

# FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS

## UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

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Meeting of October 12, 2004

Room 331 of Coleman/Morse Centers

**Members Present:** Prof. Fernand Dutile (Chair); Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. Eileen Botting; Mr. Bobby Brown; Dr. Matthew Cullinan; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Prof. Umesh Garg; Mr. Patrick Holmes; Prof. William Kelley; Prof. David Kirkner; Prof. Donald Pope-Davis; Prof. F. Clark Power; Prof. John Weber; Dr. Kevin White.

**Member Absent:** (Rev.) Mark Poorman, C.S.C.

**Observers Present:** Mr. Bernard Muir and Ms. Missy Conboy, of the Department of Athletics; Ms. Kitty Hoye, recorder.

**Guests:** Mr. Daniel Saracino, assistant provost for enrollment; Mr. Michael Karwoski, assistant director of athletics for compliance; and Ms. Gail Hinchion Mancini, editor-in-chief, *ND Works*.

- 1. Call to order and prayer:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Dr. Cullinan led the group in prayer.
- 2. Minutes of previous meeting:** The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting of September 2, 2004.
- 3. Announcements:** The Chair introduced to the group Ms. Mancini, editor-in-chief of *ND Works*. Ms. Mancini asked to be present at this meeting of the Board in order better to inform herself with regard to an article she is currently writing on the workings of the Board.

The Chair announced that he had approved, on the Board's behalf, the following captaincies for the 2004-05 academic year: Lauren King, Kerry Meagher and Stephanie Madia (women's cross country); Alicja Kryczalo, Kerry Walton and Danielle Davis (women's fencing); and Meredith Thornburgh and Maureen Gibbons (rowing). All of these student-athletes met University guidelines regarding candidates for captain of varsity teams.

The Chair announced that he had also approved, on behalf of the Board, the following team schedules: women's lacrosse (fall 2004); men's lacrosse (fall 2004); and women's tennis (2004-05). The Chair noted for the record that the Board had approved, through an e-mail vote, the schedule for women's basketball (2004-05). [That schedule contained two study-day games, an away contest on Thursday, December 9, and a home game on Saturday, December 11.] The Chair informed the Board that he had approved two amendments to team schedules: 1) for

volleyball, two additional mornings, those of September 9 and September 16; and 2) for cheerleading, one additional Friday, that of October 15. Even with these amendments, both schedules remain within University guidelines.

At this point, the Board ratified these decisions.

For the record the Chair announced the membership of the Board's three subcommittees for the 2004-05 academic year. Prof. Bender chairs the subcommittee on academic integrity, whose other members are Mr. Holmes, Prof. Pope-Davis, and Prof. Weber. Prof. Fallon chairs the subcommittee on communication, whose other members are Prof. Kelley and Prof. Power. Finally, Prof. Garg chairs the subcommittee on student welfare, which includes Mr. Brown, Prof. Botting, and Prof. Kirkner.

**4. Admission of student-athletes:** At the Chair's invitation, Mr. Daniel J. Saracino, assistant provost for enrollment, addressed the Board with regard to the admission of student-athletes at Notre Dame. In introducing Mr. Saracino, the Chair noted that nothing looms larger in the protection of academic integrity with regard to a University's athletics program than the process for the admission of student-athletes. Mr. Saracino stated that the Undergraduate Admissions Office and the Department of Athletics have an excellent relationship based upon our mutual goal of enrolling the most talented young men and women—athletically and academically—at Notre Dame. The senior admissions staff works with the coaches in each of the sports. A form, with each recruited student-athlete's academic record (transcript and test scores) attached, is given to my staff and we then provide a prompt evaluation. We then inform the specific coach whether it is a reasonable expectation that the recruit would be a viable candidate for admission should that recruit formally apply. Our commitment to all the coaches is to try and respond to them within twenty-four hours. It is my opinion that we have at Notre Dame an outstanding group of coaches who represent the University well. There is mutual respect between my staff and the coaches and we have never experienced inappropriate pressure from personnel in the Department of Athletics related to the admission of recruited student-athletes. My only current concern at this time is the gap between the academic profile of the entering football recruits and that of the overall incoming class; that gap is greater than ever. In terms of high-school college-prep courses, grades and test scores, the overall student profile has gotten significantly stronger in recent years while the profile of our recruited football players has remained virtually unchanged. This could become a problem should the trend continue. Addressing Mr. Saracino's concern that the University might be at the "breaking point" with regard to the admission of student-athletes, Prof. Kirkner asked: What do you consider the "breaking point"? After all, he added, the average Notre Dame grade-point average for student-athletes seems to be up. True, Mr. Saracino replied, but about one-third of our high-profile student-athletes are high-risk students. Prof. Pope-Davis asked for a definition of "high-risk." Mr. Saracino: "High-risk" to me means a substantial chance of not making it beyond the first year. Prof. Botting expressed the view that the SAT might not be the best predictor of success. Mr. Saracino agreed that many factors enter into the likelihood of a student's success at Notre Dame. Mr. Saracino emphasized that the people handling admissions look closely at the courses students have taken in high school. A student with six "solids" has an enormously better chance of success than the student who has taken only three "solids." Course load offers a much better predictor of success than does even the grade-point average; a prospective student who barely satisfies the NCAA

