

**Faculty Board on Athletics  
Meeting of September 27, 2019  
12:45-2:15 pm—500 Main Building**

**Members Present:** Patricia Bellia (Chair), Corey Angst, Jaimie Bleck, Lauren Hanna, Patrick Holmes, Sean Kelsey, Randy Kozel, Susan Ohmer, Richard Pierce, F. Clark Power, Jack Swarbrick, Kevin Vaughan, Brian Coughlin on behalf of Erin Hoffmann Harding, Aaron Striegel

**Members Excused:** Ann Firth

**Athletics Liaisons:** Missy Conboy, Jody Sadler, Angie Torain

**Guests:** Heidi Uebelhor, Assistant Athletics Director; Claire Leatherwood Slebonick, Assistant Athletics Director and Recorder; Link Jarrett, Head Baseball Coach; Elliott Visconsi, Associate Provost and Chief Academic Digital Officer

**1. Opening Prayer**

Professor Bellia called the meeting to order shortly after 12:45 p.m. and offered the opening prayer.

**2. Minutes of Meeting of May 8, 2019**

The Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2019 meeting.

**3. Chair's Announcements**

Professor Bellia welcomed new members Richard Pierce (College of Arts and Letters, elected at-large), Randy Kozel (Law School), and Lauren Hanna (Student Representative) to the Board and invited the rest of the Board's members to introduce themselves. She thanked the Board members for their support of the Board's central task of ensuring that the University's athletics programs operate in consonance with the University's overall educational mission. She invited members to review the Statement of Principles on Intercollegiate Athletics that appears on page four of the Board's manual, and to view that document, as well as the Board's Academic Articles charge, as guiding documents concerning the Board's work.

Professor Bellia summarized business that she undertook on the Board's behalf over the summer:

*Schedules/Captaincies.* Professor Bellia circulated a list of captaincy approvals and schedule approvals for the period from May to September 2019. Regarding schedule approvals, she noted situations in which the approved schedules exceeded the class miss limitations of three misses in the Monday/Wednesday/Friday (MWF) sequence and three misses in the Tuesday/Thursday (TuTh) sequence:

- In men's basketball, Professor Bellia approved four MWF misses attributable to a particularly difficult stretch of the ACC schedule, involving away competition at Clemson on February 9 and at Virginia on February 11, followed by away competition at Duke on February 15. The extra class miss allows the team to travel directly from Clemson to Virginia without returning to campus.
- The schedule for football involved three MWF class misses, as well as a fourth partial class miss, with students to be dismissed on a schedule determined by the Office of Academic Service for Student-Athletes.
- A facility conflict at Boston College necessitated a fourth MWF class miss for hockey this fall. Professor Bellia also noted that she approved home games for hockey during reading days, subject to the Board's limitations on such competition.
- Finally, the spring softball, spring men's golf, fall men's soccer, and fall volleyball schedules all present additional class misses. With the exception of volleyball, which involved a full vote of the Board in April after a presentation by the head coach, the schedules were in line with past precedents.

Professor Bellia noted that the softball team is traveling for a foreign tour to Italy over fall break. The logistics of getting the team overseas before the team competes require a partial class miss on the Friday before fall break for twelve students. NCAA rules prohibit teams from missing class in conjunction with a foreign tour. As was the case with the spring tour for men's soccer, the Compliance Office successfully sought a waiver of this rule, which the NCAA granted on the condition that all students seek and receive the permission of their professors to miss class. ASSA has documented all of the necessary approvals.

Professor Bellia will review the fall men's golf schedule in response to a concern Professor Susan Ohmer shared that the team's class misses seemed to be unusually high.

*Petitions for a Fourth Year of Eligibility During a Fifth Year of Academic Study.* Professor Bellia reminded the Board that, during the May meeting, the Academic Integrity Subcommittee presented information on petitions for students to compete during a fifth year of academic study. Ten additional petitions for winter/spring sports and for transfer students arrived after the final meeting. Nine of those petitions were "declarations" by students pursuing degree programs (seven in graduate degree programs and two completing undergraduate degrees, including one completing a dual degree and another completing a minor). One of those petitions was an "application" for a student to enroll as an unclassified graduate student. Professor Bellia reviewed and approved this application on the Board's behalf. Professor Bellia noted that the summer petitions brought the total number of student-athletes seeking fifth-year status to 31. One of those students did not enroll, leaving the total number of fifth-year students at 30. Overall, the number of students in degree-seeking status was 23. Six students were graduate transfers, including five in degree programs and one in an unclassified graduate student status. ASSA has verified that all students indicating that they were going to enroll in a degree program in fact did so.

