

Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty Board on Athletics
May 7, 2025
500 Main Building, 2-3:30 PM

Members Present: Patricia Bellia (Chair), Colin Barr, Pete Bevacqua, Annie Coleman, Brian Coughlin for Rev. Gerry Olinger, C.S.C., Ann-Marie Conrado, Darren Davis, Patrick Holmes, Randy Kozel, Mike Niemier, Katie Wowak

Members Excused: Ann Firth, Umesh Garg, Cara Ocobock, Annie Wiese

Athletics Liaisons: Jacob Simonis (Compliance), Heidi Uebelhor (Compliance)

Guests: Heather Ryan, Director, Office of Community Standards; Ron Powlus, Deputy Athletics Director, Football

1. Opening Prayer

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

2. Minutes of April 15, 2025

The Faculty Board on Athletics (Board) unanimously approved the minutes of April 15, 2025.

3. Chair's Announcements

Professor Bellia announced the following schedule approvals and changes:

2024-25 New schedule approvals

- None

2024-2025 Schedule changes

- Men's Soccer: Game against Indiana FC on 4/26 was cancelled and will not be rescheduled.

2024-25 Schedule Changes (Weather)

- Softball: Game on 5/1 cancelled due to inclement weather and will not be rescheduled.

Post-Season (ACC, Big Ten, NCAA)

- Men's Golf: Team was scheduled to leave at noon, but pushed back dismissal until 1:45 pm class end time.
- Women's Tennis: Request to be excused from class after 1:40 pm on 4/30, and for 5/1 and 5/2 (Reading days), for NCAA 1st/2nd Round at Columbus, OH.

4. Student-Athlete Disciplinary Report (Brian Coughlin, Associate Vice President for Student Development, and Heather Ryan, Director, Office of Community Standards)

Ms. Ryan provided the Board with the 2023-24 Demographics of Student-Athletes Referred to the Conduct Process. Of note, the report included only student-athletes referred through the conduct process and could be redundant for a particular student (e.g., a student referred multiple times for multiple incidents will be noted more than once). The report included those student-athletes found responsible or not responsible of conduct allegedly in violation of *du Lac* (all referrals).

Ms. Ryan addressed a decline in instances of referrals via the conduct process since the Covid-19 pandemic due to a set of testing and community integration rules that existed at that time.

Ms. Ryan also suggested a shift with increases in referrals involving first-years, but went on to say that any given year, the data will trend high for first-years or sophomores. Professor Niemier and Professor Davis inquired generally about the conduct process, the types of conduct captured, and the different referral settings. Ms. Ryan and Mr. Coughlin discussed the types of conduct that are specifically under the jurisdiction of the Office of Community Standards, defined the settings of the process, discussed the breakdown of location for those referred (e.g., on- or off-campus), and shared the distribution of incidents by gender, College, team, transports, and arrests. They stated that trends may be shared with administrators in affected areas.

Mr. Coughlin noted that, to some extent, dating from the Covid-19 pandemic, the social scene has shifted off-campus. On-campus incidents are often tied to returning to campus following an off-campus situation. Mr. Coughlin recognized that the on-campus social scene has not been fully restored since the Covid-19 pandemic, and Ms. Ryan suggested that the availability of conveniences such as rideshare applications has additionally been influential.

Mr. Coughlin and Ms. Ryan fielded questions regarding the role of county or city law enforcement and their relationships with Notre Dame police. They also compared student-athlete incidents to those involving the general student population. They noted that such incidents are generally lower than the rest of the student body, possibly due to time constraints and judicious social circles. They also explained that the data does not include referrals to the Title IX process, which are handled through a separate process. The Board requested that future reports incorporate referrals to the Title IX process.

Mr. Coughlin closed with a discussion about what has increased over the past several years generally at the University. Mr. Coughlin noted that there is a trend of moving off-campus and continuing to be affiliated with a residence hall. Parties that once occurred on-campus are now off-campus and include both on-campus and off-campus students. Most conduct incidents continue to involve alcohol use and/or binge drinking and the sharing of and misuse of medications such as stimulants.

5. Update on Shields Family Hall (Ron Powlus, Deputy Athletics Director, Football)

Mr. Powlus introduced his role on the Working Group on Student-Athlete Integration and discussed the support that Shields Family Hall will provide to football student-athletes and all student-athletes, reflecting Notre Dame quality, values, and standards. Mr. Powlus discussed the vision of the hall, the planning phases, and several benchmarking exercises that occurred with other institutions. Mr. Powlus went on to state that the phrase “Form follows Function” was paramount to the design of the Shields Family Hall, offering several examples. The building is meant to be functional to the performance of the program and the student-athletes, while avoiding the excesses sometimes associated with such projects. The project was funded by three former student-athletes.

Mr. Powlus went on to share renderings of the building and described the function of several areas pertinent to the student-athlete experience (e.g., community, nutrition, medical, rehabilitation, academic space). Mr. Powlus and Mr. Bevacqua additionally addressed the effect that Shields Family Hall will have on other teams and performance staff, either within the new building or in the Guglielmino Complex or the Loftus Sports Center. Mr. Powlus spoke to opportunities for community building across several sports (e.g., training table meals).

6. Reports of Ex Officio Members and Liaisons

Mr. Bevacqua provided a *House* Settlement update, noting that the most recent hearing and filings involved two modifications: an update to the roster caps and the introduction of the concept of the “Designated Student-Athlete,” to grandfather in current student-athletes who would otherwise be cut by virtue of the roster cap. Notre Dame has advocated for this sort of grace period throughout the settlement discussions.

7. Adjournment

Professor Bellia asked whether, as is typical heading into the summer months, the Board would like to delegate to her the authority to approve (within existing precedent, and with a subsequent report) actions on the Board’s behalf until the Board reconvenes in the fall semester. The Board unanimously adopted a motion to this effect.

Professor Bellia additionally announced the expiration of Professor Kozel’s term and thanked him for his longstanding service to the committee.

Professor Bellia adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm.