

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of May 2, 2011
500 Main Building**

Members present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Eileen Botting, Rev. Tom Doyle, C.S.C., Stephen Fallon, Thomas Frecka, Umesh Garg, Patrick Holmes, Richard Pierce, Clark Power, Kevin Richards (student representative), Frances Shavers, Jack Swarbrick, Ann Tenbrunsel

Members excused: William Kelley, Tracy Kijewski-Correa

Board Liaisons present: Missy Conboy, Bill Scholl

Observers and Guests: Martin Ingelsby—Assistant Coach, Men’s Basketball, 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. Chair’s Announcements

There were no schedule approvals to report. Women’s soccer will make a schedule request at today’s meeting. Prof. Bellia announced that senior men’s tennis player Tyler Davis was awarded the first ever Michael Tranghese Leadership Award by the Big East. The award is given to a student-athlete who demonstrates leadership in the classroom, on the field, and in community service. Tyler will enroll as a medical student in fall 2011 at Vanderbilt. Prof. Bellia noted that until this year’s Big East tournament, Tyler had started every dual match during the four years in which he was a member of the tennis team.

Prof. Bellia reminded members that the O.S.C.A.R.S. program takes place on Wednesday, May 4, with a reception at 6 pm followed by awards and performances at 7 pm. All members are invited to attend.

3. Scheduling Request by Men’s Basketball

Prof. Bellia welcomed Martin Ingelsby, assistant basketball coach, to the meeting to present the request by the team for permission to play a non-conference game during a December study day in fall 2011. She reminded members that the team had last made such a request in fall 2009 for the fall 2010 season. At that time, the Board confirmed that future study-day game requests should continue to come to the Board rather than being handled at the discretion of the Chair.

Mr. Ingelsby thanked the Board for hearing this request. He noted that he has handled the scheduling for the team over the past two years. He explained that several factors necessitate the request to schedule a game on the Saturday of the study period. First, the team must schedule at least 12 non-conference games in the short window between Nov. 11 and Dec. 25, a very tight 5 ½ weeks. Second, Notre Dame blocks out the first weekend in December each year, holding the Purcell Pavilion open for potential volleyball NCAA play. Third, no games can be scheduled

during the exam period. Fourth, the non-conference games play a particular role in the team's season. Quality non-conference wins affect the selection process for the NCAA tournament.

Mr. Ingelsby described the game plan for the requested game. He said the visiting team (possibly Dartmouth) will arrive on Friday. A pre-game meal will be scheduled for four hours before the game, likely at 1 or 2 p.m. The student-athletes will report to the gym one hour before the scheduled tip-off, and there will be no scheduled responsibilities after the game. Thus, the demands on the student-athletes during this study day period will be carefully limited. The start time was chosen to enable the visiting team to depart on Saturday, after the completion of the game.

Prof. Fallon asked if the scheduling strictures indicate the likelihood of this request being made on a regular basis. Mr. Ingelsby said it was likely. He noted that a home game is preferable during this stage of the semester. Mr. Ingelsby also noted that besides conference and non-conference games, the team participates in multi-team tournaments during the non-conference portion of its schedule. During these events, several non-conference games can be accumulated with ease. Notre Dame gets many requests to participate in these events, most of which it must turn down.

Prof. Garg asked if there has been any discussion about the possibility of a home men's basketball game disrupting the intention of the study days for the campus student population. He noted that faculty members are forbidden from holding even voluntary study sessions during the study days. Given the concern this rule indicates, he wondered if anyone has expressed concern for the impact of a basketball game on the students. Mr. Swarbrick noted that a typical non-conference game attracts between 300-500 students, while a Big East game attracts about 900-1000 students.

Ms. Conboy asked how many class misses typically are used by the men's basketball team in the fall semester. Mr. Ingelsby said that the current rendition of the fall 2011 schedule includes three class misses, below the number permitted, and typical of the fall basketball schedule. Indeed, there are typically even fewer class misses in the fall. The number is at three because of travel issues with the return game scheduled at Gonzaga this fall.

Prof. Frecka noted that the Board has not established criteria for approving study day games. He suggested that "impact on academic performance" might be a useful criterion. In this case, he said there did not appear to be significant negative impact, given the typical student's use of study days. He noted that the game is not scheduled on Sunday, typically a more utilized study day for students. Prof. Power asked if there was any data on the academic impact of past study day games. Pat Holmes reported that there is a history of making use of this date. There is no perceptible negative or positive impact. A game was played at DePaul on this date in the recent past; it is preferable that it be a home game.

