

FBA Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2007
311 Coleman Morse Bldg.

Members present: Prof. Donald Pope-Davis (Chair); Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. Eileen Hunt Botting; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Mr. Patrick Holmes; Prof. David Kirkner; Ms. Kathryn Lam (Student Rep.); Prof. Richard Pierce; (Rev.) Mark Poorman, CSC; Prof. Vince Rougeau; Prof. John Weber; and Dr. Kevin White

Members absent: Prof. Francis Castellino, Prof. Daniel Lapsley; Dr. Frances Shavers

Board Liaisons Present: Mr. Stan Wilcox of the Department of Athletics

Board Liaisons Absent: Ms. Missy Conboy, Mr. Michael Karwoski

Observers and Guests: Ms. Mary Hendriksen, executive assistant to Prof. Pope-Davis; Ms. Kitty Cooney Hoye, recorder.

1. Call to Order and prayer: The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Ms. Kathryn Lam offered the opening prayer.

2. Minutes of previous meeting: After making one correction to the minutes of the meeting of February 27, 2007, Fr. Poorman moved for their approval; Prof. Pierce seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Subcommittee on Academic Integrity: Review of credit-hour requirement for unclassified graduate students – Harvey Bender

The subcommittee is recommending that the FBA approve a modification of the academic credit requirements for the fifth-year student-athletes who are enrolled in a graduate program or those considered “unclassified” graduate students. Prof. Bender referred the board to a handout distributed during last month’s meeting - “5th-Year Student-Athlete Graduate School Credit Hour Requirement” for his discussion.

Prof. Bender briefly summarized the history regarding the 5th year of eligibility – particularly as it relates to the student-athlete classification and credit hours. Typically, 18-20 students each year will petition the board seeking to continue as a 5th-year student-athlete. These student-athletes fall under one of the following categories: undergraduate completing degree; degree-seeking graduate student; or unclassified graduate student. A majority of the student-athletes petitioning for a fifth year fall into the “unclassified graduate student” category and are required to complete at least nine credit hours each semester. Although there have been “no major problems” with this group, the subcommittee is recommending the following change to the credit requirements:

5. ...Fifth-year students who are enrolled in a graduate program or who are unclassified graduate students must complete at least nine credit hours per semester, *three of which must be at the 4000 level.*

The change, argued Prof. Bender, will “put us in harmony with the Graduate School” and thereby facilitate advising and the ability of student-athletes to gain access to desired courses. The proposed changes would go into effect during the 2007-08 academic year.

In response to a question from Fr. Poorman regarding directed readings, Prof. Bender said that the change will force student-athletes to register for something “other than directed readings.” He also noted that after speaking with Mr. Holmes, and members of the registrar’s staff, the subcommittee found that “timing” has been the cause of many fifth- year student-athletes failing to gain access to their desired courses. Prof.

Kirkner questioned the basis for requiring full board approval of student-athletes' schedules. Both Prof. Bender and Fr. Poorman responded that the requirement stemmed from a desire by the board to assure that student-athletes were "academically engaged" during their fifth year.

A discussion regarding possible streamlining of the application process followed. Currently, student-athletes seeking a fifth year must submit a detailed application that includes recommendations from the coaching staff as well as a course plan for the year. In addition, each applicant is interviewed by Prof. Don Pope-Davis. While various board members commended the subcommittee on this thorough review of each application, Fr. Poorman suggested that to streamline the progress, the subcommittee could be given authority to vet and approve applications – bringing only those with special circumstances to the full board for discussion. In the past, Prof. Bender noted, FBA members wanted an opportunity to discuss the matter. He agreed, however, that doing so was "not a good trade-off" and supported Fr. Poorman's suggestion that the subcommittee could take responsibility for approving any routine applications and bring only those that are "questionable" or otherwise involve "special circumstances" to the attention of the full board. Both Prof. Fallon and Prof. Botting stated they benefited from the full board discussion. Prof. Bender invited interested members of the full board to join the subcommittee during their discernment meetings. He agreed to notify the full board of any future relevant subcommittee meetings.

Noting that timing was a significant issue in the past, the board recommended that the subcommittee complete their review of petitions for a fifth year of eligibility and provide the Registrar's Office with a list of approved student-athletes by April 14, 2007. Prof. Don Pope-Davis agreed to write a letter to the Registrar on behalf of the FBA clarifying the new process.

MOTION: Fr. Poorman made a motion authorizing the subcommittee on Academic Affairs to approve routine applications for a fifth year of eligibility, with the proviso that *all* Board members will be notified of subcommittee meetings so that they are able to give their input on the applications. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Prof. Bender, as chair of the subcommittee on Academic Affairs, motioned to approve the subcommittee recommendation amending the requirements for 5th year student-athletes enrolled as either degree-seeking or unclassified graduate students to read:

5. ...Fifth-year students who are enrolled in a graduate program or who are unclassified graduate students must complete at least nine credit hours per semester, *three of which must be at the 40000 level.*

It passed unanimously.

4. Subcommittee on Student Welfare – Eileen Hunt Botting

The Board continued to discuss the off-campus housing policy for student-athletes.

5. Subcommittee on Communications – Steve Fallon

The subcommittee on communications has been addressing the ongoing issue regarding afternoon class schedules and practice schedules. A number of concerns have been raised regarding conflicting messages student-athletes receive about when they must be finished with classes. The subcommittee met with Dr. Chris Maziar, vice president and associate provost, to discuss the matter. Dr. Maziar has agreed to co-write a letter with Kevin White to coaches and undergraduate advisors clarifying the policy requiring class attendance and making accommodations for practice schedules. Prof. Fallon noted that Dr. Maziar is continuing to identify ways to make the day more "useable" with respect to upper-division courses.

The subcommittee continues to gather information on fifth-year eligibility requirements at other institutions. Preliminary information indicates a considerable range between notifications of eligibility for a fifth year. Prof. Fallon will keep the board apprised as additional information becomes available.

6. *Ex officio* and Liaison reports - None

Fr. Mark Poorman: Student Affairs

Pat Holmes: Academic Services for Student-Athletes

Frances Shavers: Office of the President

Kevin White / Missy Conboy / Mike Karwoski / Stan Wilcox: Athletic Department

7-8. New / Old Business

Prof. Bender, on behalf of the subcommittee on student welfare, asked that coaches be reminded of the nominating process for the Kanaley Award. It is important, added Prof. Weber, that the coaches understand the qualifications for the award. Noting that it is particularly important for new coaches to understand the criteria, Prof. Pope-Davis suggested including a reminder at the coaches meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Prof. Pope-Davis adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.