-time enrollment requirement for competition if the courses meet certain

conditions. Notre Dame does not typically offer the sort of distance-learning or online courses that the provision covers and the provision will not have a significant effect here. To the extent that certain other courses (such as independent studies) are swept in by the new “nontraditional courses” definition, we are confident that Notre Dame student-athletes meet the conditions for counting the courses toward the full-time enrollment requirement.

Proposal 2010-51-B sets a maximum of 50% for nontraditional courses as part of a student’s course load. Ms. Bodensteiner believes the Big East will not support this rule. At some institutions, student-athletes are encouraged to use nontraditional courses to fulfill graduation requirements; for such institutions, the 50 percent maximum would prove problematic. Another proposal, 2010-60, which would permit enrollment in nontraditional coursework taken through other institutions to fulfill progress toward degree requirements, builds on the definition provided in 51-A. While at Notre Dame no student is permitted to take an online class as part of his/her progress toward a degree, Ms. Bodensteiner said the ability of student-athletes at other institutions to take advantage of this sort of rule should be monitored by Notre Dame from the “level playing field” perspective.

Proposal 2010-52 addresses eligibility for students who have graduated with at least one season of eligibility remaining and who seek to participate in athletics as a graduate student at another institution. In most sports, such eligibility is already preserved. The change would extend to baseball, basketball, football, and men’s ice hockey, and would allow the student to participate at the new institution if the student-athlete’s athletically related financial aid is not renewed by the previous institution (and if other conditions are met). Members discussed the ways in which this rule interacts with Notre Dame’s fifth-year policies.

Ms. Bodensteiner also reviewed a series of proposals altering academic requirements for football players to be eligible to compete in the fall semester. The proposals would limit the eligibility of players who did not meet certain academic performance requirements for the prior fall semester. This series of proposals is driven by recognition that APR (Academic Progress Rate) numbers are low for football across the nation. It is widely agreed that the goal is important. Nevertheless, the Big East athletics directors oppose all the variants of this proposal as written, in part because they believe that the method of implementing change represented by these proposals is ineffective to address this goal. Members discussed the details of these proposals, agreeing that on the surface the proposals address a vital topic of improvement of academic progress. One difficulty with the proposals as written, however, is that they create an uneven playing field because certain academic policies regarding eligibility vary by institution. Rather than simply imposing penalties for students who do not meet NCAA minimums, the proposals would also impose penalties for students based on failure to meet the higher eligibility requirements that institutions such as Notre Dame impose over and above the NCAA minimums. Prof. Bellia noted that she had asked Ms. Bodensteiner to discuss this proposal in order to make clear to members why Notre Dame (and the Big East) will vote against a proposal that seems on the surface to support academics. Ms. Bodensteiner suggested that the discussion at the convention should produce some long term value on this subject.

Ms. Bodensteiner turned to a proposal concerned with class misses during the “non-championship” segment of competition for baseball, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer

and volleyball. This kind of proposal has surfaced several times in the last few years, focused on reducing costs for non-championship competition. These previous proposals have been unsuccessful; the 2010 version approaches the issue from an academic angle, proposing to reduce class misses due to non-championship competition in order to provide student-athletes with more time for academics and campus activities. She noted that this proposal would be generally acceptable to Notre Dame without the inclusion of lacrosse. The lacrosse teams face a geographical limitation in scheduling competitions and would be severely hampered by this rule. More generally, student-athletes in the named sports do not incur significant class misses in the non-championship segment, nor do they experience academic problems as a rule. In addition, coaches appreciate the flexibility to occasionally schedule a competition that incurs a class miss. Therefore, Notre Dame will oppose this rule.

Prof. Bellia thanked Ms. Bodensteiner and Ms. Vining-Smith for their review.

## **7. Subcommittee Reports**

### **A. Student Welfare**

Prof. Frecka gave a brief report. The NCAA Division I transfer appeal process has been modified to provide a 15 day window for appeals by student-athletes. As Notre Dame's rule is a 30 day window, that will need to be modified. A proposal will be brought forward at a subsequent meeting. Prof. Frecka also reported that Charmelle Green has agreed to meet with the subcommittee to discuss programming for student-athletes.

### **B. Academic Integrity**

In Prof. Kelley's absence, the report was deferred.

## **8. New Business**

### **A. Morning Practice**

Prof. Bellia noted that a member had requested discussion of the effect of morning practice on the scheduling of required courses. The request had been precipitated in part by the impact of football moving its practice time to the mornings in the M/W/F sequence in Spring 2011. This current change in practice times was made in consultation with Academic Services for Student-Athletes and with undergraduate advisors in the College of Arts and Letters and the Mendoza College of Business. In discussions about this change, however, it became clear that there is no central repository of information about team practice times, nor an established system of communication between the colleges and the teams.

Members discussed the factors that affect the scheduling of courses. There are registrar limitations on the number of courses that can be offered by a department and/or college in any one time slot. Deadlines for scheduling courses occur sometimes as much as a year before the course will be offered. Some courses are offered only in the spring or in the fall semester. Some courses are only offered in the morning or in the afternoon. Each of these factors bears on a student-athlete's ability to make choices that balance both academic and athletic needs.

Prof. Kijewski-Correa gave the perspective of the College of Engineering. She suggested that more information in the hands of the scheduler would result in more responsive scheduling. She noted that the College is willing to be accommodating, generally, but can only do so if it is sufficiently informed. When asked what kind of information the scheduler would need, she responded that identification of a student-athlete and the maximum range of practice times when that student enrolls in the major would enable the scheduler to track that student-athlete through his/her progress toward degree and craft a more responsive schedule, given other limitations. It was noted that although coaches must keep open a 10-class window for the scheduling of classes, the times of practices do change periodically, and not always with advance notice. In addition, because of crowding within practice facilities, the schedules of one sport's practices can be affected by the practice time choices of another.

It was agreed that Mr. Holmes could provide more information to specific colleges that requested it, so as to facilitate responsive scheduling. In addition, Prof. Bellia would communicate with coaches and/or administrators in an attempt to more systematically collect information about practice times.

As time had expired, Prof. Bellia thanked members for their contributions. The meeting was adjourned.