Father Doyle recommended that the process not be changed; the discussion should be held yearly, to insure that this game can be justified each year.

Prof. Bellia thanked Mr. Ingelsby for presenting this request to the Board. The decision will be communicated to the team.

Members continued to discuss the request after Mr. Ingelsby's departure. One topic of discussion was the suggestion that criteria be established. Prof. Tenbrunsel suggested that the value of requiring a team to appear before the Board to make this request will be diluted if the request is always granted. She expressed concern that other teams will begin to press for this opportunity, with less justification. A set of criteria would remove any impression of bias in the decision-making process. Other members discussed the recurring nature of the requests, and wondered whether certain teams should be exempted from the rule. Professor Bellia reminded members that the rule only applies to non-conference competition. Teams participating in conference or post-season competition are exempt from the rule. Ms. Conboy added that sports that have completed the non-conference portion of their season will not be impacted by a rule about study days; however, other teams might look upon this date as a "freebie" to be made use of regularly. Prof. Bellia reported the experience of informing a coach that a request had to be presented to the full Board; that coach resolved the issue in a different way, without having to make use of a study day date.

Prof. Bellia reviewed three options before the Board:

1. Continue to require teams to appear before the Board to make a request; this acts as something of a check on excessive requests, as experience has indicated. Coaches think twice about the justification of a game if they need to defend it to the Board.
2. Confer discretion to make this decision to the Chair.
3. Develop criteria for making this decision. Prof. Bellia would recommend referring this issue to the Academic Integrity subcommittee, with any such criteria to apply from a future date.

Members agreed to consider today's request in light of past practice and move forward in the next academic year to modify the rule, if warranted. Prof. Power asked if a relevant factor might be the team's academic health. If a team is performing poorly, the requirement to defend a request before the Board operates as a check.

Mr. Swarbrick noted that attention should be given to unintended consequences of limiting study day games. Teams are going to maximize games in whatever way is available. If this date is closed off, it might push the basketball team to make further use of the class miss option. It would be preferable not to drive the team in that direction. The team is to be applauded for underutilizing the class misses available to it.

Father Doyle summarized the sense of the discussion. The requested date is not the more important Sunday study day. The game will require at most an 8-hour commitment by the student-athletes, there are 4 study days in total, and the rest of the campus population will be minimally impacted by this event. In addition, the proposed game is a home game, which is viewed by the Board as much preferred to an away game; even a game in Valparaiso is too far, requiring at least a 12-hour commitment by student-athletes.

Prof. Fallon asked Mr. Holmes about study patterns and whether a Friday night game would be preferable to a Saturday game. Mr. Holmes noted that the study center is open from 8 a.m. to midnight each study day and there is regular activity throughout that time period. It is hard to ascertain more detailed study patterns. In response to a question about setting a minimum GPA before a team could have a study day exception, Mr. Holmes expressed that establishing a GPA rule would be unwise. Team GPAs are so variable and depend on team culture, changing each

year as a cohort graduates and another enters the pool. A GPA rule would also penalize next year's team for the performance of the previous year's team.

Prof. Frecka moved to approve the request for a study day game for the men's basketball team; it was seconded by Prof. Botting. The request was unanimously approved. It was also agreed to refer to the Academic Integrity subcommittee the question of whether the Board should adopt criteria for applying this rule, and if so, what those criteria should be.