minimum regarding course load will not make it at Notre Dame. Mr. Brown asked who determines the factors governing admissions; after all, what it takes to “make it” here involves many intangibles. Mr. Brown added that he himself had been a five-sport athlete and, indeed, one that might be referred to as a “premier” prospect. People at his high school, though, advised him not to take any advanced-placement courses. Admissions people need to appreciate these differences, must understand the intangibles, the unique dynamic involved in the performance of such student-athletes. You can look at the scores all you want, but, he stressed, the intangibles got him here and made him succeed. Many things get implicated, including parents, high-school athletics administrators, and social and economic factors. Some of these student-athletes see making it athletically not as a dream, but as mandatory to get a house for their parents. Notre Dame does a great job; one cannot overestimate the positive influence of Notre Dame’s environment. The Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, in particular, does a great job. Living with guys who are going to graduate, he said, makes you want to graduate. Mr. Saracino: I don’t think we should change; I just think we must “stay nervous,” be worried. We do try to counteract the erroneous advice that high-school student-athletes might get. We do tell student-athletes in high school what types of courses they need to take in order to secure admission to Notre Dame. Moreover, we emphasize to incoming students that half the battle is going to class and doing the homework. Nonetheless, in order to field a competitive team, we do admit a small group, say fifteen to seventeen student-athletes, whose “credential gap,” relative to the rest of the student population, increasingly widens. Dr. White indicated his pride at the academic achievements of our student-athletes. Even our few casualties, he added, come back, thanks to a great system. With regard to graduation rates and otherwise, we remain the envy of the country. We must continue to work hard, but our systems are very good. Ms. Conboy asked whether faculty/staff children at Notre Dame actually present a lower profile as applicants than do student-athletes. Mr. Saracino replied that in at least one recent year that indeed was the case. Responding to a question from Prof. Botting, Mr. Holmes lauded the role played by the Office of First Year of Studies, and especially Mr. Kevin Rooney, in advising student-athletes during the first year. The Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, of course, provides advice during the students-athletes’ entire stay at Notre Dame. Prof. Kelley expressed his surprise at the lack of any “benchmarking” in this area, a baseline by which we can measure success. Some student-athletes from the high-risk group will go on to the National Football League, but the majority will need to succeed in some other way. I would worry less about the so-called gap, he continued, and more about getting these student-athletes through our program successfully. Education at Notre Dame can be life-changing in a very profound way. In response to a question from the Chair, Mr. Saracino stated that he in fact interviews each prospective football player prior to admission. The Chair observed that Notre Dame always finds itself at, or close to, the top of the graduation-rate list for student-athletes. Does this reflect that the screening interview done by admissions is a “big deal”? Yes, Mr. Saracino responded; I stake my reputation on everyone accepted. Some prospective student-athletes come to realize that Notre Dame is not the right place for them, that they are not a “good fit.” Is it fair to say, the Chair inquired, that we make more admissions concessions for our high-profile teams? Yes, Mr. Saracino responded. But the likely makeup of different teams warrants mention. For example, the most common extracurricular activity among National Merit Scholars is cross-country. Playing the violin comes in second. The Chair: How do you insulate yourself from any inappropriate pressure? Happily, Mr. Saracino responded, our coaches are “on the same page” concerning admissions. In this regard, we have never seen a better group of coaches than we have today. I

get more pressure from our alumni. The Chair: Do you have much contact with head coaches? Mr. Saracino: Not that much. We do exchange e-mail and some meetings do take place. In response to a question from Prof. Weber, Mr. Saracino stated that the statistics distributed to Board members during the meeting did reflect changes in the way the SAT now gets graded. In answer to Prof. Pope-Davis's reference to fears that SAT scores will drop under the test's new format, Mr. Saracino said that sample testing indicates scores will remain about where they are. The Chair thanked Mr. Saracino for his report.

