

Annual Report to Faculty Council From the Faculty Athletics Committee

Submitted by Layna Mosley
Chair, Faculty Athletics Committee;
Professor, Department of Political Science
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I. Committee Overview

The Faculty Athletics Committee (FAC) “informs and represents the faculty and advises the chancellor on any aspect of athletics, including, but not limited to, the academic and broader University experience for varsity student athletes and the general conduct and operation of the University’s athletic program” (Faculty Code § 4-7[b], Amended 2/19/16).

During 2015-2016, FAC consisted of 9 elected faculty members:¹

- **Term expiring 2016:** Joy Renner (FAC chair), Radiologic Science; Deborah Stroman, Kenan-Flagler; Kim Strom-Gottfried, School of Social Work.
- **Term expiring 2017:** John B. Stephens, School of Government; Beverly Foster, School of Nursing; Josefa Lindquist, Romance Studies.
- **Term expiring 2018:** Daryhl Johnson, School of Medicine; Layna Mosley, Political Science; Andrew Perrin, Sociology

Lissa Broome served as Faculty Athletics Representative to the ACC and the NCAA, and thus served as an ex officio member of the FAC. Chancellor Carol Folt attends regularly, as her schedule permits; when she is unable to attend, she typically sends a representative. Several non-voting consultants also attend regularly, provide information and seek the Committee’s advice. They include Director of Athletics Lawrence Cunningham; Senior Associate Athletic Director Vince Ille; Director for the Academic Support Program for Student Athletes, Michelle Brown; and a representative from the Provost’s Process Review Group (Debbi Clarke). Two student-athletes, chosen by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, also take part in FAC meetings; in 2015-2016, the students were Ezra Baeli-Wang (Fencing) and Lexi Cappalli (Gymnastics).

FAC’s internal structure has evolved in recent years, with a general effort to more clearly define the tasks and responsibilities of each member, allowing members to develop expertise in certain areas, while also being mindful of faculty members’ other commitments and responsibilities. Joy Renner was re-elected to serve as Chair in 2015-2016; in her capacity as Chair, she attended meetings of the ASPSA Advisory Committee, the Title IX Committee, Athletics Department Drug Policy Review Committee, Athletics Council, Student Athlete Advisory Council, the Process Review Group (formerly the Student-Athlete Academic Initiative Working Group), and multiple individual meetings with groups and individuals involved with our students participating in sports.

¹ Beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year, FAC’s membership was expanded to include 12 faculty members.

For 2015-2016, the committee also selected a vice chair, Kim Strom-Gottfried, tasked with assisting the chair to coordinate the FAC's external activities (including, as described below, chairing the Committee on College Sports and UNC).

As in previous years, each member of FAC was assigned a "topic area," for which the member was responsible for developing expertise, liaising with relevant parties on campus (for instance, in the case of the Academics topic area experts, participating in the campus review of Course Clustering), and presenting information to FAC. Topic area experts also participate in the Academic Initiative Working Group's meetings when that body is reviewing processes relevant to their area. The topic areas include Academics; Admissions; Advising; and Student-Athlete Experience. FAC members who have experience on the Committee usually move to a new "topic area" role at some point, so that they have the opportunity to provide input on, and gather information about, an additional element of the committee's work.

Each member of FAC also was assigned as a liaison to (typically) two varsity athletics teams. The rationale behind the team liaison assignment was that it would allow members to develop direct relationships with student-athletes, academic counselors and coaches, and that this would improve the flow of information between FAC, on the one hand, and those involved in athletics, on the other. In their team liaison role, FAC members might attend a team meeting or practice; meet with the coaching staff; meet with the academic counselors assigned to their team; or meet with individual members of the team. FAC members have approached this liaison role in various ways, reflecting differences across sports, as well as varying capacities to commit time to this role. In any case, the team liaison activity has allowed FAC members to gather information and bring perspectives that are specific to individual sports – recognizing, for instance, that the concerns of student-athletes in volleyball or basketball may not be the same as those in football or golf.