4. Request by Women's Soccer to Schedule a Game During First-Year Orientation

Prof. Bellia circulated a written request from Coach Randy Waldrum for permission to schedule a women's soccer match at 5:30 p.m. on the Friday of First-Year Orientation. Coach Waldrum was unable to attend today's meeting to make this request in person. Prof. Bellia reminded members of the historical context for this request. In 2008, the NCAA added a week to the women's soccer schedule, making it a 12-week schedule to match the men's soccer schedule. Under the prior Chair, two orientation weekend games were added to the schedule as a result of this change. These requests did not come before the Board. Last year, in 2010, Coach Waldrum requested permission of the Board to make this schedule addition again. After consultation with many of the concerned units on campus—First Year of Studies, Residence Life, and Athletics—the Board approved two games at adjusted times. Friday at 5:30 p.m. was selected in order to give the freshmen athletes opportunity to return to their residence halls in time for a mandatory 8 p.m. meeting. Sunday 2:30 p.m. was selected to fall after the Mass for first-years and their families and to enable the visiting team to leave town in a timely fashion. When the Board approved these requests, it gave no guarantee that similar future requests would be approved. Because of the NCAA requirements and the parameters Coach Waldrum places on scheduling (while the team can schedule 20 games, Coach Waldrum endeavors to schedule the minimum 18 games needed to qualify for the NCAA tournament, and he strives to devise a schedule with the fewest number of class misses in regular season play), this request is likely to be made on a yearly basis.

For the fall 2011 season, Coach Waldrum is requesting one game, on Friday at 5:30 p.m. Each year, a significant and strong freshman class joins the team and is integral to successful play; therefore, it is important to design the schedule to enable them to play. Ms. Conboy, representing Coach Waldrum, noted that the women's schedule is also affected by the men's soccer schedule.

Members reviewed the rationale presented last year for the times and dates of the proposed matches. These were chosen to balance the needs of the visiting team with the needs of the first-years involved in orientation. In fall 2010, the game was free to all incoming freshmen and their families.

Prof. Fallon reported that, as the faculty liaison of the women's soccer team, he has experienced Coach Waldrum's high level of support for the academic experiences of the student-athletes. He noted that Coach Waldrum historically has not taken undue advantage the scheduling situation; therefore, he would support this exception.

Father Doyle agreed and added his appreciation of the attention being paid to the orientation schedule. He noted that were it a two-game request, encompassing both a Friday and a Sunday

game, he would be less comfortable, as that scenario would effectively remove the freshmen athletes from the orientation experience, despite anyone's best efforts to arrange their attendance at events. It was noted that while Father Poorman had supported the scheduling of an orientation weekend game, he too had expressed concern about two games in the weekend.

Prof. Bellia noted that Coach Waldrum is clear in stating that this request will most likely recur, including the possibility of a two-game request, given the strictures on scheduling.

Prof. Fallon moved to grant the request of women's soccer to schedule a home game on the Friday of Orientation weekend, August 2011. Prof. Garg seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

5. Reports on Academic Performance

Prof. Bellia invited Pat Holmes, Academic Services, to present his annual report on the academic progress of student-athletes. Mr. Holmes distributed several documents providing data to members. The information on GPAs is presented for the fall 2010 semester, and as trends over the past four academic years.

The student-athlete population numbers 710 on 26 varsity teams, which is 8% of the overall undergraduate student population. This proportion has been consistent over the past five years. 61% of these athletes are grant-in-aid (GIA) student-athletes (431/710). Women represent 42% of the student-athletes receiving GIA, and they receive 41% of the GIA awarded. Women's athletic teams do not use all of the aid available to them. Women represent 46% of the Notre Dame undergraduate population and 39% of the student-athlete population. Mr. Holmes commented that the female student-athlete population often decreases from the beginning to the end of the fall semester, as a number of women leave the rowing team after an initial trial.

Mr. Holmes reported that the figures for minorities are increasing in the overall student population—22%—and declining as a portion of the student-athlete population—17%. There is a decline in the percentage of African American student-athletes—8.6%; 10% of the male student-athletes are African American.

As is typical, 83% of Notre Dame undergraduates identify as Catholic, while 68% of student-athletes identify as Catholic.

Student-athlete college choices are consistent with recent trends; student-athletes enroll in the Mendoza College of Business in the largest numbers. Numbers enrolling in engineering—6%—and the sciences—9%—are increasing, as the population shifts. The most popular majors for student-athletes are as follows: Finance, Marketing, Psychology, Accounting, and Sociology.

Mr. Holmes next reported on the average SAT scores for enrolled student-athletes and on the GPAs for the student-athlete population as a whole. The average SAT for the student-athlete population has increased over the last four years. The cumulative GPA of the overall student population was the same for spring 2010 and fall 2010: 3.374. The cumulative GPA for student-athletes for fall 2010 was 3.138. The cumulative GPA for GIA student-athletes in fall 2010 was 3.032.