**5. Proposed NCAA Legislation:** Mr. Michael Karwoski, assistant director of athletics for compliance, discussed with the Board eight proposals currently working their way through the NCAA's legislative process. Mr. Karwoski felt that these eight, selected from among many others, held particular relevance to the work of the Board.

The first of these proposals would specify that an individual enrolled and receiving institutional athletics aid during the summer prior to initial full-time enrollment is not a "prospective student-athlete." This would allow institutions to treat such student-athletes (currently limited to men's and women's basketball) like current students rather than like recruits. Mr. Karwoski pointed out to the group that the NCAA will consider expanding this early summer-school option to all "at risk" student-athletes, as defined by each institution. This expansion, Mr. Holmes added, will have no serious impact on the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes; "we are ready." There remain some hurdles, however, including housing, orientation, and class offerings.

The second proposal would increase the maximum number of permissible contests in basketball from twenty-eight to twenty-nine and in hockey from thirty-four to thirty-five. The proposal would also eliminate all non-traditional-segment competition in soccer, volleyball, and women's lacrosse. Finally, the legislation would eliminate all "exempt" contests in all sports. Mr. Karwoski said that both coaches and players oppose eliminating the non-championship segments of the sports involved; the non-competition period provides many useful opportunities to train student-athletes and to provide them with experience. Bobby Clark, head coach of men's soccer, for example, feels that the fall season offers competition and the spring season a chance to develop younger players. So far, Mr. Karwoski observed, it remains unclear whether this proposal will pass. Prof. Power argued that, from an academic point of view, limiting off-season competition helps significantly. Ms. Conboy: But coaches and student-athletes say they would rather work out. They miss virtually no classes during the non-traditional season. Moreover, being away from your sport for eight months is not ideal for any athlete. Prof. Botting stated that, as a former student-athlete herself, she realizes that college sports inevitably means training throughout the entire year.

The third proposal would allow student-athletes in all sports a one-time transfer option. Currently, student-athletes in football, men's and women's basketball, and ice hockey cannot transfer without "sitting out" a full year prior to further competition. Mr. Karwoski deemed the proposal unwise. Dr. White agreed; student-athletes in these sports would be looking around for a better opportunity the first time they did not get the playing time they feel they deserve. This could have a huge impact on graduation rates. Prof. Garg: Wouldn't the proposal also present the possibility of recruitment continuing during a student-athlete's first two or three years in

college? Yes, Mr. Karwoski replied; indeed, it would present a never-ending problem. Prof. Pope-Davis wondered whether the rule wouldn't provide at least one good result: Student-athletes who come to a school for a particular head coach, only to find that coach going to another institution, would themselves have latitude to move. The Chair: But shouldn't student-athletes choose a university largely based on factors other than the head coach? Mr. Karwoski noted that under the proposal, at least in theory, a school could find itself left with no players should the head coach decide to go elsewhere.

The fourth proposal would allow institutions to play twelve regular-season football contests every year. Currently institutions may compete in twelve regular-season games only in those years having fourteen Saturdays between the first permissible playing date and the last playing date in November (the years 2002, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2019 fall into that category). Dr. White stressed the financial motivations at work in this proposal; many institutions need additional revenue to sustain what he calls the "athletic cathedrals" on their campuses. Only about ten to fifteen of the 117 division I-A institutions fare well financially; the others are fiscally "hemorrhaging." We should also remember that a Notre Dame home game yields an immense financial impact on this community.

The fifth proposal would allow student-athletes in Division I-A football to play five seasons of competition within five years of their initial full-time enrollment. Currently, with very few exceptions, student-athletes have five years in which to play a maximum of four years of competition. (The National Association of Basketball Coaches originally sponsored a parallel proposal, but has since withdrawn support for it.) Dr. White expressed his opposition to the proposal; it just would not fit well at Notre Dame. At some schools, the typical student takes more than four years to graduate, but that is not the case here. We are more traditional. Moreover, the five-year window could soon turn into a six-year window; student-athletes could start looking like "hired help." Moreover, about a fifth fewer students would experience Notre Dame as student-athletes should the rule be extended to all sports. The Chair noted that in many cases regular students take longer to graduate due to financial pressures; obviously, full grant-in-aid student-athletes do not generally face that problem. The Chair predicted that the proposal, once approved for football, would soon extend to other sports. In response to Prof. Kirkner's question regarding the likelihood of approval, Dr. White expressed his worry that the proposal might pass.

