

FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Meeting of December 1, 2003

5th Floor Conference Room, Main Building

Members Present: Prof. Fernand Dutile (Chair); Prof. Matthew Barrett; Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. John Borkowski; Mr. Bobby Brown; Dr. Matthew Cullinan; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Prof. Umesh Garg; Mr. Patrick Holmes; Prof. David Kirkner; Prof. Layna Mosley; (Rev.) Mark Poorman, C.S.C.; Prof. Donald Pope-Davis; Prof. John Weber; Dr. Kevin White.

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

1. Call to order and prayer: The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Father Poorman led the group in prayer.

2. Minutes of previous meeting: Prof. Barrett moved that the minutes for the meeting of November 6, 2003, be approved. Father Poorman seconded. The vote was unanimous.

3. Announcements: The Chair informed the Board that he had approved, on its behalf, the playing schedule for baseball for spring 2004. He announced a change in the men's tennis schedule; the home match against Wisconsin will be played on Saturday, February 14, rather than Sunday, February 15.

The Chair has also approved a slate of candidates for 2003 captaincies in football. The permanent captains for the 2003 season will be elected from this slate and announced at the football banquet on December 12. [The team ultimately selected as its captains Darrell Campbell, Vontez Duff, Omar Jenkins, and Jim Molinaro.] The Chair announced approval of the following captains: Natalie Ladine and Kathleen Welsh (rowing); and Steve Clagett, Brennan Creaney, Stewart Crosland and Matt Howell (men's lacrosse). At the Chair's request, the Board ratified these actions regarding both playing schedules and captains.

The Chair announced that in January 2004 at the NCAA Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, Father Hesburgh will receive the NCAA's first President Gerald R. Ford Award. The award "honors an individual who has provided significant leadership as an advocate for intercollegiate athletics on a continuing basis over the course of his or her career." That award carries with it a check for \$25,000 to fund scholarships at the institution of the award-recipient's choice.

The Chair noted that the compliance office of the Department of Athletics had sent to each member of the Board a copy of NCAA legislation currently proposed for Division I. In an e-mail message, the Chair had set out those proposals he deemed of particular interest to the Board. A special meeting of the Board will be scheduled to consider these proposals with a view to informing Notre Dame's ultimate position on them. These proposals will also be discussed at the NCAA Convention in January 2004, both within the Big East Conference and within Division I, and ultimately voted on by the NCAA Board of Directors in April 2004.

4. Board communications: Prof. Fallon, speaking for the subcommittee on communication, sought feedback from Board members regarding several issues. First, the subcommittee wishes to continue the work of the Bridge Series, a project that has been suspended since the dissolution of The Mendelson Center for Sports, Character, and Community. Second, the subcommittee seeks ways to identify the most successful student-athletes—Vanessa Pruzinsky of the women's soccer team comes to mind. Third, the subcommittee would like to address the negative image student-athletes, and especially our football players, seem to have among many in the Notre Dame community. Fourth, the subcommittee would like some feedback regarding the creation of a web page for the Board; although we are a quasi-representative body, we really have no good way to communicate with the community at large. A web page could explain who we are, tell those with concerns regarding athletics and academics how to get those concerns addressed, and seek community feedback on issues faced by the Board. All of this would need to be done, of course, with sensitivity regarding confidential material. Fifth, we need some method to improve consultation among Board members between formal meetings. E-mail votes may not allow for sufficient information or exchange of views; such a situation arose recently in our consideration of a waiver relating to the academic program of a fifth-year student-athlete. The subcommittee did discuss implementing a "listserv" for these purposes, but remains concerned that confidentiality might be compromised. As the subcommittee's discussion progressed, the subcommittee increasingly preferred establishing a series of scheduled conference calls during the summer. This arrangement would avoid "blind" voting on certain issues. Would something like this work? The Chair pointed out that he occasionally needs a vote within two or three days for especially time-sensitive issues. The summer conference calls would not respond to that concern. Prof. Garg pointed out that a listserv can be limited to those with authorization to use it; this limitation addresses the confidentiality problem. Prof. Fallon: Can the listserv be set up so as not to be archived? Prof. Garg: Yes, that is an option. Prof. Mosley observed that the subcommittee worried that a list does not always promote sharing in the same way that talking about something does. Prof. Garg noted that after an e-mail exchange, a conference call, which is easy to set up, could be held if needed. Prof. Barrett agreed; we could use the list, but go to a conference call if a specified number of people would like to discuss the matter over the phone. In setting deadlines, he continued, we should be sure to use the concept of "working days"; moreover, Board members should have the right to change their votes up to a specified time. The Chair saw the possibility of two different "windows" – a two-day window, say, for voting when a fast vote is needed, but a larger window of discussion triggered when a specified number of people, during the smaller window, invokes that device. The Board favored the idea of a web page, as well. The device would facilitate communication between members of the Board and the rest of the community, allow for earlier publication of the minutes of Board meetings, and provide access to the *FBA Manual*. The Chair thanked Prof. Fallon and the subcommittee on communication for its good

work.