Graduation rates put Notre Dame at the top of the list among its peers in the Football Bowl Subdivision. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) reported under NCAA criteria is 99% for GIA student-athletes. Under the federal Department of Education rate, Notre Dame graduated a four-year average of 91% of its student-athletes, tying with Stanford for the highest number.

Mr. Holmes reiterated that the central concern for his office, in viewing SAT and GPA numbers for certain segments of the student-athlete population, is to ensure that Notre Dame provides the quality educational experience that was promised to the GIA students as part of their recruitment. He noted that there are many good and encouraging success stories and these stories will continue to happen, with student-athletes who really value the Notre Dame education. A significant task is to continue to guarantee that the resources needed will be available to these student-athletes. Academic Services has made important strides, and it must continue to support this promise.

Members discussed the information presented. Ms. Conboy noted that the data indicates there are “at risk” sports rather than “at risk” student-athletes. Prof. Fallon asked about performance as compared to expected performance. Prof. Bellia noted that the Office of Institutional Research has devised a model by which a prediction can be made about academic performance based on certain test score and high school data. Mr. Holmes said this model is continually refined. The data aids in evaluating team cultures, in assessing the performance of students in given SAT ranges, in observing specific sub-groups of the student-athlete population, and then shaping programming aimed at these cohorts.

Prof. Power noted that one disadvantage for some student-athletes is the quality of the high schools from which they graduated. A concern, therefore, is the first-year student who does not know how to navigate the academic environment. The transitional issues warrant attention for these students.

One resource that appears to be working well is the Summer Bridge program. This program is capped at 40 students, drawn primarily from football and including some hockey and basketball student-athletes, as well as selected students from other sports for whom there might be an adjustment issue. Every GIA student-athlete from the football program and men’s and women’s basketball is invited and encouraged to enroll in the summer session prior to the first year. Typically, six credits are taken, with a special FY composition class for the at-risk population that includes more classroom time for the same number of credits. 40 slots seem to be close to the need level.

Mr. Holmes also reported on Notre Dame’s Academic Progress Rate for each team. These figures will be announced in a press release soon. Notre Dame’s rates are very good. Eight teams have a higher APR than last year, thirteen have similar APR, and five have a lower APR. It was noted that on a small team, one student-athlete’s situation can have a larger impact; this occurred on the women’s basketball team this year.

Mr. Holmes reported further on GPA distribution among teams for the fall 2010 semester. The student-athletes earned an average semester GPA of 3.164, which is an improvement from Fall, 2009. 18 of the 22 teams (treating cross-country, indoor track, and outdoor track as combined teams) had GPAs over 3.00. The highest GPA was earned by the women’s golf team, which had a semester GPA of 3.534 and a cumulative GPA of 3.588. This team has a particularly strong

team culture and also presents the case of the impact one or two extraordinary student-athletes can have on a small team's GPA. The sports with GPAs under 3.00 are football, hockey, and men and women's basketball.

The GPA numbers for the GIA cohort give rise to some concerns. In the case of one team that had a lower fall semester GPA than at any point in the last decade, the team had an unusually high percentage of freshmen/sophomore athletes, whose GPAs tend to be lower than those of upper-class students. Attention will continue to be focused on this team.

Prof. Botting asked how Academic Services interacts with students on the question of the choice of major. Mr. Holmes noted that Academic Services puts a high premium on exploration in the first year of study; it would be undesirable to encourage the students to choose early. If a student-athlete has indicated an intent, then the exploration focuses on that area. Students are not required to declare a major until their junior year.

In response to Prof. Frecka's request, Mr. Holmes said it would be possible to distribute GPAs more quickly, although some data is not immediately available. The preliminary numbers can be shared.

Members briefly discussed how changes in qualifications for declaring a major in the Mendoza College of Business might affect student-athletes. There currently are "gates" on majors in MCOB. Gates on admission to MCOB are now under discussion. Mr. Swarbrick noted that MCOB is working with the Athletics Department to collect and analyze data about college and major choices. The College is interested in a diverse population while instituting a GPA gate at the point of entry to the program.

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

Prof. Bellia noted that this is the last meeting of the academic year. She thanked members for all the hard work and dedication they have shown to the concerns of Notre Dame's student-athletes. The service they give is valued by the University. She thanked departing members, noting especially that Kevin Richards, student representative, is graduating from the MBA program and taking up a new professional position this summer. All offered him congratulations.

The meeting was adjourned.