FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Meeting of February 6, 2006
Fifth Floor Conference Room, Main Building

Members present: Prof. Fernand Dutile (Chair); Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. Eileen Botting; Mr. Bobby Brown; 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.

Members absent: Prof. Patricia Bellia and Prof. Francis Castellino.

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

Guest present: Mr. Randy Waldrum, head coach, women's soccer.

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. Bender moved, with Father Poorman providing a second, that the minutes for the meeting of December 7, 2005, be approved. The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. Announcements: The Chair informed the Board that one of its members, Prof. Bellia, could not attend today's meeting due to serious medical problems. Prof. Bellia, who recently gave birth to her second child, has incurred an infection necessitating a complete hip replacement. He asked Board members to keep Prof. Bellia in their thoughts and prayers.

The Chair announced that, on the Board's behalf, he had approved the spring 2006 schedules for both women's lacrosse and rowing. He has also approved a revised schedule for men's lacrosse for spring 2006. All of the schedules satisfy University guidelines.

The Chair has also approved amendments to the following schedules: outdoor track (the Hillsdale Relays on April 28 - 29 have been added); women's tennis (the away match with Tulane on April 15 has been dropped from the schedule; a home match against Eastern Michigan on March 31 has been added); and men's tennis (Friday, February 3, has been added as a missed-

class day, replacing Friday, March 24). None of these amendments took the schedules outside University guidelines.
Also on the Board's behalf, the Chair has approved 2005-06 captaincies for the following teams: women's lacrosse (Crysti Foote, Carol Dixon and Lena Zentgraf); and softball (Heather Booth, Mallorie Lenn, Meagan Ruthrauff and Sara Schoonaert). All of these candidates met University requirements with regard to grade-point average and approval of the Office of Student Affairs.

Finally, the Chair announced for the record that he had received two separate applications for an appeal to the full Board with regard to a denial of permission to live off-campus during the senior year. (Both applicants had failed to meet either of the alternative grade-point average requirements that grant-in-aid student-athletes must meet for such off-campus residence). The Chair has denied both petitions for failure to meet the threshold criterion of "extraordinary circumstances."

At this point, the Board ratified the Chair's decisions.

4. Fall 2006 schedule for women's soccer: The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mr. Randy Waldrum, head coach of women's soccer. Mr. Waldrum brought to the Board a request that the team be allowed a fourth class-miss day in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence. After thanking the Board for the opportunity to meet with it, he explained that the request for an extra excused-absence day has been made necessary by the expansion of the Big East Conference. Although schedules formerly had been prepared two years in advance, the Conference had experienced difficulty in completing the 2006 schedule and had not provided it to Notre Dame until just before Christmas 2005. Unavoidably, the team had already scheduled a non-conference tournament, only to learn that the Conference schedule itself required three class-miss days in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence, leaving virtually no flexibility for non-conference games. Coach Waldrum has decided to cancel the tournament, but nonetheless has been left with only three weekends during which to schedule non-conference games, games that play a crucial role in enhancing Notre Dame's "strength of schedule." Playing top-flight non-conference teams remains a central part of tournament selection and seeding. But top-flight teams will insist on a home-and-home arrangement; they will not always come to our place. Coach Waldrum has looked into making changes in the 2006 schedule, but contractual issues make that difficult; we must, of course, honor our commitments. Moreover, the team already has games scheduled for both weekends of Fall break. Coach Waldrum noted that the problem he faces this Fall will, unfortunately, recur regularly. He sees no relief until at least 2009, unless some dramatic change takes place in conference scheduling. Prof. Weber: Given the possibility that the team could play in several post-season tournament games, isn't it conceivable that these student-athletes could miss seven Fridays? Coach Waldrum: Yes, it's conceivable. But if we do as well as we hope to, we should be at home for at least part of that tournament. In the past, we have been very successful in earning home games during tournaments. Prof. Bender pointed out that the number of Fridays implicated by the schedule would prevent a student-athlete from taking his course; he suggested that there might be many other courses from which student-athletes on the team are precluded. Do any of the other head coaches in the Conference worry about the extent of class absence? Coach Waldrum responded that the issue has not been part of the discussions to which he has been privy over the years. Mr. Wilcox, who formerly worked at the Big East Conference office, added that the issue had come up among the faculty athletics