II. Summary of 2015-2016 activities

A detailed, meeting by meeting summary of FAC's activities can be found in the minutes of our monthly meetings, available from the Faculty Governance website. The activities described in this report are intended to be illustrative, rather than exhaustive. Meetings are open, and we encourage our faculty colleagues to attend, or to communicate with members of the committee regarding any concerns they have related to our committee's charge. For additional information regarding academics and athletics at UNC, please see the annual report submitted by Lisa Broome, as Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR).

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the FAC held nine monthly meetings, including a longer end-of-year retreat in May. All meetings were open, and we typically had additional faculty as well as members of the media join us. In addition to its regular meetings, FAC also attended a meeting of head coaches, held on February 23, and intended to gather together the head coaches of all varsity sports with the members of FAC. This meeting allowed for the discussion of, among other things, how faculty and coaches could best communicate (including the role of academic counselors) and how to address class absences related to athletic competition.

Our activities and discussions during these meetings fell into four broad areas.

Collection of Information Related to, Monitoring of, and Advising on Topic Areas. After several years in which FAC was focused on creating a more institutionalized set of structures and

processes, and on responding to major events and analyses at UNC, the Committee has now transitioned to a more routinized means of operation. The Committee continues to survey the campus environment for issues of concern, and to encourage faculty, student-athletes and coaches to bring issues to us as they arise. Regular (every meeting, usually) updates from the Chancellor, the Director of Athletics, the Faculty Athletics Representative, the Process Review Group, and the Academic Support Program for Student Athletes aid in these efforts.

At the same time, FAC has instituted regular reporting and oversight by its topic area experts, and a significant portion of our 2015-2016 meetings were devoted to presentations and discussions led by these topic area experts. Through these activities, FAC is able to collect, request and assess various forms of data, some of it of a protected (e.g. academic records of individual student-athletes) nature, and to identify concerns that might arise.

For instance, in September 2015, FAC held its meeting jointly with the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions. Steve Farmer, Vice Provost and Director of Admissions at UNC, presented information on the “special talent” admissions process, by which the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions has authorized 160 athletics admissions and 40 music and drama admission per year under a special talent category referenced in the Trustees’ admissions policy. Farmer described the use of the “predicted first year grade point average” tool, which is the means by which Special Talent subcommittee makes its initial assessments of academic risks and prospects. Farmer noted that, over time, the number of student-athlete candidates for admission who fall into the highest-risk category (and therefore require detailed committee review) has fallen markedly, from 39 students in 2001, to 29 students in 2006, to 9 students in 2015.

Farmer also summarized information in the 2015 report on the entering undergraduate admissions class generally, and on the special talent admissions specifically. At the meeting, Farmer also discussed the Special Talent Committee’s composition (seven faculty members), policies and procedures. During the conversation, Farmer noted that the Subcommittee on Special Talent Admissions’ assessment of candidates comes at the end of a long process, which begins with the Department of Athletics reviewing approximately 700 potentially recruited student-athletes, and 527 of these being forward to the Admissions Office for initial review. Some of these students ultimately decided to attend elsewhere; others were deemed by Admissions not to meet UNC’s standards; and still others ultimately went through the formal admissions process. From this larger pool of 527, and based on their academic records at the time, 52 would have required detailed review by Subcommittee on Special Talent. Of those, only 14 applied to UNC, and 9 were admitted and enrolled.

At this same meeting, and in closed session, Farmer presented information on the academic performance of student-athletes at UNC. The purpose of this conversation was to consider how students admitted through the Special Talent process performed once at UNC, in terms of the courses in which they enrolled and their outcomes in those courses, as well as their overall grade point averages. Farmer also noted, more broadly, that the Special Talent subcommittee now reports regularly to the Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Admissions. At a later meeting, FAC members were in consensus that they were satisfied with the oversight of the admissions process, and with the willingness of Farmer and others to provide information to FAC.

Similar presentations, involving data collected by FAC topic experts as well as other individuals on campus, were made by topic experts at other FAC meetings. For instance, at the May 2016 meeting,

Layna Mosley and Deborah Stroman (“Academic” topic experts) presented data on the majors of student-athletes (with comparisons over time as well as comparisons with non-athlete students) and described the process by which the General Administration-mandated review of course clustering and grading outcomes (involving Dean Abigail Panter, University Registrar Chris Derickson, FAR Lissa Broome and two FAC members, Mosley and Stroman) is conducted.

