

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty Board on Athletics
September 6, 2023
200 Main Building 12pm-1:30pm

Members Present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Colin Barr, Brian Coughlin (for Rev. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C.), Darren Davis, Umesh Garg, Patrick Holmes, Randy Kozel, Mark McCready, Cara Ocobock, Jack Swarbrick, Jamal Wilson, Katie Wowak

Members Excused: Jaimie Bleck, Annie Coleman, Ann Firth

Athletics Liaisons: Missy Conboy (SWA), Heidi Uebelhor (Athletics Compliance), Jen Vining-Smith (GLD Center)

Guests: Pete Bevacqua (Special Assistant to the President for Athletics), Gabby Whitton (Athletics Compliance)

1. Opening Prayer

Professor Patricia Bellia called the meeting to order and Professor Randy Kozel offered the opening prayer, which included respect and appreciation for Professor Jeff Kantor, a Board member who passed away during the summer.

2. Introduction of Incoming Athletics Director Pete Bevacqua

Mr. Bevacqua provided information about his background, sharing that he is a Notre Dame graduate, attended Georgetown Law School, and worked at a large law firm before stints at the U.S. Golf Association, Creative Artists of America (CAA) Sports, PGA of America, and NBC Sports, including as chairman. He started July 17 in his current role with the President's office, and is "shadowing" Jack Swarbrick until transition officially occurs later this academic year. He is looking forward to working with the Faculty Board.

3. Review of Men's and Women's Swimming Schedule

Professor Bellia introduced Chris Lindauer, the Peterson Head Men's and Women's Swimming Coach. Professor Bellia explained (for the benefit of the new Board members) her delegated authority to approve competition schedules within certain parameters. She shared that the full Board must consider whether to approve schedules that exceed these parameters. She called attention to a U.S. Open meet on the proposed men's and women's swimming schedule. Although the meet is not technically an intercollegiate competition, Notre Dame pays expenses for its swimmers to attend. Last year, after the Board determined that this type of meet should be included on the schedule for approval, Professor Bellia approved a schedule that included the meet. This year, the inclusion of the meet would cause the schedule to have a number of class misses that would exceed Professor Bellia's delegated approval authority.

Coach Lindauer spoke to his priorities, including the overall development of student-athletes. Academics is top priority, and the team recently achieved a 3.525 GPA and 3.39 GPA for women and men respectively. He explained that the U.S. Open Meet provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in a “long-course” format. College swimming uses a short-course format, but Olympic swimming is a long-course format. The U.S. Open meet will set up student-athletes to gain qualifying times for the Olympics. The meet will involve competition by about 20 out of his 70 student-athletes, and he is committed to sending only those students who are meeting the team’s high academic standards. Lorrin Ostojic, the team’s academic counselor in Academic Services for Student-Athletes (ASSA), will provide input on students’ academic status before final decisions are made on who will travel.

Professor McCready asked for the specific days that would be missed. Coach Lindauer indicated that the full meet was scheduled for November 29th -December 2nd (Wednesday/Thursday/Friday/Saturday), but it was possible that some students would only miss Thursday and Friday. Professor Ocobock asked if any first-year students would be affected. Coach Lindauer shared that, similar to last year, there could be some who qualify, but the coaching staff and academic counselor will look at this factor as part of their academic review.

After Coach Lindauer departed, Professor Bellia shared input from Ms. Ostojic, who last year used a red/yellow/green rating to assess the academic impact on invited students. The academic review was a key factor in determining who was able to go in 2022. The intention would be to use the same type of review this year. In addition, some students may self-select out of the competition if they are concerned about the academic impact of a late-semester class miss. Professor Bellia noted that even if the Wednesday is backed out for some swimmers, the number of remaining misses still places the schedule beyond her delegated approval authority.

Mr. Swarbrick weighed in on Coach Lindauer’s performance to date, sharing that the swimming program was in tough shape before his arrival, and that the new leadership has dramatically improved the program in all aspects within a single year. Mr. Swarbrick hopes the Board measures the academic impact of the meet, and also considers how best to support the team consistent with Notre Dame’s competitive values. Professor Bellia and Professor Ocobock both provided anecdotal information that supported Mr. Swarbrick’s observations about the culture of the team under Coach Lindauer’s leadership.

Professor McCready moved to approve the swimming schedule with the inclusion of the U.S. Open meet. Professor Ocobock seconded the motion. All present and voting members voted in favor.

4. Minutes of Meeting of May 11, 2023

With no changes, Professor Kozel moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 11, 2023. Professor Davis seconded the motion. All present and voting members voted to approve.

5. Chair's Announcements

Professor Bellia informed the Board of the following schedule requests and captain nominations that she had approved since the May 11, 2023, meeting:

a. Schedule Approvals:

i. Spring 2023 Post-Season Competition Schedule Approvals

- Baseball: ACC Championships
- Outdoor Track & Field: NCAA Championships
- Men's and Women's Lacrosse: NCAA Championships
- Softball: NCAA Championships
- Women's Tennis: NCAA Championships

ii. Fall Sport Championship Segment Schedule Approvals

- Cross Country
- Football
- Cheerleading, as ancillary to Football
- Men's and Women's Soccer
- Volleyball

iii. Winter Sport Approvals

- Men's Basketball (non-conference)
- Women's Basketball (non-conference)
- Hockey (non-conference)

iv. Spring Sport Non-Championship Segment Schedule Approvals

- Men's and Women's Golf
- Women's Lacrosse
- Softball
- Women's Tennis

v. Additional Fall Class Misses

- Cheerleading (travel for the mascot)

