

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of May 4, 2010
500 Main Building**

Members present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Stephen Fallon, Thomas Frecka, Umesh Garg, Patrick Holmes, Mary Ann McDowell, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Richard Pierce, Robin Rhodes, Frances Shavers

Members excused: William Kelley, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, Clark Power, Kevin Richards (student representative), Jack Swarbrick

Board Liaisons present: Missy Conboy, Charmelle Green

Observers and Guests: Tracey Thomas (Recorder)

1. Call to order and Opening Prayer

Prof. Bellia called the meeting to order and offered the opening prayer.

2. Minutes of March 24, 2010

The minutes of the March 24, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved, subject to any corrections offered by Ms. Conboy on the presentation she gave.

3. Chair's announcements

Prof. Bellia reported that she has approved both men's and women's swim team captains. She also approved post-season travel for the golf teams to the Big East championship. Also approved were class misses for men's and women's tennis—both teams are participating in the Big East championships, with the first round of play to be held at Notre Dame.

Prof. Bellia thanked Pat Holmes for assisting in implementing the procedures for approving the rescheduling of final exams—these procedures are different than those for class misses during the semester. Championship play for both women's golf and women's lacrosse created exam conflicts. Under the procedures, the Chair notifies the deans of these conflicts; the deans provide to the affected instructors a copy of the Chair's notification and a copy of the FBA's rescheduling procedures; and the student and the instructor then arrange a timely alternative examination date.

Prof. Bellia noted one unusual situation: women's softball is scheduled to play a regular season game at St. John's University on the day after exams end. The game is scheduled for noon, and the team must travel on the last day of exams to arrive in time. Travel tickets for the morning of the last exam day had already been purchased, but since the contest is a regular season game rather than a post-season game, the exam rescheduling policy does not apply. The Department of Athletics resolved the situation by rescheduling the tickets for students with afternoon exams on the last day, and the team will travel in two groups. Prof. Bellia expressed her appreciation for the Department of Athletics' flexibility in this case.

4. Request for Exception to Housing Policy for Summer Session

Prof. Bellia introduced a housing request by reminding members that student-athletes are required to live on campus until they complete six semesters. Summer sessions are not included in this count, and student-athletes attending summer sessions are expected to live on campus until they have completed the six-semester requirement. Prof. Bellia turned over the discussion to Charmelle Green.

Ms. Green reported that a sophomore member of men's soccer has requested an exception to live off campus, rent-free, with his aunt's family while attending the 2010 summer session. Ms. Green circulated a letter from the student. The letter detailed the financial burden his family is currently facing. His grant-in-aid is a partial scholarship, so his summer tuition but not his housing will be covered. He is also aware that he will be expected to return to campus housing in the fall, 2010. Prof. Bellia noted that student-athletes on full grant-in-aid have all summer costs covered in full.

Members asked questions about other funding possibilities. Ms. Green explained that the coach has already provided the student with the maximum available under NCAA rules and internal funding sources. He has allocated the SAOF funds available, with a priority given to seniors who are facing graduation demands. The student's fall 2010 scholarship has already been increased. Members discussed the function of SAOF funds, noting that this case presents exactly the type of situation that fund was created to meet. Ms. Green agreed but said that the SAOF funds have been tapped out; in addition, NCAA rules permit a distribution of SAOF funds in only the proportion paid out during the academic year.

Professors Frecka and Fallon offered their support for this request, noting that there are positive values in the situation since the student will be living with family members. Ms. Conboy concurred in this specific case.

Members voted unanimously to grant the request.

5. Reports on Academic Performance

Pat Holmes gave the semester report on student-athlete academic performance. He circulated the extensive profile document as well as a summary sheet with highlighted data. The information pertains to the Fall, 2009 semester and represents a snapshot in time of the end of the semester data.

705 student-athletes participated on 26 varsity teams in the 2009-2010 academic year, representing 8% of Notre Dame's undergraduate population. Mr. Holmes provided comparisons of the gender, ethnic, and religious composition of the student-athlete and general undergraduate populations. Mr. Holmes also discussed the distribution of student-athletes among the various colleges. Student-athletes are consistently strongly represented in majors in the College of Arts and Letters and the College of Business. 62% of student-athletes choose majors in these two colleges; 49% of the undergraduate population do so. The most popular majors for male student-

athletes include the following: Finance, Sociology, Marketing, Psychology, and Accounting. The most popular majors for female student-athletes include the following: Marketing, Psychology, Finance, Accounting, and Science-Business. These represent an increase in College of Business majors. ND undergraduates most frequently major in the following: Political Science, Finance, Psychology, Economics, English and Science Pre-Professional.