representatives. But class attendance does get left up to each institution. Father Poorman asked if Notre Dame, with its relatively rigid class-miss policy, was an "outlier"? Most assuredly, the Chair assured him. Most Division I institutions set their team schedules and rely on individual student-athletes to work with their professors regarding any problems and, if necessary, to switch courses. Prof. Bender stated that he could not believe that we are the only institution that cares about this matter. Dr. White: Ours is a very conservative position; I agree with it, but it is aconservative one. The Chair noted that if all other schools had Notre Dame's policy, our scheduling might become still more difficult; other schools would be more insistent on mid-week games being played at their sites. Ms. Conboy noted that she sensed a reduction in the willingness of other teams in the Conference to work with us with regard to scheduling. In response to the Chair's question, Coach Waldrum noted that soccer players need at least one day between games; even a Friday-Sunday schedule puts huge demands on players both physically and mentally. Furthermore, we cannot, from a competitive standpoint, play under conditions dramatically more disadvantageous than those under which other teams play. Prof. Kirkner observed that in recent years the University has seen a shift to more Monday-Wednesday classes. Can we find out the extent to which there remains a problem with regard to Fridays? Mr. Holmes responded that many juniors and seniors can avoid Friday classes, but it's much more difficult for freshmen and sophomores, and especially for students in science, math and business. Prof. Weber emphasized that women's soccer ranked among Notre Dame's top five teams with regard to overall grade-point average; this, he said, speaks highly of the team's student-athletes. In response to Prof. Bender's inquiry, Coach Waldrum stated that the team travels "commercial" and not by charter. Indeed, charter flights would not help that much since the team typically travels on Thursday evenings. The Chair thanked Coach Waldrum for his participation in the meeting and wished him good luck with regard to this fall's competition. After Coach Waldrum had left the meeting, the Board deliberated the request for an extra class-miss day in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence. Prof. Weber, alluding to his earlier remark concerning the academic achievement of the women's soccer team, wondered whether academic performance becomes relevant in discussing team requests for extra class-miss days. Prof. Poorman urged that relative academic achievement not be considered and that a uniform principle be adhered to, lest we start down a slippery slope. Beyond the difficulty of assessing and accommodating such differences, the Chair noted, the better students add more to a class and, therefore, will be missed *more* when excused from classes. Prof. Weber tended to agree that academic achievement should not be factored into the decision, but felt it important to raise the point. Father Poorman felt "generally inclined" to approve the team's request, but at the same time to indicate a strong concern about the long term: We do not want athletics schedules to make students ineligible for "Friday rich" majors like science and business. The Chair noted the possibility of approving the request for this year only, specifically disclaiming any view with regard to future such requests. Meanwhile, as Notre Dame's faculty athletics representative, he could pursue the issue at the Conference level. He also suggested that Dr. White could mount a parallel attack with the other directors of athletics in the Conference. Dr. White agreed to do that. Father Poorman moved to approve the women's soccer schedule for this Fall, but with a specific disclaimer regarding any such waiver in future years. Prof. Kirkner seconded that motion, which passed unanimously, except for one abstention.

5. Nonrenewal of grants-in-aid: The Chair introduced a preliminary discussion of the nonrenewal of grants-in-aid at Notre Dame. His impression had been that nonrenewals

