

FACULTY ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

Monday, September 11 | 3:30 – 5 p.m.

Location: South Building, Suite 105

ATTENDEES

FACULTY ATHLETICS COMMITTEE:

David Berkoff, Lissa Broome, Stacey Daughters, Cassandra Davis, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Kevin Guskiewicz (for part of the meeting), Shawn Kane, Aimee McHale, Lisa Rahangdale, Abbie Smith-Ryan, Issac Unah, Carmina Valle, Erianne Weight

ADVISORS:

Michelle Brown (ASPSA), Bubba Cunningham (Athletics), Robbi Pickeral Evans (Athletics), Dwight Hollier (Athletics), Cricket Lane (Athletics)

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Elijah Green (Football), Kiersten Thomassey (Field Hockey)

GUESTS:

Andrew Carter (News & Observer), Jesus Enriquez (Chancellor's Fellow), Amy Grau (Chancellor's Office)

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WELCOME AND PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- Chair Erianne Weight thanked Committee members for coming together to share their thoughts
- Committee members and guests introduced themselves
- The June Retreat minutes and fall schedule of meetings were approved. The FAC-SAAC focus group meeting date was finalized.
 - Monday 9/11 | 3:30 – 5 p.m. | Committee Meeting | 105 South Building
 - Monday 10/9 | 3:30 – 5 p.m. | Committee Meeting | 105 South Building
 - Tuesday 10/17 | 8:30 a.m. | Head Coaches' Meeting | Blue Zone Upper Club
 - Wednesday 11/8 | 6-7 p.m. | FAC-SAAC Focus Group Meetings | Blue Zone Upper Club
 - Monday 11/13 | 3:30 – 5 p.m. | Committee Meeting | 105 South Building
 - Monday 12/11 | 3:30 – 5 p.m. | Committee Meeting | 105 South Building
- Weight noted that there will be a Battle of the Blues Symposium on topics in college athletics on November 10 and likely hosted at Duke.
- Weight encouraged FAC members to reach out to their teams and to be “what the team wants and needs.”

COLLEGIATE SPORTS HOT TOPICS: CONFERENCE EXPANSION

- Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz and Athletic Director Bubba Cunningham discussed the recent ACC Conference vote to admit three new members beginning in fall 2024 – SMU, California, and Stanford.
- Input from the Committee (including Aimee McHale’s written submission) was relayed to the Chancellor by FAC Chair Erienne Weight and FAR Lissa Broome. The Chancellor appreciated the chance to discuss the issues with them.
- Broome also shared McHale’s submission and Weight’s draft op-ed with the ACC FARs. The ACC suggested that FARs communicate with their Presidents/Chancellors regarding expansion.
- Cunningham explained that some schools favored expansion because they were worried that schools might leave the ACC. Some schools were influenced by the foregone revenue from the new schools that would be an addition to their budgets.
- The committee discussed the obvious effects on time away from class and student-athlete well-being from cross-country travel.
- The ACC is now working on scheduling models for 2024-25 and beyond.
 - Some neutral sites (Omaha for baseball; Dallas) are being considered to reduce the travel burden.
 - The downsides of this approach include that that both teams will be traveling, one team loses a home game, neither team will be playing before family/friends/the university community, and there will be additional expense for facilities rentals and lodging for two teams.
 - 11 ACC sports have regular conference schedules and will be most directly impacted by expansion
 - 14 more ACC-sponsored sports have just a conference championship
- FAC can help by continuing discussions with SAs at UNC SAAC and the Chancellor will be sure that the ACC SAAC is also discussing how to minimize the impact on SAs.
 - Kiersten Thomassey (Field Hockey) noted that travel issues -- such as delayed flights, baggage not arriving with players – are exacerbated for travel on regular airlines versus charters
 - Elijah Green (Football) commented that game time can have an effect. An upcoming away game will kick-off at 8:00 p.m., meaning that even though the team charters, it will not arrive home until the wee hours of the morning but the players will still be expected to attend meetings the next morning.
- The Chancellor will relay McHale’s suggestion that we record classes (as we did during the pandemic) and make the recordings available to students with excused absences (for any reason) to the Provost who is looking at the increased need for accommodations for students.

- Cunningham cautioned that Athletics may need to rethink its internal policy limiting missed class time for regular season competition to 7 classes.
 - Athletics will share drafts of schedules as they are being produced with FAC
- The Chancellor reported that the UNC Board of Trustees met earlier in the day in a closed session to receive a legal update on Tez Walker's eligibility determination and legal options available to challenge the NCAA's ruling that Walker was not eligible to play this year.

FAR UPDATE

- Lissa Broome, the Faculty Athletics Representative, reported that the ACC will spend time working on how to make the expanded conference work with as little negative impact on the academics and well-being of student-athletes as possible.
- McHale asked whether we could influence the NCAA to change its rules that prohibit UNC Women's Tennis Player Fiona Crawley from receiving prize money she earned from her performance at the US Open. The NCAA's restrictions seem out of step with its stance on NIL. Cunningham said that discussions are underway with the USTA as to whether an exception similar to that for Olympic medal payments can be instituted.

