



FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Meeting of March 22, 2006
Fifth Floor Conference Room, Main Building

Members present: Prof. Fernand Dutile (Chair); Prof. Patricia Bellia; Prof. Eileen Botting; Mr. Bobby Brown; Prof. Francis Castellino; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Mr. Patrick Holmes; Prof. David Kirkner; (Rev.) Mark Poorman, C.S.C.; Prof. Donald Pope-Davis; Prof. F. Clark Power; Dr. Frances Shavers; Prof. John Weber; and Dr. Kevin White.

Member absent: Prof. Harvey Bender.

Observers present: Ms. Missy Conboy, Mr. Michael Karwoski, and Mr. Stan Wilcox of the Department of Athletics; and Ms. Kitty Hoyer, recorder.

Guest present: (Rev.) John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.

1. Call to order and prayer: The Chair called the group to order at 3:05 p.m.; Father Poorman led the group in prayer.

2. Minutes of previous meeting: Prof. Kirkner moved, with Prof. Weber providing a second, that the minutes for the meeting of February 6, 2006, be approved. A unanimous vote ensued.

3. Announcements: The Chair announced that he had approved, on the Board's behalf, the schedule for volleyball (Spring 2006), women's soccer (Spring 2006), and men's soccer (Fall 2006). He also approved amendments to the schedules for women's soccer (substituting Wednesday, October 11, 2006, for Friday, October 13, 2006). This change kept the schedule within University guidelines.

The Chair also approved current-year captaincies for baseball (Greg Lopez and Tom Thornton); and an additional captain for women's fencing (Rachel Cota). All of these student-athletes met University guidelines for serving as captain: approval by the Office of Student Affairs and a grade-point average above 2.3. At this point, the Board ratified the Chair's decisions.

4. New Chair of Faculty Board and NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative: [The University's *Academic Articles* limit service as Chair of the Faculty Board on Athletics and as

NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative to two three-year terms. Prof. Dutile, who has held these positions for the last six academic years, will leave them on June 30.] At this point, University president Father John Jenkins addressed the Board. He began by thanking the current Chair of the Faculty Board for his “extraordinary dedication and service.” Father Jenkins stated that he and Ms. Frances Shavers, his executive assistant, have consulted with many members of the faculty and staff, including members of the Faculty Board on Athletics, with regard to choosing a successor. After long deliberation, Father Jenkins has asked Prof. Donald Pope-Davis, associate vice-president and associate dean for graduate studies, and professor of psychology, to assume the positions of Chair of the Faculty Board on Athletics and NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative. Prof. Pope-Davis has accepted that invitation. Father Jenkins stressed the large number of important committees, including the Faculty Board on Athletics, on which Prof. Pope-Davis has served. Prof. Pope-Davis understands well, Father Jenkins said, the many issues involved in chairing the Faculty Board. Father Jenkins pledged his total support of Prof. Pope-Davis in these new roles. For his part, the current Chair expressed his commitment to full cooperation in connection with the transition. In response to a question from Prof. Weber, Father Jenkins noted that the proposal of the Faculty Board to eliminate the six-year term limit on service as Chair and “faculty rep” is now working its way through appropriate channels.

5. Byron V. Kanaley Awards: Prof. Weber, for both the subcommittee on student welfare and the subcommittee on academic integrity, reported that those two groups had met, along with the Chair of the Board, three times to consider nominations for the Byron V. Kanaley Award. That award, named for a 1904 graduate of the University, goes to “senior monogram winners deemed most exemplary as student-athletes and as leaders.” Head coaches make the nominations from their respective team rosters. More than one award may be given annually. In recent years, the number of awards has risen, attributable largely to the greater number of varsity teams, and therefore of student-athletes, now at Notre Dame. Prof. Weber noted that the formal criteria have evolved as they have been applied through the years. Currently, the Board seems to seek outstanding academic credentials and outstanding athletics credentials; a sliding scale will not do. Prof. Weber noted that “intangibles,” such as the student-athlete’s particular college and major, and service activities play a role. Further, he stressed the importance of recognizing that the average student at Notre Dame boasts a cumulative GPA close to the 3.4 level. The subcommittees gave significantly less consideration to student-athletes with GPAs below that of the average student. The subcommittees also looked to the supporting statement of the head coach and to whether and, if so, how long the student-athlete served as a team captain. Assessment of athletics accomplishment took into account conference and national honors and in some cases international participation. That said, Prof. Weber moved, on behalf of the two subcommittees, that Byron V. Kanaley awards go to: Lauren Connelly (women’s tennis); Megan Duffy (women’s basketball); Stephanie Madia (track and cross country); Annie Schefter (women’s soccer); and Tom Thornton (baseball). Prof. Weber stated that the recommendation of five winners in no way reflected an intent to dilute the award’s prestige; all five really deserve it, he stressed. Indeed, the grade-point averages of this year’s group are still better than those of last year’s. In response to a question by Prof. Castellino, the Chair observed that the non-successful candidates are not made aware of their nomination, at least not by the Faculty Board. Prof. Castellino: Can professors nominate for this award? No, the Chair responded; the process calls for head coaches, who presumably best know the various qualities of the student-athletes under their tutelage, to make the nominations. That process could be changed, of course. Prof.

