

FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Meeting of October 9, 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; Prof. Stephen Fallon; Mr. Patrick Holmes; Prof. David Kirkner; Prof. Layna Mosley; (Rev.) Mark Poorman, C.S.C.; Prof. Donald Pope-Davis; Dr. Kevin White; Prof. John Weber.

Members Absent: Dr. Matthew Cullinan and Prof. Umesh Garg.

Observers Present: Ms. Sandy Barbour, Ms. Missy Conboy, Mr. Mike Karwoski 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 5:05 p.m. Father Poorman led the group in prayer.

2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting: Prof. Bender moved that the minutes for the meeting of September 15, 2003, be approved. Prof. Weber seconded that motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Announcements: The Chair announced the membership of the Board's subcommittees for the 2003-04 academic year. The subcommittee on academic integrity will comprise Prof. Bender (Chair), Mr. Holmes, Prof. Pope-Davis and Prof. Weber. The subcommittee on student welfare will comprise Prof. Barrett (Chair), Mr. Brown, Prof. Garg and Prof. Kirkner. The subcommittee on communication will include Prof. Fallon (Chair), Prof. Borkowski and Prof. Mosley.

The Chair reported on a meeting of Division IA directors of athletics and faculty athletics representatives held in Dallas in late September. Dr. Myles Brand, president of the NCAA, delivered the keynote talk there. In that talk, a summary of which was distributed to all members of the Board, Dr. Brand cited Notre Dame as one institution that fairly fully integrated its athletics program into the general university structure. At that meeting, the faculty athletics representatives agreed to pursue formally organizing themselves as a separate Division IA "faculty rep" organization. That organization, it was decided, would operate under the auspices of the Faculty Athletics Representatives Association, a national group for faculty reps of all NCAA divisions. At the Dallas meeting, an executive committee made up of one faculty rep from each Division IA athletics conference was formed. The Chair will serve on that executive committee as a representative of the Big East.

The Chair then briefly alluded to two issues prominently discussed at the Dallas meeting: a twelfth football game on an annual basis (currently, only certain calendar years allow for a twelfth game) and a possible change to five years of playing eligibility, as opposed to the current four years of eligibility within a five-year window. Participants in the Dallas meeting strongly supported a regular twelfth game, largely for fiscal reasons and despite some concerns that a twelfth game placed too much of a burden on student-athletes. The group expressed at least some sentiment that provision for a regular twelve-game season should require that any conference-championship game count against that limit. With regard to the suggested increase in years of eligibility, the Chair stressed his concerns, concerns that he raised at the Dallas meeting. If five years of eligibility become the norm, inevitably there will be a push to allow six years in which to play the five; where does this end? Moreover, if a particular student-athlete can occupy a playing position for five years, rather than four, still fewer student-athletes will enjoy the benefits of actual competition.

The Chair reported on a meeting, sponsored by the Board and attended by “working deans” Ava Preacher, of the College of Arts and Letters, and Sam Gaglio, of the Mendoza College of Business. Also present: Mr. Holmes, Mr. Muir and the Chair of the Faculty Board on Athletics. The meeting addressed the issue of time spent away from campus by student-athletes competing not as members of Notre Dame varsity teams but rather as members, or prospective members, of national teams and the like. Practice and competition of our varsity teams fall within the jurisdiction of the Board. Individual events occurring under Notre Dame auspices, such as tennis invitationals, fall within the jurisdiction of the vice-president for student affairs and the director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes. Practice or competition in connection with national teams, however, seems to “fall between the chairs.” Some student-athletes miss extensive periods of campus presence in connection with such participation. What to do? After a long discussion, Dean Preacher promised to bring to the Undergraduate Studies Committee a proposal to limit any student’s absence from campus. Her proposal would not trump any other attendance rules and would apply to all student activities, not just athletics.

The Chair announced that he had approved, on the Board’s behalf, the following team schedules: football (2003); men’s lacrosse (2003-04); men’s basketball (2003-04) (including a study-day game on December 14 against DePaul in Chicago specifically approved by the Board); women’s basketball (2003-04) (revised) (including a study-day game on December 15 against Dayton at home, specifically approved by the Board); men’s golf (fall 2003); and men’s swimming (2003-04).

The chair announced that he had approved the following team captains: women’s cross-country (Lauren King, Stephanie Madia and Katie Ellgass); hockey (a slate of candidates from which the team will choose its ultimate captains, in addition to Aaron Gill, who had been approved as a captain on April 7, 2003; the Department of Athletics will notify the Chair of those ultimately selected from the slate). At this point, the Board ratified the decisions announced by the Chair with regard to team schedules and team captains.

