



FACULTY BOARD ON ATHLETICS UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Meeting of November 6, 2003

5th Floor Conference Room, Main Building

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

Members Absent: Prof. Harvey Bender; Prof. John Borkowski; Prof. Umesh Garg; and Dr. Kevin White.

Observers Present: Ms. Sandy Barbour and Ms. Missy Conboy, both of the Department of Athletics; and 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. Minutes of previous meeting: Dr. Cullinan moved that the minutes of the meeting of October 9, 2003, be approved. Prof. Barrett seconded that motion, which passed unanimously.

3. Announcements: The Chair announced that he had approved, on behalf of the Board, the following team schedules: softball (2003-04); men's and women's fencing (2003-04); women's lacrosse (spring 2004); and women's swimming (2003-04), including competition scheduled for the last week of class and specifically approved by the Board at its meeting of October 9, 2003. The Chair has approved, for men's basketball, a revision that moves Notre Dame's home game against Georgetown University from Wednesday, March 3, 2004, to Thursday, March 4, 2004.

The Chair also has approved, on the Board's behalf, the following team captains for 2003-04, all of whom meet the University's criteria for appointment: Neil Komadoski and Rob Globke (hockey), who join Aaron Gill, previously approved as a captain; and Steve Sollman, Javier Sanchez and Chris Niesel (baseball).

Following these announcements, the Board ratified the Chair's decisions with regard to team schedules and captains.

4) Report on academic progress of grant-in-aid students versus other student athletes: In an earlier Board discussion of academic progress of student-athletes generally, it had been suggested that comparing the academic profiles of grant-in-aid student-athletes (*i.e.*, those receiving any athletics-related financial aid) with those of other student-athletes might be instructive. Mr. Holmes, as director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes, distributed to the Board a chart entitled *Spring '03 Semester GPA: All Student-Athlete/G.I.A. Student-Athlete Comparison*. The average GPA of all 677 student-athletes (3.132) exceeded that of the 360 grant-in-aid student-athletes (3.048) by .084. Eight varsity teams reflected higher GPAs for grant-in-aid student-athletes than for all student-athletes; fourteen teams showed a lower GPA for grant-in-aid student-athletes than for all student-athletes. By team, the difference between GPAs for grant-in-aid student-athletes and all student-athletes ranged from -.188 (football) to +.115 (women's soccer).

Professor Barrett pointed out that including grant-in-aid student-athletes in both groups dilutes the differences in GPA. For example, the GPA difference between all non-grant-in-aid student-athletes and grant-in-aid student-athletes is -.18; the difference between the two groups on the football team is -.64. Mr. Holmes stated that his office did not "weight" the figures that way but was not trying to conceal anything by combining the two groups in the "total" category. Ms. Barbour suggested that setting out three categories (all, grant-in-aid, and non-grant-in aid) might be the most helpful breakdown, at least, Professor Barrett added, when there are at least five students in each category. In response to a question from Prof. Pope-Davis, Ms. Barbour reported that at least fifty percent of non-grant-in-aid student-athletes receive financial aid from non-athletics-related sources. Prof. Kirkner: What about "at-risk" student-athletes? Do we define "at-risk" differently today? A few years ago, he continued, we did a study of such student-athletes and used a grade-point average under 2.2 as the criterion for being at-risk. But now GPAs have all shifted upward due to grade inflation. The Chair remembered that a relatively recent study done by the University's Office of Institutional Research showed virtually no grade inflation at Notre Dame if one adjusts for entering credentials. Mr. Holmes observed that there is no one definition of "at-risk." The bar is set at different heights for different student-athletes. Some who earn a 2.4 or a 2.6 have gotten all they could out of a Notre Dame education. Father Poorman noted the importance of recognizing the extent to which our typical student has improved over the years, exacerbating the difference between that student and some student-athletes, especially in the high-profile sports. The Chair thanked Mr. Holmes for his report.

5. Report on student-athletes living off-campus: Each year, the director of the Office of Academic Services for Student-Athletes reports to the Board on the academic progress of grant-in-aid student-athletes who have chosen to live off-campus during their senior year. Mr. Holmes distributed to Board members two documents entitled, respectively, *Senior G-I-A Student-Athletes Living Off-Campus: Academic Performance Fall 2002*, and *Senior G-I-A Student-Athletes Living Off-Campus: Academic Performance Spring 2003*. During fall 2002, thirty-two of the forty-six student-athletes living off-campus earned a semester GPA higher than their cumulative GPAs; fourteen earned a semester GPA lower than their cumulative GPAs. The average student in this group showed a semester GPA .107 higher than that student's cumulative GPA. Among these students, the difference between semester GPA and cumulative GPA ranged from -.651 to +.500. During spring 2003, thirty-five of the

forty-six student-athletes living off-campus earned a semester GPA higher than their cumulative GPAs; eleven earned a semester GPA lower than their cumulative GPAs. The average student in this group showed a semester GPA .162 higher than that student's cumulative GPA. Among these students, the difference between semester GPA and cumulative GPA ranged from -.601 to +.733. Of the forty-six students who lived off-campus, forty-four graduated, one returned for a fifth year of eligibility and one, though having exhausted athletics eligibility, returned to the University in order to earn student-teaching credits. The Chair thanked Mr. Holmes for his report.