Mr. Holmes noted that the 2010 graduation rates will be released in October, 2010, representing the cohort from 2003-04. He estimated that current trends indicate ND will have the 2nd or 3rd best graduation rate.

Mr. Holmes presented information on trends in test scores and cumulative GPA among all students, student-athletes, and grant-in-aid student-athletes. Members discussed the problem of grade inflation which is of concern across the University. It is not currently possible to track grade inflation in student-athletes as versus the undergraduate population. While a small team might be impacted by the high or low grades of a single student, Mr. Holmes also noted that coaches are consistently recruiting stronger students, which should reduce the impact on data of any single student's performance.

Members discussed certain categories of at-risk students. Members discussed the writing class offered by First Year Composition instructors in summer sessions as well as the one-credit writing tutorial offered during the academic year. The latter program is facing funding deficits and its fate is currently under discussion. Prof. Bellia has been in recent contact with Dennis Jacobs and Prof. John Duffy on this subject; a decision is expected soon.

Father Poorman congratulated all on this profile data—ND has 'bragging rights' on the upper end of student-athlete data. He also noted that the ongoing concern of the Board is for those student-athletes represented by the data at the lower end. He suggested that an important focus might be a 'deep dive' into that low end data. He asked if there are privacy issues connected with FERPA in disseminating that information to the Board. Prof. Bellia said that it is her understanding that the General Counsel, Ms. Corr, has authorized that access for the Board. Mr. Holmes agreed that it would be possible to craft a report with such a focus. Father Poorman noted that there are some positive stories among that data—student-athletes who are outperforming predictions. This reflects positively on Academic Services, on ND and on the athletes.

Mr. Holmes turned to the report on Fall 2009 GPAs. Women's swimming reported its highest semester GPA ever. Mr. Holmes said this is due to a new coach who has put great emphasis on both academics and athletics. Two teams—women's golf and women's tennis—reported GPAs over 3.4. Men's tennis reports its highest GPA ever. Twelve student-athletes earned a perfect 4.0. 9.8 % of the student-athletes attained the Dean's List, and 36 % had GPAs over 3.4. In addition, 4 ND student-athletes earned *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-America honors in the Fall and Winter sports seasons.

Members discussed overall trends in GPAs and the challenges which need ongoing attention. Mr. Holmes presented data on the number of G-I-A student-athletes on probation this year. He

noted that with respect to the student-athletes involved, the mid-semester reports already indicate some improvement.

Prof. Bellia thanked Pat Holmes for his report and congratulated him on the hard work he has done to pull together this informative and important report.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. Student welfare

Prof. Mary Ann McDowell presented the year end summary of the activities of the Student Welfare subcommittee. She listed the three priority issues for the year:

1. Revision of athletics-related financial-aid hearing procedure
2. Honor code programming
3. Diversity programming

On the financial aid hearing procedures, the committee worked on revising this policy, which was discussed at the last meeting. The changes made at that meeting were forwarded to Jill Bodensteiner. Those changes were primarily in wording and were presented to members by Prof. McDowell. After a brief discussion, Prof. McDowell made a motion for approval of this policy, pending approval by the General Counsel. Members voted unanimously to approve the financial aid procedures document.

Prof. McDowell next reviewed the interpretative document which has been drafted to accompany the procedures; as this is not part of the policy, no vote is needed. Prof. Bellia said that Ms. Bodensteiner was queried as to the utility of this document; she thought the document would be helpful to those involved. It was suggested that the form be changed to a checklist. Prof. Bellia has agreed to attend a coaches' meeting as part of the educational process.

On the second issue, honor code programming, Prof. McDowell said the committee sought to assess possible programming about the honor code geared to student-athletes. She summarized the ongoing work. Prof. Tracy Kijewski-Correa attended a SAAC meeting to engage student-athletes in discussion. From this conversation emerged a set of recommendations from the students.

1. Students are concerned that faculty are not sufficiently educated in the honor code and thus do not clearly express to students what they think constitutes cheating. In addition, many faculty create an environment which encourages cheating. Students repeatedly recommend this situation be addressed. The committee is continuing to look into this issue.

2. Student education on the honor code needs ongoing attention. One option to address this is to focus education on team captains, who are influential to teammates. Through leadership training and honor code education, understanding of the code can be disseminated throughout the team.

3. Institute a formal advertising campaign across the campus, emphasizing the importance of honor code allegiance. Such a campaign would be similar to the current campaign featuring men speaking out against violence. This recommendation was favorably greeted by Dennis Jacobs.

The subcommittee will continue to discuss useful honor code education programming.