4. Men’s golf revisited: At the September 15, 2003, meeting of the Board, the men’s golf team had

requested a fourth class-miss day (one more than normally allowed) in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence. As it turned out, the event originally thought to require such an additional class-miss day fell not during classes but during the study-day period. Alas, as originally scheduled, that event would require absence from campus during three study days, April 30 through May 2, 2004. Mr. Karwoski, athletics administrator overseeing the team, told the Board that the team now proposes to skip the practice round on April 30 and instead be absent from campus only on May 1 and 2. He stressed the importance of this competition, one of two regional competitions needed for qualifying for the NCAA tournament. Asked when the competition would end on that Sunday (May 2), Mr. Karwoski responded that the round would take about five hours. Asked whether the team would have any other commitments the next week, Mr. Karwoski replied that the team would have a two-week gap before any further competition. Prof. Barrett found very problematic the prospect of missing the last two study days. Isn't there only a one-week gap between the conference tournament and the NCAA regional? Couldn't we play in a different tournament on April 15 and 16, when the Big East tournament had originally been scheduled? An additional class-miss day struck him as preferable to missing the last two study days. Prof. Pope-Davis asked if the Michigan State tournament, scheduled for those study days, presented the only occasion for the team to qualify for the NCAA tournament. Mr. Karwoski replied that the Big East is actually the most prominent tournament; but if we don't qualify there, then we must rely on the tournaments at Purdue and Michigan State. Prof. Pope-Davis wondered whether, if the team does well at the Big East tournament and secures an automatic qualification to the NCAA tournament, the team would still participate in the Michigan State event. Mr. Karwoski: The Michigan State event provides the only competition prior to the NAAs. Prof. Weber: How many students are we really talking about, five? Yes, Mr. Karwoski replied, the number is small. Prof. Kirkner moved that the proposal be approved. The motion, seconded by Prof. Mosley, passed 6-4.

5. Women's swimming schedule: Ms. Barbour, athletics administrator for women's swimming, brought to the Board a proposed schedule calling for two class-miss days (December 4 and 5) during the last week of class, a period during which University regulations especially discourage absences. In response to Prof. Weber's question concerning whether any travel time was involved, Ms. Barbour noted that two separate but coinciding meets were implicated: the Notre Dame Invitational and the U. S. Open, to which we usually send from six to eight student-athletes, depending on how many qualify. Prof. Mosley: Will student-athletes also miss one-half a day on December 3 for travel? Ms. Barbour: Only those attending the U. S. Open will miss the one-half day. Prof. Barrett wondered whether the U. S. Open needed Board approval, since it seems to be an individual event, not a team event. Dr. White responded that he viewed the event as a Notre Dame one since Notre Dame will finance the trip. Prof. Borkowski suggested that since the U. S. Open involves travel to the West Coast the team could leave after the day's last class. Ms. Barbour assured Prof. Borkowski that the team's head coach will do the very best, within financial constraints, in that regard. Prof. Mosley noted, with regard to the one-half day, that once again we are dealing with a very small number of students. Ms. Barbour added that the team will not travel this fall as much as it has in the past; indeed, the team will stay on campus for two weeks prior to the U. S. Open. Prof. Fallon wondered why, in light of University guidelines, the Notre Dame Invitational falls during the last week of class. Ms. Conboy responded that traditionally that tournament occurs earlier, but a late Thanksgiving holiday occasioned the current situation. Prof. Borkowski saw no real difference between this issue and that involved in the men's-golf request just

discussed. Perhaps some regulation addressing individual students with poor grade-point averages or other academic problems might be considered. We should trust student-athletes who have handled their responsibilities well; those who have not should not compete. Prof. Borkowski moved that the Board approve the request to compete during the last week of class. Prof. Pope-Davis seconded that motion. The motion carried, 6-2.