traditionally just did not occur at Notre Dame. Nonetheless, recently three nonrenewals had apparently been considered. The Chair worried that we might slowly but inexorably be moving toward a policy of nonrenewal merely when the student-athlete does not perform athletically well enough to satisfy the coach; in such cases, the coach understandably would like to have that grant-in-aid to award to another student-athlete. Nonrenewal of aid has enormous financial implications for a student-athlete, especially at a school as expensive as Notre Dame. Mr. Karwoski, for the Department of Athletics, emphasized that no written NCAA or University policy requires renewal of grants-in-aid. Any nonrenewal, however, would begin with a coach's recommendation to the director of athletics. If the director accepted the recommendation, the student-athlete would then be informed of the nonrenewal. The student-athlete would be provided an opportunity to appeal the nonrenewal before a committee fromoutside the Department of Athletics. (Mr. Joseph Russo, director of student financial strategies in the Office of Financial Aid, chairs the committee, which includes four other members of that Office. This is essentially the same appeals committee to which any student, athlete or not, would have recourse. The committee does include as resource people two nonvoting members, including Mr. Karwoski.) That committee has the final decision. In his fourteen years here, Mr. Karwoski has seen only one or two cases go before such a committee. Of course, nonrenewal can result from a transfer or academic dismissal; those cases obviously do not go to an appeal. Prof. Kirkner: Can one be "nonrenewed" for "nonperformance"? It would seem difficult to draw the line between athletics under-performance, on the one hand, and insufficient effort, insubordination and the like, on the other. Dr. White: There will always be student-athletes who pose challenges; they have disagreements with the coach or violate team policy or otherwise choose not to conform. Out of 750 student-athletes, 430 of them with grants-in-aid, we will get about two or three a year. Nonetheless, let me stress that if I felt a coach acted capriciously in not renewing aid, I would step in. Of course, if there has been a fair evaluation, I support the coach. In any event, the contentious situations get resolved by the appeals process. Most often, in fact, aid is retained. Father Poorman expressed the view that increased fairness might come from expanding the committee to include a representative from the faculty or from Residence Life. After all, these cases present more than typical financial-aid issues. Dr. White agreed with that recommendation. Prof. Botting worried about the impact of injuries on financial aid; student-athletes should not lose their grants because of an injury. Mr. Karwoski replied that written policies preclude taking away financial aid because of injury. The Chair asked Prof. Botting, who heads the Board's subcommittee on student welfare, to pursue this topic. He charged the subcommittee to determine 1) who drafted the current appeals process; 2) whether a change in that process seems indicated; and, if so, 3) what the new process should look like.

6. Statement of trustees' responsibilities concerning intercollegiate athletics: [The Chair deferred discussion of this item to the Board's next meeting.]

7. NCAA graduation-rate summary: Mr. Holmes reported to the Board data and implications related to changes in the assessment of the graduation rates of student-athletes at various institutions. Until recently, the Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) provided the primary prism for viewing graduation success in the athletics context. The FGR, however, misleads in two significant respects. First, it treats as a failure any student-athlete who, even if in good academic standing, leaves an institution. It is difficult to see why such a student should be counted as a failure on the part of the institution. Second, the FGR takes no account of incoming transfer

students. To address this issue, the NCAA, as part of its academic-reform program, developed the Graduation Success Rate (GSR). Under the GSR, student-athletes who leave an institution in good standing get removed from the cohort; moreover, those student-athletes who transfer into an institution get added to the cohort. Mr. Holmes distributed to the Board data indicating that (with regard to the grant-in-aid student-athletes entering Notre Dame in 1998) Notre Dame's FGR was 91% (83 of 91). Notre Dame's GSR, the NCAA rate, was 98% (86 of 88). Mr. Holmes noted that both the FGR and GSR used a six-year window with regard to graduation. The Academic Progress Rate (APR) also plays an important role in the NCAA's academic-reform efforts; the APR focuses on the real-time academic progress at each institution by tracking both eligibility and retention for all teams from year to year. Notre Dame's overall APR was 988 (of a maximum 1000). He noted that Notre Dame will continue to suffer inappropriate comparisons under the APR; this results from the fact that eligibility is determined by each institution. At Notre Dame, the student-athlete needs to meet a minimum grade-point average to retain eligibility. At many schools, the only criterion of eligibility as one moves into the springsemester is successful completion of six credits during the fall semester. Accordingly, APR data do not use a level playing field. Prof. Bender suggested that an asterisk be used whenever the APR gets discussed in connection with Notre Dame; there should always be an explanation of the "eligibility" variations. Mr. Karwoski believed that over time relative APRs will increasingly receive less attention from the media except in cases of teams falling below the cutoff. At Notre Dame, we will not see APRs below the cutoff. Prof. Weber, noting all the favorable publicity recently showered upon Notre Dame in connection with the release of graduation rates, asked to whom or to what the credit should go. Dr. White cited a number of reasons for our success, including the efforts of the student-athletes, the performance of Mr. Holmes and his staff at the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, and the "wonderful job" done by Mr. John Heisler and his staff in the Office of Sports Information.

8. Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m. [At this time, members of the Faculty Board were invited to tour the Guglielmino Athletics Complex.]

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