In response to a question from Professor Aaron Striegel on those student-athletes intending to be unclassified graduate students, Professor Bellia described the process for this population of students.

*Housing Waiver Requests.* Professor Bellia received twelve requests from grant-in-aid student-athletes seeking to move off campus. She referred two of these students to the Student Affairs process, as they involved rising sophomores. Of the remaining ten requests, nine involved students claiming on the basis of medical documentation that a move off-campus would benefit their health. In consultation with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Professor Bellia granted three waiver requests. One of those three involved a recommendation from ODS for a transfer to a LEED-certified residence hall at a time when no such hall would be available in the foreseeable future. Professor Bellia denied the remaining six medical requests on ODS's recommendation. The tenth request was non-medical and involved a student who misunderstood the application of the housing policy in the summer months. Professor Bellia denied this request.

*Academic Articles Charge.* Professor Bellia noted that, in revising the Board's manual to accommodate the new version of the Academic Articles, she discovered a previous change that she believes was inadvertent. More specifically, in globally replacing the phrase "teaching and research faculty" with the phrase "tenured and tenure-track faculty," the Executive Committee of the Academic Council altered the tenure status of the Chair, such that tenure is no longer a requirement for service. She brought this error to the Executive Committee's attention with a request that the Committee address it along with other corrections that it is making following the Decennial Review of the Academic Articles. The Executive Committee approved the change and forwarded it among the "minor amendments" that the full Academic Council will review prior to the October Board of Trustees meeting.

*Upcoming Meetings/Priorities.* Professor Bellia discussed the Board's priorities for the upcoming year. She observed that the intercollegiate athletics environment continues to be in great flux, based in part on changes in the legal landscape and ongoing legislative discussions. She noted that Mr. Swarbrick would address some elements of the changing environment today. She hopes not only to keep the Board abreast of these developments, but to ensure that the Board remains a partner in the relevant discussions, so that it can fulfill its charge—including acting as a liaison to the broader faculty on these matters. Regarding upcoming meetings, the Board will visit in October with Don Bishop, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Enrollment, and Christy Pratt, the new Director of Admissions. In addition, the Board will receive the Compliance Office's Annual Report and an update on intercollegiate athletics gambling from Angie Torain, Senior Associate Athletics Director. In November, Brian Coughlin and Heather Ryan of the Division of Student Affairs will present information on student-athlete disciplinary issues. The Academic Integrity Subcommittee will return to its prior discussions about course clustering, with the benefit of a new tool refined by the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Research. The full Board will continue to monitor how the launch of the ACC Network, and the possible impact on scheduling, will affect the academic status and well-being of student-athletes.

#### **4. Introduction of Link Jarrett, Baseball Head Coach**

Professor Bellia introduced Link Jarrett, Notre Dame's recent hire as the new head coach of baseball. Ms. Jody Sadler, sport administrator for baseball, shared some details about the search.

Mr. Jarrett shared his enthusiasm for being the baseball coach at Notre Dame. He offered his philosophy on how to run a successful baseball program, the interconnectedness of academic and athletic success, as well as his goals for the Notre Dame program.

In response to a question from Professor Ohmer on the broad trends in baseball, Mr. Jarrett described the increasing prevalence of technology in conjunction with data analytics. Replying to a question from Professor Bellia regarding challenges to achieving an ACC Championship berth, Mr. Jarrett described the team's current lack of depth and the culture change he and his staff is attempting to instill in the program.

Professor Bellia thanked Mr. Jarrett for his time while he thanked the Board for the opportunity to be before it.