6. Report on academic progress of student-athletes: Mr. Holmes distributed to Board members a report on the academic performance of student-athletes during the Spring 2003 semester. The overall Spring 2003 grade-point average for all 677 student-athletes: 3.132. Sixty-seven percent of the student-athletes had a 3.000 grade-point average or higher; thirty-six percent of the student-athletes had a 3.400 grade-point average or higher. Sixteen full-time student-athletes (*i.e.*, carrying twelve or more credit hours) earned a perfect 4.0 grade-point average. Mr. Holmes noted that 201 student-athletes were named Big East Academic All-Stars; that honor requires a 3.0 grade-point average or better for the academic year *and* a monogram from a team participating in the Big East Conference. Notre Dame also produced four Academic All-Americans: John Crowther (football), J. P. Gagne (baseball), Steve Sollmann (baseball) and Luke Watson (track). For the first time ever, four Notre Dame teams (women's fencing, women's golf, women's tennis and volleyball) boasted semester averages above 3.400. Its 3.479 grade-point average gave women's golf the highest semester performance of all the teams. Two teams (women's golf and men's tennis) earned their highest semester grade-point average ever. Five teams (hockey, women's swimming, men's tennis, women's tennis and volleyball) currently carry their highest cumulative grade-point averages ever. On the negative side, fourteen student-athletes, including eight on the football team, found themselves on academic probation at the end of the semester. Ten of these fourteen went to summer school; nine of those came off probation. Of the other four, one student-athlete decided to quit school and three others returned this Fall on academic probation. Prof. Pope-Davis suggested that the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes provide a breakdown by "year in school." Where do the problems occur? For example, is it between the freshman and sophomore years? Mr. Holmes replied that such statistics could be provided. Certainly, he added, we focus on the transitional year; the first year is indeed the best predictor. Father Poorman expressed his surprise that ninety student-athletes who would have made the Dean's List under the old standards did not make it under the new. Prof. Borkowski wondered about Notre Dame's success with regard to students who are "at-risk" (perhaps measured by some threshold level of SAT or grade-point average in high school); are we servicing these students adequately? Could we get a breakdown of their success rate? Prof. Borkowski saw a need to "track" that success rate. Dr. White agreed; collecting those data would help with intervention. Nonetheless, although we can always do better, he added, we are in the aggregate doing better than anyone else in the country. Father Poorman wanted information on how student-athletes have done at Notre Dame in light of their entering credentials. If indeed we do well with student-athletes in light of their entering credentials, both he and Prof. Borkowski saw such information as a tremendous recruiting tool; we can show the parents of a prospective student-athlete the statistics predicting that their child will do well at Notre Dame. Dr. White: We market those predictions now; of course, it would be nice to have the data to back them up. Informed that about 120 student-athletes enter summer school, Prof. Barrett inquired about the value of tracking those students. Mr. Holmes: Not all teams are represented, but tracking can still take place. Prof. Weber noted the extent to which female student-athletes at Notre Dame academically outperform

male student-athletes. Is that an issue of motivation alone? Prof. Kirkner suggested the desirability of statistics on grant-in-aid student-athletes, as opposed to other student-athletes. The Chair thanked Mr. Holmes for his report.

7. Report on the new process for certification of eligibility: Ms. Barbour, associate athletics director for compliance, reported on a significant change in the process for certification of student-athlete eligibility. Formerly, head coaches would prepare a list of team members and social security numbers. Those sheets then went to a compliance officer in the Department of Athletics, then to the Office of Student Affairs to insure “good citizenship,” then to the Office of the Registrar to ascertain academic good standing, and then to the NCAA faculty athletics representative for a final “sign-off.” The new form allows entry of all pertinent data, including initial date of enrollment at Notre Dame (and any other institution attended prior to Notre Dame), grade-point average, number of credit hours completed, percentage of credit hours needed for graduation, academic good standing and a special column for any “comments.” Moreover, the form adds to the old a special section in which the director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes assesses compliance with NCAA academic requirements, as opposed to Notre Dame’s requirements for academic good standing. (Ms. Barbour stressed that Notre Dame’s academic standards remain much tougher than those of the NCAA. Mr. Holmes agreed; for example, the NCAA requires that student-athletes complete twenty-five percent of their degree requirements (soon to be forty percent) by the beginning of their junior year. At Notre Dame, students generally satisfy that requirement by the end of their first year.) The new form allows the NCAA faculty athletics representative to “spot check” information without having to access the database in the Office of the Registrar. Moreover, if any of the people charged with reviewing the form see a problem, that problem gets noted in the “comment” column. Father Poorman: What about transfer permissions? Ms. Barbour: The NCAA “faculty rep” oversees that. Responding to requests from Prof. Barrett and Prof. Pope-Davis, Ms. Barbour explained each category on the form and listed who on campus discharged the responsibility for “signing off” on that particular area: with regard to compliance matters, Mr. Karwoski of the Department of Athletics; with regard to citizenship matters, Mr. William Kirk of the Office of Student Affairs; with regard to University academic good standing, Ms. Lora Spaulding of the Office of the Registrar; with regard to NCAA eligibility, Mr. Holmes of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes; and with regard to overall oversight, Prof. Dutile, Chair of the Faculty Board on Athletics and the University’s NCAA faculty athletics representative. Dr. White pointed out that the Department of Athletics has added a new person in compliance, Mr. Allen Greene. We have thus moved from two to four people working in compliance, although some of these have duties other than compliance. We hope to have five people working in this area soon.

8. Report on conference affiliation: At the Chair’s request, Dr. White gave another in a series of updates on the evolving situation with regard to athletics conferences. Dr. White reported that on the upcoming Sunday Boston College would be invited to join the ACC. [Note: That invitation did issue and was accepted.] Following discussion among Board members about this development and its related implications to the Big East Conference and Notre Dame, the Chair thanked Dr. White for his report.

9. Adjournment: The chair adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.