The last major issue which has occupied the committee this year is the question of diversity, a carry-over from previous years. While programming has been created, the complexities of the situation are only recently becoming evident. In order to further understanding, the committee has worked with Ms. Green to craft a survey of student-athletes' campus experiences. The committee is awaiting the data from this survey. In general, student-athletes seem satisfied with their campus experience but point to room for improvement. In the fall, 2010, the committee plans to evaluate the data.

In response to a question, Prof. McDowell said that one part of the deliberations about honor code programming has led to conversations between members and Bill Kirk and Jeff Shoup, to understand better the way Residence Life violations are handled. Students have expressed worry about the waiting period between the occurrence of a possible violation and the hearing. This gap causes worry and undue stress, as student-athletes worry about dismissal and its impact on their athletic endeavors. A change recently instituted is to alert Charmelle Green or Jill Bodensteiner when a hearing is scheduled. Ms. Bodensteiner reports that in the most recent instances, there appears to be an improvement for students.

Prof. McDowell, noting that she will be stepping down from the subcommittee chairmanship, thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and commitment to the student-athletes. Prof. Bellia thanked Prof. McDowell for the leadership she has shown in her tenure at Student Welfare.

b. Academic Integrity

Prof. Pierce presented the year-end report of the committee. A major concern this year has been developing a better process toward graduation for student-athletes who have left the University prior to graduation to pursue professional sports careers. Ava Preacher, of the Dean's Office of Arts and Letters, has indicated that it is much more complicated than anticipated to achieve graduation for this population. The main constraint is the requirement that students be in residence for the last year prior to graduation. Prof. Pierce indicated that administrators work closely with these students and are sometimes able to waive requirements to aid in achieving this goal. The committee has determined that the issue has not been examined in a significant period of time. The committee is faced with two options: recommend the University revisit this issue or leave the informal procedures in place as they are. The latter is dependent in part on the administrators involved, which suggests a temporary solution.

Father Poorman said this process should be carefully tracked which would provide the committee, and the Board, with more concrete data to determine the best practice. Father Poorman and Prof. Bellia discussed the ongoing revision of the Academic Code, which is

currently in the hands of the Undergraduate Studies subcommittee of the Academic Council. Prof. Bellia discussed one proposal. Currently, a student must graduate within five years of his or her most recent academic activity on campus, but the window is a “rolling” window that permits a student to return from a leave of absence and restart the five-year clock. One proposal would institute an absolute five-year window during which a student who takes a leave of absence must return to the University to complete his or her degree. Prof. Bellia noted that the subcommittee adjourned for the summer without voting on this and many other proposals.

Father Poorman noted that the question of University absence has been the subject of discussion within the Academic Council subcommittee. The University’s policy, he stated, is full of gaping holes; in addition, faculty is increasingly frustrated about a pattern of absences. Prof. Bellia said that the Academic Council subcommittee has discussed the idea of a percentage miss black line. Members noted that this would punish an athlete with strong academic skills who might be prevented from taking a miss for graduate school interviews having reached the black line with sports absences. All agreed that FBA input should be included in the deliberations on this issue.

Members returned to the discussion of graduation procedures, which are related to this issue of University misses. The trend is growing in baseball and hockey to leave before graduation, in part because the professional seasons in these sports are in the early spring. A third trend can be seen in women’s soccer. The administrators currently use a wide interpretation of the guidelines which are suggested for completing a degree after a leave. Without this generous interpretative approach, however, the guidelines are ‘tough’ and most student-athletes would fail to meet them. Prof. Bellia noted that the University’s approach is out of line with peers; Stanford, for instance, has a more flexible response to completing a degree after taking a leave. Prof. Pierce said many institutions are accepting online credits toward graduation in these situations. Mr. Holmes reported that no student-athlete who has really wanted to complete his/her degree has been unable to achieve that goal; he also applauded the administrators who are assisting in this process for these students.

Prof. Bellia thanked the subcommittee for its yearlong work, and she thanked Prof. Pierce for his leadership.

7. New Business

As time was expiring, Prof. Bellia asked Ms. Conboy to postpone her report of a summary of University athletics accomplishments, 2009-2010.

Prof. Bellia reported that additional athletes have requested approval of fifth year status: she noted that the subcommittee on Academic Integrity will vote by email on these requests shortly, and asked that any other members of the full committee interested in providing input contact Professor Pierce.

Prof. Bellia, noting that Father Poorman is leaving the Board, spoke about his long service as a FBA member. She congratulated him and thanked him for all he has done for students in his many capacities. The Board gave Father Poorman a gift in recognition of his contributions.

Prof. Bellia also thanked Prof. McDowell for her work as subcommittee chair. As Prof. McDowell will also be leaving the Board, she was thanked with a gift as well.

Finally, Prof. Bellia thanked all members for their devoted, hard work through a successful year.

The meeting was adjourned.