ASPSA UPDATE

- Michelle Brown, Director of ASPSA reported that a record 503 student-athletes were on the ACC Honor Roll
- 141 student-athletes graduated in May and August
- Student-athletes earned a term and cumulative 3.2 GPA
- Brown posted the most recent Academic Scorecard on the FAC Canvas site and the ASPSA website, aspsa.com
 - Record-breaking numbers for GSR and APR
- About 60 student-athletes had a study abroad experience last year, not quite back to the pre-pandemic level of 100 student-athletes.
- Celebration of academics – best GPA teams will have a meal together at the Carolina Inn this fall thanks to a generous donor (Men's Fencing and Women's Tennis)
- ASPSA is hosting a pregame football event this weekend and invited campus partners and FAC topic group members who work with ASPSA
- 8 Sections of Thrive are being taught by members of the ASPSA team.

AD UPDATE

- Athletic Director Bubba Cunningham reported that the ACC's new office has opened in Charlotte
- UNC has had a great start to the season and the two new coaches (Erin Matson – Field Hockey and Mike Schall – Volleyball) are off to a good start.
- The new Tennis facility opened last spring and the new Golf course will open soon.

- The BlueZone Training Table opens tomorrow for all student-athletes who can get a meal between 10:30-1:30. Cunningham noted that FAC's reports from the SAAC-FAC focus groups about dissatisfaction with the Fueling Station played a role in this development.
- Parking still needs work. Although Athletics was successful in getting Women's Basketball parking in the Ramshead Deck, there are still issues for other student-athletes.
 - Could a pass be issued for student-athletes who live together?
 - Are there passes that could be good for just specific times of the day?
 - Special concern for rowing students biking to practice in the dark
 - Parking has been to SAAC meetings. FAC will invite a rep to an upcoming FAC meeting.

GOALS FOR 2023-24

1. Bridge divide between academics and athletics
2. Facilitate for credit opportunities for SAs
3. Support well-being and mental health of SAs
4. Position UNC to make informed decisions in rapidly changing college athletics environments

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- Prioritize 2 and 3, based on input from Green and Thomassey.
- 1. will be done organically through FAC meetings, FAC liaison activities, FAC meeting with coaches, and SAAC-FAC focus groups.
- 4. will be part of most agendas as we will be touching on important topics in intercollegiate athletics at each meeting.

2. For-credit opportunities for student-athletes.

- Weight described three buckets of potential for-credit courses for student-athletes:
 - Course that would offer credit for some of the onboarding activity that student-athletes undertake
 - This could perhaps be incorporated into the Thrive course.
 - Michelle Brown notes that the Thrive curriculum is prescribed
 - Perhaps an additional hour could be added to the course to cover student-athlete-specific issues
 - Or the required course content could be reduced to free time for athlete-specific content
 - Course that offers credit for some content that is currently covered in the Leadership Academy
 - This course could be offered as a Triple I (333 students)

- This course could be for other “high performers” like musicians
 - Course that offers credit for activities related to NIL, including financial literacy
 - There are financial literacy courses already offered for credit
 - Wells Fargo has an online curriculum with various short modules on financial literacy topics
 - The Heels 4 Life Collective also offers financial literacy training to the football student-athletes receiving funds through the collective
 - Broome and others from an NIL working group recently met with the Digital and Lifelong Learning group at UNC (formerly the Friday Center for continuing studies) to talk about models for developing stand-alone courses or an NIL certificate program
- Other course ideas considered
 - NC State provides a course that offers credit for student-athletes
 - Learn more about this course and whether it provides credit for athletic participation or if there is additional content offered
 - Brown and Lane will survey the Academic Support Directors and Student-Athlete Services Directors in the ACC to find out more about this course and whether there are others like it at other ACC schools.
 - Sports psychology course or other course that might offer to student-athletes and others training in various topics that would assist them in managing their mental health
 - Meditation, journaling
 - Course regarding community engagement
 - Course regarding nutrition, especially applicable to fueling the body for athletic performance balanced against societal body image expectations
- Lists of courses that might be of interest to student-athletes
 - Lissa has prepared a list of courses related to NIL, but acknowledges that students who are not majors may have difficulty registering for some of the courses
 - Once a list is prepared, it could include existing offerings in financial literacy, sports psychology and could be shared with advisers.
- Weight also mentioned a proposal she is working on for a Major/Minor related to athletics and innovation that might be housed in the Shuford Program on Entrepreneurship or the new school of Civic Life and Leadership

3. Well-being and mental health of student-athletes

- Dwight suggested inviting Dr. Jeni Shannon, Director of Mental Health and Performance Psychology for Sports Medicine to come to talk to FAC about specific things that would help in advancing the well-being and mental health of student-athletes.

- Would offering a sports psychology class for intercollegiate athletes help reduce Dr. Shannon's load?
- Green described the need for more free time without either school or sport obligations. He also wished for more time to go home to be with family and friends throughout the year.
 - Unah wondered whether Athletics could fund a parents' weekend where student-athletes' close family members spend a weekend on campus with their student-athlete.
 - Many parents already travel to home and away games although this will become harder and more expensive in a geographically expanded conference

ACTION ITEMS:

SEPTEMBER ACTION ITEMS:

- Review Topic Groups (Abbie)
- Parking Challenges (Lissa & Bubba)
- Curriculum Ideas: Thrive and Triple I, Leadership Academy for Credit (Erienne)
- Circulate list of NIL-related courses currently offered and invite others to supplement with other courses that might be beneficial to student-athletes (Lissa)
- Access to Financial literacy modules (Michelle)
- Benchmarking of other ACC schools on whether course credits are offered for athletics participation (Michelle & Cricket)
- Plan Discussion on mental health and well-being for Student-Athletes (Erienne)