With regard to Advising, FAC members collected and presented information related to ASPSA and its activities and programming, as well as to the relationship between undergraduate advising generally (“Steele Building”) and student-athlete advising specifically. During these conversations, it was noted that the increased prevalence of mid-year (January) student-athlete matriculation presents challenges, in terms of orienting the students, and in terms of the availability of appropriate courses.

More generally, FAC members also provided feedback on the Process Review Group’s website (apsa.unc.edu), which provides a means of easily accessing the information gathered by that group during its first two years of operation. The site was launched in October 2015.

Finally, FAC receives regular reports from the Department of Athletics regarding its operations. This typically includes a detailed report on the Department’s revenues and expenditures. In April 2016, it also included a presentation on and discussion of the proposed Indoor Practice Facility for football, and its implications for other campus facilities and activities.

Discussion and Advising on Potential NCAA Legislative Items. During its 2015-2016 meetings, the FAC continued to receive regular and detailed updates from the Faculty Athletics Representative. Many of these involved discussions of policy changes by the Atlantic Coast Conference or the NCAA. Lisa Broome, as FAR, regularly asked FAC members to weigh in on proposed changes, and the committee regularly discussed how best to form alliances with like-minded faculty bodies at other (especially ACC) institutions.

The NCAA legislative items discussed during the 2015-2016 year included proposals related to whether travel days for student-athletes should be considered a “day off” from athletically-related activities. In January 2016, at its annual convention, the NCAA deferred a set of three “time demands” proposals for further study, and for a vote during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Campus Outreach. Following a 2015-6 Faculty Council resolution (“On a Task Force to Examine the Implications of Impending Changes in College Sports”), FAC worked with others on campus to launch a discussion on the academic implications of changes occurring in collegiate sports. The FAC Chair appointed two members to the committee (Stephens and Strom-Gottfried); Kim Strom-Gottfried chaired the committee through June 30, 2016. The committee also included four other (non-FAC) faculty members and one student. This Committee met in February and May 2016 to explore possible topics; the summer was devoted to planning a forum, held on September 14, 2016 (see Section III below).

Also, as has been its practice in recent years, the FAC also held Open Forums (November 18 and March 2), with a drop-in format, to gather faculty input related to Athletics. While attendance at these forums was quite sparse, FAC members appreciated the opportunity to discuss academics and athletics with faculty colleagues.

In February 2016, a form was added to the FAC Faculty Governance page which allows faculty members to ask questions through an online form, and to direct email to FAC@unc.edu. The committee also receives inquiries and feedback via the FAC Chair and other FAC members, including the FAR.

FAC members also participate, once each year (usually in February or March) in focus groups with student-athletes, held in the context of a regular Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) meeting. Students and FAC members form small groups and discuss a set of open-ended questions (using an instrument crafted by FAC members), related to student-athletes' experiences at UNC. FAC members aggregate the feedback from these sessions and use it to inform their activities.

In February 2016, some of the subjects which were noted in the focus groups included (a) priority registration for student-athletes, and its possible expansion to include summer school and first-year students; desire to form relationships with faculty, but with time constraints in attending office hours; demand for tutors in upper division courses; unwillingness of some faculty to accept the student-athlete travel schedule; occasional difficulties (but also reports of cooperation) in resolving class scheduling issues with coaches.

Time Demands for Student-Athletes. During 2015-2016, the FAC also devoted significant consideration to the time-demands faced by student-athletes, and to how these demands intersected with academic opportunities and performance. In the October 2015 meeting, for example, the committee discussed the GOALS survey, distributed by the NCAA Division I SAAC to student-athletes, and including questions on how accurately time demands are described to prospective student-athletes during the recruitment process.

The Committee also heard feedback from its student liaisons; they described the time spent on athletically-related activities (including, but not limited to, travel, practice and competition), as well as their (often) desire to devote even free time to practice at their sport. These conversations also suggested that there is significant variation within, as well as across, teams in how class/practice time conflicts are handled. It was noted that conflicts typically are more problematic for those involved in team, rather than individual sports. Our conversations with the campus community also highlighted the desire of, and the difficulty for, student-athletes to take part in traditional study-abroad opportunities, either during the semester or during the summer.

