

Intercollegiate Athletic Committee Meeting

Klamath Hall, Room 151

January 28, 1997

Committee Members and Guests Present: Ralph Barnhard, Glen Banfield, Kent Black, Dusty Carlson, Gary Gray, Judith Grosenick, Steve Kevan, John Leahy, Bill Moos, Marilyn Nippold, Jim O'Fallon, Don Peting, Nani Sarosa, Dan Wojcik, and Debbie Nankivell.

Academic Liaison Program

Discussed whether the committee should recommend pursuing an academic liaison link between the department and faculty regarding student-athlete academic progress. Ralph Barnhard contacted Herb Chereck prior to this meeting and found that implementing such a program would be allowable from an advising/mentoring perspective.

Gary Gray outlined the services currently available to student-athletes, including access to computers, a resource library, counseling, academic advising, tutors, progress reports, academic testing, career counseling, SOAR classes, and team council. The team council links student-athlete representatives from each sport with department administrators. The council meets twice a month to discuss academic, athletic, and team issues affecting student-athletes.

Ralph pointed out specific areas of the Handbook for Student-Athletes listing benefits received by student-athletes. These benefits include complimentary tickets for their sport, financial aid based on participation in a sport, non-athletic related financial aid, the special assistance fund, letter awards, academic services, book allowance, health insurance, and the Adopt-A-Duck program. (The department was recently advised that the Adopt-A-Duck program can no longer be administered by the department).

Definition of Academic Liaison

The following definitions were provided to facilitate the pro and con discussion of this issue.

ACADEMIC LIAISON

- I. *A person, within an academic field, whose only responsibility for the athletic department is to confidentially discuss the progress of the designated student-athlete with the athlete's instructor(s). The liaison should not hold a position above the instructor that could be used as an intimidation factor. This person will report their findings to the appropriate facilitator and will not be involved in actions occurring after this point.*
- II. A committee member (or faculty member) to serve as a liaison between the athletic department (i.e., a coach) and a classroom instructor regarding concerns about a specific student-athlete's academic progress.
 - 1) A faculty member serving as a mentor to student-athlete.
 - 2) Gain the assistance of the faculty mentor to inform the coaching staff when a

student-athlete is not attending or performing adequately in their class(es).

Briefly reviewed the following portion of the minutes from the November 19, 1996 meeting.

A lengthy discussion ensued with a number of concerns raised. The issues included:

- 1) Whether services to handle student-athlete problems are already in place and if so, whether they are working to everyone's satisfaction.
- 2) Whether similar programs are in place on campus for the general student body and if so, whether student-athletes could tap into these services.
- 3) Whether it is appropriate to expect faculty to notify coaches of student-athletes' progress more often than they report on the progress of other students.
- 4) Whether committee members feel comfortable asking faculty members to identify student-athletes' with performance/attendance problems when faculty know the student-athletes will most likely be disciplined by being assigned tedious drills in an effort to change the poor behaviors.
- 5) Whether the current early warning system (forms) can be revised to be more effective.
- 6) Whether student-athletes with poor academic records should be recruited to the UO.

Pro Argument

John Leahy presented the following in favor of the academic liaison program.

- I. *The state of Oregon wants a competitive Division I men's basketball team.*
- II. In order to have a competitive Division I team, you have to *recruit minority athletes from the inner cities.*
- III. Inner city high schools and the inner city environment do not prepare students for the University of Oregon, or for living in Eugene, Oregon. (Note: The critical word is recruit.)
- IV. [Added during meeting] The opportunity to enhance the quality of our student-athletes' education is important and could help promote the program. Parents of recruits would likely want their son/daughter to select the UO based on the resultant high grad rates.

Additional Arguments in Favor of Academic Liaison Program.

- 1) *Coach requested this program.*
- 2) This could be a pilot program that could be extended to other programs.
- 3) This program will provide a small step in the direction of fostering better ties between the athletic department and the rest of the University.

John stated that he has experience recruiting and retaining foreign students in the UO Math Department and he has far more leeway in options available to him for assisting students to

succeed than the NCAA rules allow for student-athletes.

Con Argument

Steve Kevan presented the following in opposition to the academic liaison program.

- 1) ***The pamper factor:*** *Why just men's basketball? Why not all student athletes, or indeed, why not all students? The faculty consulted about this proposed program focus almost immediately on this issue. We will take some heat if we implement it without some care.*
Counterargument: *This could be a pilot program that could be expanded to more teams/athletes. Doubt it could be expanded to all students in any formal way.*
- 2) ***The cost factor:*** *Faculty time is expensive, and this is not generally what faculty are trained and paid to do. They could actually screw it up without much effort.*
Counterargument: *Exercise some care in finding the mentors.*
- 3) ***The turf battle:*** *Student-athletes can get advice from any of several programs inside the athletic department. Does the IAC want to enter the fray in this way? Would it be better to try to offer advice to improve existing programs, rather than to generate a whole new, competitive program?*
Counterargument: *Perception is that internal programs do not and probably cannot offer the sort of mentorship program desired.*

During the ensuing discussion, the following additional concerns were raised about the athletic liaison program (primarily referring to the mentorship vs. oversight approach).

- 1) The possibility that there would not be enough mentors available to work with the number of student-athletes interested in participating in the program.
- 2) If only one team was selected to participate in the program, other student-athletes would feel that their team(s) were perceived as less important to the university.
- 3) Not sure how this program could be successfully implemented and managed.
- 4) Not sure that some student-athletes would accept being told they would need to participate in such a program. They could feel intimidated about their required participation in the program.

5) Some student-athletes have a difficult time keeping up with the demands made on them now, participation in a mentorship program could only complicate their already busy lives.

Bill Moos stated that if the committee decides that the benefits of the athletic liaison program outweigh the drawbacks, the committee should submit a recommendation to him. Bill, along with his staff, will take the next steps to consider implementation of the program, including approval from the president or his designee. Should the committee recommend starting with a pilot mentoring program, the first student-athletes to participate would come from various teams rather than only one team.

Recommendation Discussion

Each member of the committee was given the opportunity to express their opinion about whether the academic liaison program should be pursued. The final tally was eight in favor of the program and three against, although it should be noted that even those who voted in favor expressed concerns about the program. The committee members did agree, however, that the mentorship aspects of the program were preferred over the oversight components.

One suggestion was that a UO research team take on the academic liaison program as a project. This research team could help in designing and implementing the program.

The next step is for the committee is to submit a recommendation to Bill Moos. Ralph will prepare the first draft of this recommendation and request assistance from committee members prior to its submission at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next Intercollegiate Athletics Committee meeting has been scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. on **Tuesday, February 18, 1997** in the Casanova Center conference room. Agenda items will include an update on NCAA legislation, information about the NCAA certification self-study's preliminary plan, and the committee's recommendation regarding the academic liaison program.

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