

**Faculty Board on Athletics
Meeting of October 13, 2025
500 Main Building, 2-3:30 PM**

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

Members Excused: Ann Firth, Cara Ocobock, Umesh Garg, Pat Holmes

Athletics Liaisons: Brian Pracht (for Missy Conboy), Jacob Simonis (Compliance), Heidi Uebelhor (Compliance), Jen Vining-Smith (Student-Athlete Services)

Guests: Pat Garrity (General Manager, Men's and Women's Basketball)

1. Opening Prayer

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

2. Minutes of September 15, 2025

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

3. Chair's Announcements

Professor Bellia announced that she approved schedules for fencing and indoor track and field. She noted that both schedules involved competitions in which not all student-athletes compete, so that the approved absence totals appear on the surface to exceed Board policies. Not every student will participate in every competition, however, and counselors in Academic Services for Student-Athletes will track class misses. She also approved the fall schedule for men's lacrosse and the spring schedules for men's golf, women's golf, rowing, and women's tennis.

Professor Bellia noted that she approved excused absences for two men's soccer student-athletes who had exams scheduled during team travel and outside of normal class times; for a women's basketball player attending a Women Leaders in Sports conference; and for student athletic trainers to staff a large on-campus cross country meet.

Professor Bellia also stated that she approved captaincies for cheerleading, hockey, rowing, softball, and volleyball. Professor Coleman inquired about the process and substantive criteria for approving captaincies. The process involves the coach and sport administrators providing a narrative explaining why their nominees demonstrate "high standards of conduct and strong leadership." Student Affairs reviews the form to ensure that there is no relevant disciplinary history. Professor Bellia then reviews the information that the programs and Student Affairs provide. The scope of the Board's delegation to the chair extends to approving

nominations that fall “clearly within Board guidelines.” Professor Bellia noted that she has occasionally referred nominations to the full Board when she has had concerns about whether the candidates meet the substantive standards.

4. Introduction of Pat Garrity, General Manager, Men’s and Women’s Basketball

Professor Bellia introduced Mr. Garrity to the Board and asked Mr. Bevacqua to describe the newly created role in men’s and women’s basketball designed to steer the programs through this new era in college sports. Mr. Garrity oversees the business of the programs and specifically handles strategy around the institutional response to the *House* settlement, the transfer portal, and name, image, and likeness (NIL).

Mr. Garrity welcomed the opportunity to discuss the new landscape of NIL and compensation, providing an overview of the *House* settlement and the intersection of Rally (a collective formed to support commercial name, image and likeness opportunities for Notre Dame student-athletes) with the basketball programs. As an example of the challenges programs face in the NIL era and the need to take academic considerations into account, he described an invitation for the women’s team to participate in the Players Era tournament in 2026, which overlaps with Notre Dame’s final examination period. Notre Dame could commit to participate only if the organizers were able to place Notre Dame’s games outside of the final examination window, which they ultimately agreed to do.

Mr. Garrity explained the unique process for recruiting prospective student-athletes to Notre Dame, including an emphasis on non-athletic aspirations such as academics and professional or career motivations. Mr. Garrity further compared Notre Dame’s recruiting approach to similar institutions and conferences. Mr. Garrity stressed academic rigor, the unique campus community, and the integration of student-athletes into that community as positives.

Members asked several questions. Discussion ensued about how the basketball programs can get student-athletes to buy in now that students can easily transfer when they face academic, athletic, or personal challenges; how the programs could better promote academic success stories; the extent to which academics continue to resonate with students in the current landscape of college athletics; the impact that an increase to the WNBA salary structure could have on women’s basketball recruitment and retention; and the effect of compensation on team culture.

Ms. Deehan inquired about the approach that coaches take in negotiating compensation with student-athletes. Mr. Bevacqua clarified that Mr. Garrity’s role (and Mike Martin’s General Manager role in football) is to remove the burden of involvement from the coaching staff. Professor Coleman wondered whether faculty can assist in identifying and promoting long-term goals and education to student-athletes as mentors.

In closing the discussion, Professor Bellia noted that it touched upon three topics that may come back to the Board for further discussion: (1) the availability of financial literacy training support to student-athletes receiving compensation; (2) the challenge raised when students transfer out of Notre Dame partway through their athletic careers but, cognizant of the value of the Notre Dame degree, still seek to secure their degrees from Notre Dame; and (3)

ongoing campus conversations about formalizing pathways for students who leave the University early, including to pursue professional athletics, to return to complete their degrees.

5. Annual Report of Student-Athlete Services (Jen Vining-Smith)

Ms. Vining-Smith introduced the Student-Athlete Services (SA.S) 2024-2025 Annual Report. Ms. Vining-Smith highlighted the four pillars of SA.S, the engagement rate of student-athletes in various programming, and the success of career services. Ms. Vining-Smith emphasized the goal of building a network of support for current student-athletes and alumni, introducing the Legacy Weekend initiative, the role of Career Services, the Built Different Speaker Series, the Forces for Good Committees driven by the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC), community service and faith initiatives, educational life and financial resources, and Life After Notre Dame (LAND). Ms. Vining-Smith additionally addressed opportunities for faculty to assist, particularly in the interview process and career preparedness.

6. Athletics Updates (Pete Bevacqua)

In light of time constraints and the fact that Mr. Bevacqua's planned visit to Washington, D.C., had been cancelled, Professor Bellia deferred the update on the intercollegiate athletics landscape to a future meeting of the Board.

7. Update on Working Group on Student-Athlete Integration

Professor Bellia deferred the discussion to a future meeting of the Board.

8. Update on Online Degree Completion Initiative

Professor Bellia recognized that the topic was briefly discussed during Mr. Garrity's segment and in the review of the Student-Athlete Services Annual Report. She welcomed further discussion at a future meeting of the Board.

9. Adjournment for Subcommittee Chair Selections

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm for selection of subcommittee chairs. The Academic Integrity Subcommittee selected Katie Wowak as its chair. The Student Welfare Subcommittee deferred discussion until Professor Ocobock could be consulted about her willingness to serve as chair. [Professor Ocobock subsequently agreed to serve.]