

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of December 14, 2021
Monogram Room—11:45am**

Members Present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Corey Angst, Alex Blachly, Malcolm Chaka, Patrick Holmes, Jeff Kantor, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, Mary Ann McDowell, Susan Ohmer, Rev. Gerard Olinger, Jack Swarbrick

Members Excused: Ann Firth, Jaimie Bleck, Randy Kozel, Richard Pierce, Kevin Vaughan

Athletics Liaisons: Missy Conboy, Jody Sadler

Guests: Deanna Gumpf, Head Softball Coach; Nick Mainieri, Student-Athlete Transition Program Director; Heidi Uebelhor, Associate Athletics Director; Claire Leatherwood Slebonick, Assistant Athletics Director and Recorder

1. Opening Prayer

Professor Bellia called the meeting to order at 11:48am and offered the opening prayer.

2. Minutes of Meeting of November 10, 2021

Professor Mary Ann McDowell moved to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of November 10, 2021 (Minutes) and Professor Corey Angst seconded the motion. The Board unanimously voted to approve the Minutes.

3. Chair's Announcements

Schedule Approvals. Professor Bellia announced that she approved the following schedules on behalf of the Board: baseball's spring schedule; revised schedules for hockey, diving, and indoor track and field; and post-season schedules for women's and men's soccer. She noted that the men's soccer post-season schedule necessitated the rescheduling of Friday exams.

Additionally, with input from the Academic Integrity Subcommittee, Professor Bellia approved competition schedules for three individual student-athletes who had national competition during the final exam window.

Captaincy Approvals. Professor Bellia announced that she approved the captains for women's lacrosse on behalf of the Board.

4. Softball Class Miss Request

Professor Bellia introduced Deanna Gumpf, Head Softball Coach, and the Board members introduced themselves. Professor Bellia reminded the Board of the key elements of its class miss policy and then invited Coach Gumpf to describe the softball class miss request.

Coach Gumpf thanked the Board members for their time. She described her request: three Tuesday-Thursday (TTh) and six Monday-Wednesday-Friday (MWF) misses, and noted that this is one TTh miss less than her original request. Coach Gumpf stated that the majority of the MWF misses would occur on Fridays. She described the challenges inherent to having a fifty-six game schedule and shared that, in deference to the class schedules of the student-athletes, she has only scheduled fifty-four games. Coach Gumpf commented on the need to travel for the first six weeks of the season due to the weather in South Bend. The availability and affordability of flights further complicate the situation. She discussed her efforts to mitigate the number of class misses, including asking the ACC to schedule Notre Dame in such a way as to limit the number of Friday class misses and requesting that other coaches play double headers Saturday-Sunday wherever possible. She noted that other coaches are increasingly less interested in playing double headers. Coach Gumpf provided details about specific match-ups and the impact of the schedule on Notre Dame's likelihood of hosting the NCAA Regional tournament, which is a goal of the program as it affects the chances of post-season success.

In response to a question from Professor McDowell, Coach Gumpf discussed how student-athletes typically handle their academic loads while missing class and commented on the proactive nature of student-athletes' communication with their professors around their schedule. In answer to a question from Professor Angst, Professor Bellia shared that several of the implicated Friday classes are required and so could not be avoided. Professor Tracy Kijewski-Correa and Professor Angst discussed hybrid teaching options and the willingness of faculty to embrace these opportunities.

In reply to a question from Professor Kantor, Coach Gumpf described the specific difficulty surrounding the higher incidence of required Friday classes in science and engineering. In response to a question from Professor Bellia about softball's post-season tournaments, Coach Gumpf stated that the NCAA post-season tournament is scheduled after the University's final exam window, which eliminates the need for additional class misses. Professor Bellia commented on the similarities between the structure of softball's and volleyball's schedules, with the majority of the misses occurring during the regular season rather than during the post-season.

In answer to a question from Professor Bellia, Coach Gumpf elaborated on the budget constraints that affect the team's planned travel.

In reply to a question from Professor Ohmer, Professor Bellia shared information provided by Ms. Kathryn Cooper, the Academic Services for Student-Athletes (ASSA) counselor for softball student-athletes, about the number of students affected by Friday class misses, their majors, and plans to help the affected students navigate this challenge. Professor Kantor and Professor McDowell commented on how professors or teaching assistants might be able to provide additional help to these students. Mr. Pat Holmes shared that the softball team culture around academics has been very positive and consistent over the last several years and that ASSA will continue to support these students in navigating this challenge.

In response to a question from Professor Angst, Coach Gumpf offered her philosophy surrounding the importance of generally traveling the entire squad and the impact that has on the culture of the program. Professor Bellia explained that ASSA evaluates the academic situation of each student-athlete and, should there ever be someone with a serious academic risk, the team's counselor would consult Coach Gumpf and consider recommending that the student-athlete not travel; she noted that while this tactic has been used before in other sports, it has not yet been needed in softball. Coach Gumpf reassured the Board that she would not travel a softball student-athlete whom ASSA identified as being at academic risk.

Professor Bellia thanked and excused Ms. Gumpf.

Professor Bellia opened the floor for discussion of the request. Professor McDowell commented on the nature of the classes that are slated to be missed, and Professor Ohmer shared that it was helpful to hear of Coach Gumpf's efforts to mitigate the number of class misses. Professor Kantor stated that professors need to be able to accommodate student schedules in general and Professor Bellia expressed support for Professor Kijewski-Correa's earlier point on the need to provide more learning options for all students. Professors Kijewski-Correa and Angst discussed the issues surrounding broader faculty adoption of hybrid teaching methods and Professor McDowell shared her own experiences on providing hybrid learning options. In response to a question from Professor Kantor, Professor Bellia and Mr. Holmes replied that the extent to which the missed classes in question will be recorded is unknown. Professor Kijewski-Correa stated that she believes this creates an opportunity to advocate for the use of hybrid teaching options.

In response to a concern expressed by Professor Angst, Mr. Holmes shared that a high percentage of softball student-athletes are STEM majors. Mr. Nick Mainieri, the former ASSA counselor for softball student-athletes, offered that these student-athletes historically have been academically ambitious.

Professor Kantor raised the proposition of supporting this request but linking it to a larger effort to support the use of hybrid teaching options. Professor Bellia clarified how many student-athletes will be impacted by Coach Gumpf's class miss request.

Professor Angst moved to approve the request as detailed in Coach Gumpf's submitted memo but with the reduction, as articulated by Coach Gumpf at the start of the discussion, of one TTh class miss; Professor Kijewski-Correa seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the softball class miss request as described.

5. Report on Summer Bridge Program

Professor Bellia introduced Mr. Nick Mainieri, the Student-Athlete Transition Program Director, and shared some context surrounding Mr. Mainieri's role and the Summer Bridge Program (Program).

Mr. Mainieri described the Program, including its history and its current state, as well as the background of his position. In reply to a question from Father Gerry Olinger, Mr. Mainieri

replied that the previous constraints on the number of student-athletes who could attend the Program, due to on-campus housing availability, no longer exist in the same way. Mr. Mainieri discussed the idea of the Program as a transition experience and the need to be especially mindful of students coming into the University from backgrounds with opportunity gaps. He described the typical format of the program and available resources.

Mr. Mainieri provided further explanation on the goals of the Program and emphasized the Program's philosophy that a meaningful transition experience asks students to think about their own opportunities for growth and to take responsibility for their own learning experience. In response to a question from Professor McDowell, Mr. Mainieri shared that ASSA staff conducts individual development plans with students and provided relevant details.

Mr. Mainieri described characteristics of the average Program participants, including demographic information and academic intents. In answer to a question from Professor McDowell, Mr. Holmes and Mr. Mainieri discussed various aspects related to those students with an academic intent in either Business or Economics. In reply to a question from Professor Angst, Mr. Mainieri commented on the available class options, and their relative merits, for those in the Program. Mr. Mainieri and Professor Bellia discussed how changes in Business curriculum requirements could affect the course offerings for those in the Program. In response to a question from Professor Kantor, Mr. Mainieri provided information on how students are selected into the Program. He emphasized the importance of making available appropriate course offerings for those in the Program and the challenge of doing so, particularly for those with a STEM intent. Mr. Mainieri invited the Board's feedback on this matter. In answer to a question from Professor Kijewski-Correa, Mr. Mainieri explained that much of his current focus is on expanding access to the Program, which implies a need to expand the STEM-related course offerings. Discussion ensued surrounding the need to offer appropriate courses, particularly for STEM-intents, the importance of recruiting appropriate instructors, and possible untapped pools of instructors.

In reply to a question from Professor Angst, Mr. Mainieri described the difference between various calculus course offerings and, in answer to a question from Professor McDowell, discussed the impact of Business curriculum changes on the math courses that fulfill degree requirements.

In response to a question from Professor Kantor, Mr. Holmes explained that ASSA does not currently track whether a student ultimately stays in a major that matches their intent.

Mr. Mainieri provided information on the nomination process that identifies students who would be good candidates for participation in the Program and emphasized the need to be mindful of a wide range of transition needs. He shared more details on the historic format of the Program and described both the academic and non-academic requirements, including a course focused on the transition experience. In response to a question from Professor McDowell, Mr. Mainieri provided more context around a change in the course offerings. In answer to questions from Professor Angst, Mr. Mainieri confirmed that the enrollment in the transition course is limited to student-athletes and that instructors are generally aware that the students are also athletes. Father Olinger shared that there are current conversations within Student Affairs about other support or complementary opportunities that could be offered to similarly situated students.

In reply to a question from Professor Bellia, Father Olinger shared that discussion on this topic is on-going.

In answer to questions from Professor Kantor, Mr. Mainieri explained the nomination process in greater detail, the relative use by various sports, and the increase in available seats in the program for this coming summer. Mr. Holmes shared the impact of the increase in mid-year enrollees on the number of Program participants in some sports.

Mr. Mainieri highlighted the remaining elements of the Program and, in reply to a question from Professor Kijewski-Correa, acknowledged the need to provide more coaching on the appropriate way to engage with faculty. Mr. Mainieri commented on the desire to emphasize the elements of the Program that balance a variety of meaningful transition experiences as the format of the Program continues to evolve. In response to question from Professor McDowell, Mr. Mainieri described the reasoning behind decreasing the total number of academic credits in which Program participants enroll. Discussion ensued around the relative significance of credit bearing courses with Professor Kantor noting the efforts across the University to think critically about the offerings in this space. Professor Bellia noted that Mr. Mainieri has worked with other units to learn from their efforts and to identify best practices.

Mr. Mainieri commented on gender demographic breakdown of Program participants and shared his interest in enhancing the participation levels of female students. Professor McDowell and Ms. Missy Conboy offered various comments, including a description from Ms. Conboy about the Athletic Department's current review of its gender equity practices and Mr. Mainieri's help with this effort. In answer to questions from Professors Ohmer and McDowell about the number of softball student-athletes participating in the Program, Mr. Mainieri explained that more space, more flexible course offerings, and an increase in the number of STEM-related course offerings could better serve a wider range of student needs, including those of softball student-athletes. Mr. Mainieri commented on the importance of the summer months prior to matriculating as a freshman for athletic development as well as academic and personal growth.

Mr. Mainieri discussed the need to expand the assessment of the Program and commented on related research. Professor McDowell offered various comments regarding the evaluation of similar programs and possible opportunities to do so with the Program.

Professor Bellia thanked Mr. Mainieri for his report.

6. Adjournment

Professor Bellia wished the Board a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year before adjourning the meeting at 1:21pm.