Professor Ocobock asked if Band travel (in this case to Ireland) needed to be approved by the Board. Professor Bellia shared that this responsibility falls to the Division of Student Affairs. Brian Coughlin shared that for this trip, no first-year band students were included in the travel party.

b. Captaincy Approvals

- i.** Men's and Women's Soccer
- ii.** Men's Golf
- iii.** Football
- iv.** Hockey
- v.** Rowing

- c. **Fifth Year Updates:** Professor Bellia explained the large number of fifth years still enrolled this fall, attributable to use of NCAA-granted eligibility corresponding to missed or limited competition during the Covid-19 pandemic. Two types of graduate students exist: students enrolled in degree programs, and non-degree or “unclassified” graduate students.
- i. The breakdown is as follows:
- 118 total graduate students
 - 19 in non-degree seeking status (approved by the Academic Integrity subcommittee or by Professor Bellia under a summer delegation). Mr. Coughlin asked for more information on why students would choose a non-degree status. Professor Bellia explained that some are football student-athletes who will only be here in the fall semester before turning pro. Other students may want a different graduate experience down the road, such as medical school, and are supplementing their undergraduate coursework to set themselves up for future study.
 - 92 enrolled in degree programs in the Mendoza College of Business.
 - 1 enrolled in a degree program in the College of Science.
 - 6 enrolled in degree programs in the College of Engineering.
 - 16% of the total student-athlete population is in graduate school Typically, it would be about 4%.
- d. **Annual Report:** Professor Bellia noted that a copy of the Board’s annual report, submitted to the Academic Council over the summer, had been included in the meeting materials.
- e. **Other:** Professor Bellia shared sport assignments and sport assignments for each Faculty Board member during the 23-24 academic year.

7. Reports of Ex Officio Members

Professor Bellia invited Mr. Swarbrick to update the Board on recent industry activities. Mr. Swarbrick spoke about the football game in Ireland, and the extraordinary number of Notre Dame fans who traveled. This game provided a special opportunity to give Notre Dame visibility in a foreign country. Hosting the Tennessee State game the following weekend was similarly impactful for the campus and local communities. Executive Associate Athletics Director JP Abercumbie played a big role in the Tennessee State weekend programming, and the engagement of Coach Freeman was another key factor. He also referenced the Athletics Department Annual Report, which had been circulated to members for their future review. The report focuses on big stories from the past year.

Mr. Swarbrick then shared a slide that showed the current range of issues affecting intercollegiate athletics, including conference affiliation, gambling, emerging commerce, equity, NCAA governance, media negotiations, the transfer portal/NIL, employee status for student-athletes, and the expanded CFP.

Mr. Swarbrick highlighted three major issues:

- **Redefinition of our relationship with our student-athletes:** There has been an overarching transfer of value from the institution to the SAs. How do we help steer this redefinition?
- **Relationship with our fans:** We need to convert transactional relationships to something more like ownership/membership relationships. We need to have a sophisticated understanding of the people we have relationships with.
- **Competitive excellence in football**

Mr. Swarbrick also shared some of the most recent student-athlete survey results. He was encouraged by the high level of student-athlete satisfaction with their overall Notre Dame experience. Finally, he shared examples of the role competition plays in solving problems and noted that competitive genius helps produce better results.

6. Review of Softball Schedule

Professor Bellia introduced head softball coach Deanna Gumpf to discuss the proposed softball schedule, which includes six Friday class misses. Coach Gumpf distributed information to the Board that helps inform her scheduling philosophy. Her goal is always to create a schedule that could produce an at-large NCAA tournament bid. She noted that the proposed schedule includes only 51 out of a possible 56 games. It is beneficial to play all 56, but it is too difficult to play the maximum number at Notre Dame. Because of weather, the team travels the first four weekends of the season. She outlined the level of competition she tries to schedule for those first four weekends. She noted that the conference schedule that follows these opening weekends is not within Notre Dame's control.

Coach Gumpf believes her student-athletes are used to schedules with multiple Friday class misses. Her team GPA typically goes up every spring. It is not possible to avoid classes on Fridays, because her team is a STEM-heavy group, who usually do have Friday classes. She typically gives Monday off, and the student-athletes schedule labs for that day.

A discussion of class scheduling challenges ensued. Professor Bellia explained to the Board that while student-athletes get "priority" registration, this means they register in the first 25% of their respective classes. Very few teams have "pre-registration," which entails registration before all other students. Although it may be beneficial to expand consideration of pre-registration, that would require the approval of the Provost and the Registrar.

After Coach Gumpf departed, Professor Bellia shared a report from the softball ASSA counselor, Taylor King, which gave additional information about the softball student-athletes in STEM. Professor McCready asked how many classes the Michigan softball team might miss during the spring season. Mr. Swarbrick provided anecdotal information suggesting that softball student-athletes at Michigan would miss significantly more class than their Notre Dame counterparts. Professor Bellia shared that most schools do not have a class miss policy, and online classes at other schools are available and encouraged. Mr. Swarbrick indicated that Notre Dame is working diligently to have the expanded ACC conference reconsider conference

scheduling, and believes there will be a focus on more regional competition for non-conference games to help mitigate class misses.

Professor Barr moved to approve the proposed softball schedule, and Professor Kozel seconded the motion. All present and voting members voted to approve.

9. Adjournment

Professor Bellia adjourned the meeting at 1:37 pm.

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