Weber noted that 147 student-athletes have grade-point averages above the mean; yet for some reason some coaches make no nomination. Prof. Castellino lamented the unwillingness of a few coaches to make nominations; after all, it is the student-athlete who loses out. The only possible “downside” for the coach is that the nomination might not be successful. Ms. Conboy said that administrators in the Department of Athletics could perhaps do a better job of ferreting out nominations. Father Poorman worried that the Board might be setting a specific GPA as a “cutoff” or operative disqualifier. If that’s the case, he continued, we need to be prepared to defend it. Prof. Weber responded that use of the GPA should not be seen as such; we have to start somewhere and the award calls for outstanding performance. The Chair stated that he sees the importance of looking at the mean grade-point average for students generally as disabusing everyone of the mythology that 3.0 is a good academic record. That may have been true forty years ago; it just isn’t true anymore. After all, nowadays even a student with a 3.3 GPA is below average. We need to focus on that and help others to focus on that, as well. Ms. Conboy suggested that perhaps the amount of time required by the particular sport should be considered; some sports demand a much larger time commitment than others. After a brief discussion of other nominees, the Board voted unanimously to approve the five student-athletes recommended in Prof. Weber’s report.

After the vote, several Board members suggested that the criteria for the Kanaley Award be reviewed. The Chair agreed that this should be done. He added that the requirement that recipients of the award be seniors should also be revisited. That requirement, the Chair speculated, must have stemmed from a desire to avoid multiple awards over the career of a single student-athlete. But there seems no reason for which a student-athlete should not be eligible for the award during a fifth year of athletics participation, a concept not in vogue when the award got established. This change would help especially in years in which a team has two excellent candidates, both seniors. (In one such case recently, the Board did waive the requirement).

6. Statement of trustees’ responsibilities concerning intercollegiate athletics: Reporting for the subcommittee on communication, Prof. Power informed the Faculty Board that the president’s office is currently pursuing this topic with the Board of Trustees. The better approach for the Faculty Board, then, seems clearly to await the results of this endeavor before considering any further action.

7. Petition for relief from nine-credit requirement: [Note: For privacy reasons, discussion of some of the specifics relating to this situation are omitted from these public minutes]. The Board next addressed the petition of a student-athlete for prospective relief from the University requirement that fifth-year student-athletes carry at least nine academic credits per semester. [Since no grant-in-aid is involved in this case, a nine-credit load would require the student-athlete to pay full tuition. Loads of under nine hours allow a per-credit payment.] Although initially the Chair had put the petition to the Board for a listserv vote, the requisite number of Board members had asked for a full Board discussion. Providing the historical context for the discussion, the Chair reminded the Board that since the wholesale revision of the provisions governing the fifth year of eligibility, the Board had approved a waiver of the nine-credit rule on two similar occasions, once in 2002 and once in 2004. Prof. Fallon: Is the student-athlete eligible to graduate this semester? Mr. Wilcox; Yes. Of course, he could drop one of his required courses this semester and, under NCAA rules--unlike under Notre Dame's more

stringent rules, return to take only that course in the Fall. Asked to proffer his views on the issue, Dr. White observed that the Board had to ask itself whether the case had the unique circumstances justifying a waiver; for his part, he supported the petition. Prof. Kirkner moved that the student-athlete be allowed to take as few as three credits during the fall 2006 semester. Prof. Botting seconded that motion. Prof. Castellino spoke against the motion, calling that light a commitment a “vacation” of sorts. We would, he argued, be making too large a concession. Father Poorman agreed: That would be shifting from our premise that one is a student first and an athlete second; it would put the athletics status first. The motion, attracting just four votes, was defeated. Prof. Kirkner then moved that the student-athlete be allowed to carry as few as six credits during the fall 2006 semester. Father Poorman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Prior registration: Mr. Wilcox reported that Associate Provost Christine Maziar has assembled a committee to address the issue of prior registration for student-athletes. That discussion will include the whole range of issues implicated, including Title IX. Two Faculty Board members will join that discussion.

At this point Father Poorman asked whether the possibility of prior registration for fifth-year student-athletes could be addressed. [The NCAA (and Notre Dame) allow student-athletes a five-year window within which to complete no more than four years of actual competition. Notre Dame’s policy requires student-athletes intending to compete during a fifth year to secure approval of their academic plan from the Faculty Board on Athletics. The Board has for several years emphasized its commitment to the concept of “academic engagement” for these student-athletes; athletes here should also be genuine students. To this end, any fifth-year student athlete, to be entitled to compete for Notre Dame, must enroll for at least nine hours of academic credit. Fifth-year student-athletes who are either completing their undergraduate degree or enrolled in a graduate/professional-degree program already have adequate priorities in garnering the appropriate courses. The remaining fifth-year student-athletes, however, must register as “unclassified graduate students,” a category which wields virtually no priority whatever. Such student-athletes have had tremendous difficulty not only in securing the courses set out in the academic plan presented to the Faculty Board, but also in securing, as a “fallback,” any arrangement of courses that promotes the Board’s objective of coherent academic engagement.] Father Poorman asked the Chair to pursue with the Provost’s Office the possibility of implementing prior registration for these student-athletes for the Fall 2006 semester and beyond. The Faculty Board, he observed, has long favored such a policy, but has had difficulty in getting it put in place. The Chair responded that he would address this issue without delay.

9. New Business: Prof. Weber asked whether the Board should take any action with regard to a *South Bend Tribune* report that morning alleging that “eight scholarship [football] players were granted a fifth-year of eligibility.” Actually, the Faculty Board on Athletics had not yet received any petition for a fifth year of eligibility, let alone granted one. The Chair of the Faculty Board did raise the matter with both Mr. John Heisler, senior associate athletics director for media relations, and Mr. Wilcox, who works with the football program. Mr. Wilcox assured the Faculty Board that the information had not come from a University press release. Moreover, he said he would pursue the matter with the appropriate staff. [A correction did appear in a subsequent issue of the *South Bend Tribune*].

10. Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

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