#### **5. Degree Completion Initiative, Elliott Visconsi, Associate Provost and Chief Academic Digital Officer**

Professor Bellia introduced Elliott Visconsi, Associate Provost and Chief Academic Digital Officer. Professor Bellia provided context for Mr. Visconsi's visit, reminding the Board of her and Mr. Pat Holmes' efforts over the last several years to assist former student-athletes who left the University prior to graduation in returning to the University to complete their degrees. Professor Visconsi, with a small working group, also is thinking through these issues and believes those conversations would benefit from a discussion with the Board.

Professor Visconsi thanked the Board for the invitation and shared the genesis for this conversation: a desire to leverage digital learning opportunities to assist students, including student-athletes, who leave the University without finishing their degrees. Professor Visconsi described the challenges former students face when attempting to complete their degree as well as University's investment in offering high-quality instruction at a distance. Professor Visconsi believes the increased capacity of the University to offer high-quality, synchronous classes has the potential to help this population of students complete their degrees. He invited the Board to share their concerns, ideas, and questions.

In response to a question from Professor Angst, Professor Visconsi confirmed the current focus on synchronous classes, which elicited support from Professor Angst. Professor Visconsi addressed Professor Angst's concern regarding broader use of online classes by noting that there is no intention to offer full undergraduate degrees online; rather, the idea with this initiative is to aid those students who have already separated from the University in completing their degree. Additional discussion ensued surrounding the identification of initiative's target population.

Replying to a question from Professor Richard Pierce regarding the logistics of identifying which courses to offer digitally to best serve this population, Professor Visconsi described the current conversations on this issue with Office of the Registrar (Registrar) and within the working group.

In response to a question from Professor Sean Kelsey, Professor Visconsi assured the Board that this initiative would serve a broader population than student-athletes. Professor Bellia

shared some preliminary research provided by the Registrar that shows less than half of the current target audience would be former student-athletes.

Further discussion followed on various related topics, including benchmarking other universities' initiatives and various logistical items.

Professor Visconsi thanked the Board for the opportunity to discuss this degree completion initiative while in its preliminary stage and invited the Board to provide any additional feedback to him.

## **6. Reports of Ex Officio members or Liaisons**

Professor Bellia asked Mr. Jack Swarbrick to give his Athletic Director's report to the Board. Mr. Swarbrick thanked Professor Bellia and the Board for its service.

Mr. Swarbrick discussed the Athletics Department's performance over the past year and this year's goals and challenges. He focused on the five major goals for the year, which include routinizing the setting of goals and priorities on an annual basis, completion of the Athletics Department's strategic plan, continuing to address unique student-athlete experience concerns, arriving at a sustainable financial model, and the need for Notre Dame to engage and lead nationally on the critical issues confronting college athletics. Mr. Swarbrick identified a handful of the student-athlete experience needs, including mental health, nutrition, physical health and safety, sleep and efficient travel for competition, while noting that many of these overlap with areas of concern for the general student body. He described challenges to a sustainable financial model from both the revenue and cost sides. Mr. Swarbrick described the current landscape of college athletics, why it is important that Notre Dame lead on these issues, and shared details of recent national meetings he has attended.

Mr. Swarbrick commented on various threats to college athletics, including gambling and health and safety issues, and on the importance of the ACC Network's success. Replying to a question from Professor Striegel, Mr. Swarbrick described the differences among the various conference networks' financial distributions to the institutions. In response to a question from Professor Angst, Mr. Swarbrick described various factors contributing to Notre Dame's financial forecast.

Mr. Swarbrick shared the demographics of the student-athlete population over the last year and emphasized the academic success of Notre Dame's student-athletes through their performance in the Graduation Success Rate, Federal Graduation Rate, and Academic Progress Rate metrics. He commented on the student-athlete experience, sharing highlights from the student-athlete exit interviews and survey. Mr. Swarbrick offered data on student-athlete behavioral issues, noting the positive trends. Finally, Mr. Swarbrick offered key statistics on the competitive performance of Notre Dame athletic teams, including head-to-head match-up results, national championships won, the Department's collective finish in the Learfield IMG College Director's Cup.

Professor Bellia thanked Mr. Swarbrick for his report.

## **7. Adjournment**

Professor Bellia called attention to the FBA's Annual Report prior to adjourning the meeting for subcommittee meetings. Professor Bellia adjourned the meeting shortly after 2:00 pm.