6. Report on spring semester for fifth-year student-athletes: The Chair reported that he had added this item to the agenda at the request of Prof. Weber. Prof. Weber cited as the genesis of his concern a discussion in the subcommittee on academic integrity that suggested that some fifth-year, second-semester student-athletes used the University not for academic purposes, but rather as a training facility for enhancing prospects as a professional athlete. Such student-athletes attended few if any classes. Some who did attend classes seemed to care little about how they did in those courses and too often failed them. He saw the need for a full-Board discussion of the matter. Both Mr. Holmes and Ms. Barbour acknowledged the problem. The latter emphasized that the Department of Athletics found such use of the University unacceptable. The problem seems focused on football for two reasons: the greater prospects for professional opportunities in that sport and the fact that football is a fall sport. Administrators in the Department met with Coach Willingham who, along with the administrators, subsequently met with the football team's Leadership Council. The University's expectations regarding the spring semester of the fifth year were stressed, as well as the unacceptability of using that semester only as an athletics training term. The Leadership Council agreed fully with these expectations and "signed on" to them. Accordingly, the Department of Athletics drafted a policy under which, with regard to student-athletes on the football team, the Department will no longer issue grants-in-aid for the entire fifth year, but rather for only one semester at a time. The student-athlete will receive an offer of a grant-in-aid for the spring semester only if expectations for the fall semester were met. Even in the spring semester, Ms. Barbour continued, if we learn they are not attending their classes, we will "pull the plug" on them. Prof. Pope-Davis: What recourse do we have if they just leave during the semester? We can withhold their transcript, Ms. Barbour answered. Informed that the policy was now in effect, Prof. Pope-Davis worried about a retroactive application. We discussed this with those student-athletes in August, Ms. Barbour stressed, before the fall term began. The Chair noted that the policy does not address the number of credits the student-athlete must carry during the spring semester; the University's minimum-credit rules for fifth-years do not apply when the student is not competing. Nonetheless, Prof. Barrett added, the rule does wield great importance. For example, in a semester like this one, when a Bowl game seems unlikely, the rule provides an incentive for the student-athlete to remain academically engaged lest the grant-in-aid for the spring semester be lost. Ms. Barbour agreed that the rule eventuated due to football but noted that it could play a role in the spring scenario of other sports by creating a disincentive for a student-athlete to disengage academically once the playing season ended. Prof. Mosley: What about a student who fails a course in the fall? Do we inevitably withhold a spring grant-in-aid? Ms. Barbour: That would depend on an individual assessment of the situation; termination will result only from bad faith. In any event, any non-renewal can be appealed to the appeals board. The Chair pointed out that the policy's phrase "may return in the spring" could be read to create an entitlement. Mr. Brown observed that any termination could carry huge financial

implications. How strict will the Department of Athletics be? I understand the concern, but preparing for the NFL draft, the objective of many football players during that spring semester, will occasion many missed classes. Moreover, this is a two-way street. These athletes offer a lot to program. Younger athletes see them working out for the NFL combines and the older players can be a good influence on the younger athletes and on recruits. These fifth-years make serious sacrifices, too. When he found himself in that situation, he decided to stay in South Bend rather than go to South Florida. Ms. Barbour acknowledged Mr. Brown's concerns. These athletes justifiably feel that we owe them something, but not without some academic engagement. Alas, although some of these athletes took their academic work seriously and worked things out with their professors, others just "blew off" the semester. Agreeing, Prof. Mosley stressed that she would look favorably on a student-athlete who came to her to explain the necessity of missing class for the "combines;" such a student exercises responsibility and she would give him credit for that. Prof. Weber suggested that we monitor which courses such student-athletes take in order to assess any unwholesome pattern. Ms. Barbour concluded by stating that the Department would make needed changes in its written policy on this topic.