5. *The Victory March*: Prof. Barrett, for the subcommittee on student welfare, reported on further developments regarding the possibility or desirability of promoting a more gender-neutral version of *The Victory March*. On November 12, the subcommittee on student welfare had discussed this issue with the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC), which comprises representatives of all varsity teams. At that meeting, representatives from nine varsity teams, men's and women's, spoke. None indicated any interest on the part of themselves or their teammates to change the traditional rendition of our "Fight Song." (The team representatives had ample occasion to discuss the matter with their teammates, since the Chair of the Faculty Board on Athletics had appeared at the previous SAAC meeting to notify them of the upcoming discussion). In light of the reaction of our student-athletes, Prof. Barrett, for the subcommittee, recommended that Board discussion of the issue be closed. The Chair agreed, especially in light of the fact that the words of the "Fight Song" address student-athletes directly. Because the Board's jurisdiction centers so strongly on student-athlete welfare, and since student-athletes seem against any change, there remains little for the Board to do. Members of the Board generally agreed, although Prof. Borkowski noted his aversion to building principle on what nine representatives of varsity teams might say. The Chair thanked Prof. Barrett and the subcommittee on student welfare for their fine work. The Chair added that he would report this resolution of the matter to the faculty member who first raised it with him.

6. *Conference on religion, ritual and sport*: Prof. Bender, for the committee on academic integrity, distributed to Board members the draft of an outline for a conference on religion, ritual and sport. Indicating his wish to see the conference as the first in a series of events for the entire community, Prof. Bender reviewed the outline and discussed possible speakers listed on it. The conference could well be a keystone or kick-off for a renovated Bridge Series. Indeed, the subcommittee on academic integrity has met with the subcommittee on communication; both subcommittees want to see the Bridge Series continued, though a variety of formats, big and small, seems possible. The subcommittee has asked Ms. Kitty Hoyer to assist with these efforts. The subcommittee does, however, need the Board's "input" to make the conference successful. Prof. Pope-Davis, a member of the subcommittee, alluded to the possibility that C-SPAN might cover the event. The subcommittee plans to discuss with Lou Nanni, vice-president for university relations, the possibility of securing funding for the project. We do, however, need the reaction of the Board to our proposals. Dr. White observed that NCAA president Myles Brand, mentioned as a possible speaker for the conference, would be terrific. Unfortunately, he speaks at one of these conferences virtually every week, which relates to a still larger concern: Is there a glut of such programs at this time? Members of the National Association of Athletics Directors get invited to such events repeatedly. Prof. Bender: We do need that kind of information, but Notre Dame, as a religious institution, could offer something special. We could produce a conference reflecting the special mission of this institution. Father Poorman thought that creating such a niche would require the participation of sociologists, anthropologists and religious people—scholars like Father Tom O'Meara, who has developed a paper on "game day" at Notre Dame. Such a program must address the intersection of religion and athletics. Prof. Borkowski: Who is our audience? Prof. Bender: Generally, the Notre Dame community. Prof. Borkowski: It's difficult for us to move that community from, say, Decio to McKenna Hall. I suggest working with the Department of Theology; the more specialized the theme, the better. The Chair noted the importance of deciding whether "religion," a main component of

the proposed conference, is used in its usual sense or as an analogue for sport itself. Prof. Weber thought that the subcommittee on academic integrity, on which he sits, should be expanded, with regard to this project, to include a theologian and perhaps others. We might be able to produce a conference quite different from those Dr. White had mentioned as commonplace. Dr. White added that a discussion of religion and ritual could be tied to an actual Notre Dame football game; in that event, his department could arrange tickets for the speakers. Prof. Fallon asked Dr. White for his views on producing something special. Dr. White: If you focus on religion, that will be unique. Prof. Bender thanked the group for its response and invited further input.

7. Conference affiliation, Bowl Championship Series and television: At this point, Dr. White reported to the Board on national developments regarding conference affiliations, the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) and television-rights fees. An extensive discussion ensued.

8. Report on student-athlete surveys: Mr. Muir addressed the results of student-athlete surveys taken at the end of the 2002-03 academic year. The findings involve twenty-six sports programs and responses from 576 (of 692) student-athletes. We have shared our information with the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, with senior staff, with head coaches and the like. Mr. Muir expressed great satisfaction at how positively student-athletes react to their athletics and academic experience at Notre Dame. Prof. Garg noted that the data indicated a significant downturn in “team morale.” Mr. Muir responded that this probably reflects a “down year” on the part of one team. Dr. White agreed; with regard to two or three teams we conducted interventions last year that could have influenced that factor. Prof. Bender, and then the Board by acclamation, thanked Mr. Muir and his staff for the tremendous amount of work put into conducting the student-athlete surveys and in continually updating the survey instrument. Dr. White emphasized the impact made by the data collection and feedback related to the student-athlete surveys. Through them, we know what student-athletes feel and we gain the confidence of that group.

9. Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.