Going forward, this issue will remain on the agenda, as the NCAA has deferred taking action on several time demands-related proposals; the ACC will discuss these in October 2016, and the NCAA will take action at its January 2017 meetings. Other entities at UNC also are taking part in an analysis of time demands, both generally and related to the NCAA legislation; this includes a Study Group led by Nikki Moore, Associate Athletic Director and Senior Women's Administrator at UNC.

Responding to Issues Raised by Faculty Constituents and Other Parties. FAC welcomes suggestions and issues from faculty and other members of the campus community. In addition, events external to UNC sometimes have implications for our students and faculty, and FAC works to gather information on these.

For example, in December 2015, the Committee discussed with Dean Abigail Panter the process used to address the implications of the ACC Football Championship (played on Saturday, December 5, during final exam week). Panter described the process by which she convened a meeting of

stakeholders to discuss how to address disruptions to students' final exam schedules, as the game affected two days (Friday and Saturday) of finals, with impacts on members of the band, cheerleading squad, manager program and football team. A total of 166 exams, involving 149 students, needed to be rescheduled. Panter described the process by which various alternatives were considered, and the selection of two reading days (one in the middle of, and another at the end of, the finals period) as the most appropriate make-up exam solution. Proctored exam locations were provided; students and professors also were permitted (as usual) to work out their own arrangements for the time and place of the make-up exam. In one case, a faculty member requested and received an additional option, a proctored exam on the Sunday following the championship game. Other students not involved with the championship game were also able to take advantage of these make-up options when they had an exam excuse. FAC's conversation with Dean Panter allowed committee members to offer advice on how to address similar situations, and also to gain a sense of campus-wide coordination in response to an externally-generated academic disruption.

To take another example, FAC also addressed concerns related to student-athlete class absences, related to travel and competition. FAC's concern is that policies on University-related absences are applied equally and fairly across students, regardless of the reason for the absence. In several conversations during the year, including the February meeting with the head coaches, the opportunity for student-athletes to make up exams, quizzes and other missed work was discussed.

III. Activities in 2016-2017

The FAC continues its work at the intersection of academics and athletics, and we hope to be better able to conduct our activities as the result of our recent membership expansion (from nine to twelve elected faculty members). Layna Mosley (Political Science) chairs FAC in Fall 2016, while John Stephens (School of Government) will assume the Chair's role for Spring 2017. FAC also decided, at its September 2016 meeting, to select two Vice Chairs, one to help coordinate the FAC's internal activities, and the other to help coordinate its external activities. (For Fall 2016, these roles are filled by Andrew Perrin and John Stephens, respectively).

FAC members again are assigned to topic areas, and as liaisons with varsity athletics teams. We continue to interact with various individuals and bodies on campus, including the Process Review Group, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for the Academic Support Program for Student-Athletes. We also are considering how better to solicit feedback from a broader swath of student-athletes, expanding our reach beyond those who serve on SAAC or as liaisons to campus bodies.

The Committee on College Sports and UNC: Implications and Insights, also continues its work. Its current members are

- Rhonda Gibson, Associate Professor, School of Media & Journalism
- Daryhl Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor, Surgery, School of Medicine
- Robert Malekoff, Lecturer and Academic Advisor, Department of Exercise and Sports Science
- Jonathan Weiler, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Global Studies
- Shielda Glover Rodgers, Clinical Associate Professor, School of Nursing

- Madeline Harrison, Student Representative
- John Stephens, Associate Professor, School of Government (Chair of Committee July 1, 2016 – present, FAC Vice-Chair)

On September 14, 2016, the Committee sponsored a forum, focused on student-athletes' time commitments to their sports and to academics. This forum was held with an eye toward relevant NCAA resolutions due for action in January 2017. A panel presented perspectives from student-athletes, an athlete alumnus, a coach, an ASPSA counselor, and a faculty member. Topics addressed included course scheduling, faculty office hours, athletic travel putting pressure on academic commitments, and strategies for balancing academic work and sports-related activities. The forum included presentations, with background on current and draft NCAA legislation, as well as questions from the audience.

The committee now (October 2016) seeks to expand the sample of student-athletes from which it gathers information and perspectives, and to hold a second forum in the Spring 2017 semester. The committee's charge ends June 30, 2017.