The sixth proposal would permit an institution to pay the air transportation for one parent (or legal guardian) to accompany a prospect during an official visit to the campus. Mr. Karwoski noted that under current rules institutions may pay for lodging for parents in such a situation. Although a good idea, the proposal certainly creates an issue of cost. Dr. White stated that prospects often come to campus unaccompanied by a parent. Obviously, it is difficult to decide what college to attend without any parental input; that is a huge decision. Moreover, the probability of our getting the prospect rises when a parent comes along; we can sell the parents. Told in response to his question that about fifty-six student-athletes make official visits to Notre Dame each year in football alone, Prof. Garg calculated the additional expense to be approximately \$50,000 per year. Prof. Pope-Davis saw the issue as a socioeconomic one. The parents of many student-athletes cannot afford a trip to campus. We should endorse this proposal. The NCAA Task Force on Recruiting tabled this proposal once before, but it is now

back. The Chair pointed out that the prospects for passage reflect tension between two different values: the advantages of having a parent accompany the student-athlete on the official visit versus the huge budgetary implications. At many schools the budget value will trump. Prof. Kelley agreed that the presence of a parent during the student-athlete's official visit would be "hugely beneficial." Ms. Conboy cautioned that the proposal would apply even to sports without NCAA limits on the number of visits. Prof. Garg: In some sports, therefore, we may need to set such limits.

The seventh proposal would allow student-athletes to use credit hours earned prior to enrollment through advanced-placement tests or credit by examination to meet the minimum progress-toward-degree requirement. Mr. Karwoski reported that most academics oppose this proposal; they resist any rule which would affect "progress towards degree" requirements through completion of pre-enrollment credits at secondary institutions. Were this proposal to pass, some colleges might cater to student-athletes who might not otherwise "make the numbers" required by the progress-toward-degree standards. This could undermine the recently enacted academic reform.

The eighth proposal would require all head coaches of men's basketball to develop annually, using community and institutional resources, an individual personal growth plan for each student-athlete under their charge. Furthermore, it would require that such coaches meet periodically with each student-athlete to ensure appropriate progress toward the objectives set out in that plan. Prof. Garg asked whether head coaches actually want this responsibility. Mr. Karwoski responded that head coaches actually seek more access to their student-athletes. Prof. Pope-Davis worried about what might happen to student-athletes who have a poor relationship with the coach. Prof. Fallon: Isn't this a Trojan Horse? Yes, Mr. Karwoski responded; that explains the over 130 guidelines accompanying this proposal. The Chair thanked Mr. Karwoski for his participation in this discussion.

**6. Reorganization of the Department of Athletics:** Ms. Conboy reported on recent changes in the administration of the Department of Athletics. Ms. Sandy Barbour, formerly deputy director of the department, has left Notre Dame to become director of athletics at the University of California-Berkeley. Mr. James Phillips, formerly senior associate athletics director, has left Notre Dame to become director of athletics at the University of Northern Illinois. These two departures have presented an opportunity to reorganize, especially at the senior level. Ms. Conboy and Mr. Muir have both become deputy athletics directors. Ms. Conboy will supervise business and legal affairs; Mr. Muir will oversee administration and facilities. Two senior positions, associate athletics director (for compliance and student-athlete welfare and development) and associate athletics director (for corporate relations and marketing), remain open. The department hopes to fill these positions by the end of the month. Mr. William Scholl and Mr. John Heisler have both become senior associate athletics directors. Mr. Scholl will oversee external affairs, formerly handled by Mr. Phillips. Mr. James Fraleigh will serve as assistant athletics director for external affairs and as executive director of the Monogram Club, a position formerly held by Mr. Scholl. Prof. Weber asked how these changes would affect student welfare. Ms. Conboy: We will now have one person overseeing compliance and student-athlete welfare and development, rather than two. These two areas work well as a package because too often student-athletes see the compliance person as the "bad guy." The combination

of responsibilities will provide a more positive image. Prof. Kelley: Is there any concern that student-athletes will react negatively to the “good guy-bad guy” scenario? Dr. White responded that the quality of the administrative staff leads him to believe that this will not be a significant issue. Dr. White emphasized that Ms. Conboy oversees human resources for the department and has been very instrumental in the reorganization process. Prof. Pope-Davis applauded Dr. White for making the hiring of women and people of color a “hallmark” of his tenure. Ms. Conboy added that the compliance-student welfare position has yielded an incredibly diverse pool of applicants; she anticipates an equally diverse pool for the other vacant position. Dr. White: We have been aggressive in this regard and will continue to be, but it is, as everyone knows, a constant challenge. In any event, by using entry-level vacancies to provide opportunities to a diverse group of people, we in effect work hard to create our own tomorrow. The Chair thanked Ms. Conboy for her report.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.