

Resolution 2015-6. On a Campus Discussion Regarding the Academic Implications of the Changes Coming to College Sports.

The Faculty Council resolves:

Section 1. The Faculty Athletics Committee (FAC) shall launch a campus discussion on the academic implications of the changes coming to college sport.

Section 2. To organize the relevant events, FAC shall establish a committee of at least seven members. At least two of these are elected members of FAC, appointed by the chair. One student member is appointed by the chair of the faculty, on the recommendation of the president of the Student Body. At least four additional members are appointed by the chair of the faculty.

Section 3. This resolution is effective upon passage. The committee shall complete its work by June 30, 2017.

Submitted by the Faculty Executive Committee

Background and Rationale

The original version of Resolution 2015-6 (text below) was introduced by Prof. Jay Smith (History) on behalf of the Athletics Reform Group (ARG) at Faculty Council at its February 2015 meeting. At that meeting, Prof. Vincas Steponaitis (Archaeology and Anthropology) moved that Resolution 2015-6 be referred to the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) for further discussion, and his motion passed. After due deliberation, FEC recommended adoption of the substitute resolution above, which was approved at the September 25, 2015 Faculty Council and General Faculty meeting.

The original proposed resolution was as follows:

Resolution 2015-6. On a Task Force to Examine the Implications of Impending Changes in College Sports. The Faculty Council resolves: Building upon the work of the Betts committee of 1989 and the Rawlings report of 2013, both of which contained wise and prescient recommendations, the chair of the faculty is requested to appoint an ad hoc faculty task force to examine the academic and other implications of the changes coming to college sports—Big Five autonomy, the prospect of player unionization, enhanced compensation for athletes, new threats to the non-revenue sports—and to propose appropriate responses to protect the University's academic integrity and the academic interests of athletes.

Faculty Executive Committee Rationale

Campus and national issues related to intercollegiate athletics are rapidly evolving and are being researched, debated in court, and propelled by a number of well-established foundations, faculty groups, research centers, and legal entities. While it could be fruitful for a team of researchers to

digest and apply the national issues to our campus community, the process of “examining the implications of the changes coming to college sport” in an effort “to propose appropriate responses” would be very time consuming, and the output would be largely speculative. Because of how rapidly the landscape is now changing, concrete recommendations at this point would be premature. We already have multiple faculty committees working on these issues. To appoint another committee charged with writing another report may not be the most productive option at this point.

The intent of the initial resolution is for the campus community to stay abreast of the changes in college sport and their possible impact on the university — an important cause. Our substitute resolution asks the Faculty Athletics Committee (FAC), the standing committee whose charge encompasses such matters, to help organize a campus discussion of these issues. It will do so by establishing, together with the chair of the faculty, a subsidiary committee whose members will include faculty from both inside and outside FAC, as well as a student representative.

Working under the auspices of FAC, this new committee’s job will be to facilitate an ongoing campus discussion drawing upon local and national experts so we, as a campus community, are well positioned when the time is right to propose appropriate steps. It will be entirely up to the committee to decide how this can be accomplished. Possible avenues discussed by FEC include a conference or speaker series; publicizing and coordinating the relevant events organized by other campus groups; and encouraging the development of new courses, as well as providing additional opportunities for existing courses, to examine national issues in intercollegiate athletics.

In sum, the work of the proposed committee would serve to educate the campus community on current policy issues in college sports, and to elicit ideas about future directions UNC could take with respect to these issues. FAC will keep Faculty Council apprised of this committee’s work through its regular annual reports.