7. Reorganization of the Department of Athletics: Ms. Barbour reported briefly on the recent reorganization of the Department of Athletics. That reorganization resulted from the retirement of associate athletics director Tom Kelly on July 1, 2003. That retirement occasioned a reduction in the number of senior staff from seven to six, among whom Mr. Kelly's responsibilities were distributed. On July 1, several promotions took effect. Ms. Barbour became deputy director of athletics, while Ms. Missy Conboy, Mr. Bernard Muir and Mr. Jim Phillips became senior associate athletics directors. Ms. Barbour pointed out that this reorganization followed fast upon that occurring during the Summer of 2001. At that time, when Mr. Bubba Cunningham left the Department to assume the directorship of athletics at Ball State University, Mr. William Scholl assumed Mr. Cunningham's duties. No replacement was named, however, for Mr. Scholl; his duties too were assigned to existing personnel.

8. Report on Conference Affiliation: To put this issue in context, the Chair rehearsed recent developments. Ms. Barbour then elaborated on the many implications attending the recent realignments affecting many athletics conferences. At present Notre Dame is "staying the course" with the Big East; we are, however, "monitoring the landscape." During a lengthy discussion, Ms. Barbour also explained the current status of the NBC and BCS (Bowl Championship Series) contracts, both of which expire in 2005.

9. NCAA report on intercollegiate-athletics spending: At this point the Board discussed a study commissioned by the NCAA and entitled *The Empirical Effects of Collegiate Athletics: an Interim Report*. Among its conclusions: 1) in the aggregate, operating expenses for intercollegiate athletics constitute a relatively small part of spending at Division I-A institutions; 2) football and basketball “markets” exhibited increased levels of inequality between 1993 and 2001; 3) football and basketball “markets” exhibit some degree of mobility in expenditures, revenues, and winning percentages; 4) over the medium term, at least, increases in operating expenditures on football or men’s basketball are not associated with any change, on average, in operating net revenue; 5) such increases in operating expenditures are not associated with medium-term increases in winning percentages, and higher winning percentages are not associated with medium-term increases in operating revenue or operating net revenue; 6) within the parameters of the study, the authors could not prove a correlation between increased operating expenses on big-time sports and a) expenditures on other sports; b) measurable academic quality or c) other measurable indicators, including alumni giving; and 7) the hypothesis that football and basketball markets exhibit an “arms race” in which increased expenditures in one institution are associated with such increases in other institutions could not be proven from the available data. The authors did make clear, however, that their results must be qualified. Among other limitations, the study did not assess capital, as opposed to operating, expenditures and involved a relatively brief period of only eight years.

In discussing the report, Ms. Barbour found incredible any assertion of an absence of an “arms race.” Prof. Barrett wondered whether athletics success at Notre Dame translates into better-quality students, higher donations and so forth. Can we apply this national study to our unique situation at Notre Dame? Dr. Cullinan reported that last year’s applicant pool reflected one of the most diverse such groups in Notre Dame’s history. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to attribute that fact to athletics success. The people in development here maintain there is no connection between our athletics achievements and the level of giving. Prof. Mosley wondered whether the study took into account cost-of-living differentials. Dr. Cullinan agreed that there are some differences—real estate, for example, but stated that many expenses remain the same across the country.

10. Reports of subcommittees: Prof. Barrett, for the subcommittee on student welfare, reported on the issue of alleged gender bias in the *Notre Dame Victory March*, an issue brought to the Board by a member of the faculty. With regard to copyright, Prof. Barrett noted that the song’s refrain, written in 1908, is in the public domain in the United States. Since the verse was not written until 1928, however, it will remain under copyright until the year 2023. The copyright holder, Edwin H. Morris & Co., Inc., indicated that it would consider selling its rights, but only for a substantial fee. Prof. Barrett stated that his subcommittee would next discuss this issue with the Student-Athlete Advisory Council on November 12. This meeting should reveal how student-athletes themselves view the gender aspects of our fight song. Two other issues have been submitted to the subcommittee: 1) the desire for a course on life goals, an issue seemingly more suited to the subcommittee on academic integrity; and 2) student-athletes’ need for additional space for structured study and tutoring. The subcommittee is addressing this concern with Mr. Holmes.

Prof. Fallon reported that the subcommittee on communication is pursuing ways in which to facilitate communication between the Board and the rest of the Notre Dame community. It would like to see a

regeneration of the Bridge Series, previously overseen by the Mendelson Center for Sports, Character and Community. The subcommittee will also look into creating a web page to educate the community on what the Faculty Board is and does. Finally, the subcommittee is studying ways to allow Board members to deliberate regarding prospective votes that, due to time sensitivity, must be taken between formal meetings; the idea of a "listserve" received little subcommittee support, in part due to concerns regarding confidentiality. Conference calls might provide a solution to the problem.

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