

**Boston College  
Athletics Advisory Board  
Annual Report, 2020-21**

This Report summarizes for the University community developments related to Boston College's intercollegiate athletics program and the Athletics Advisory Board's (AAB) activities during the past academic year.

## **1. Academic and Athletics Highlights**

### **A. ACC Academic Consortium**

The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) sponsored its 15th year of initiatives organized by the ACC Academic Consortium (ACCAC). The ACCAC leverages the athletics association and identity of the 15 ACC institutions in order to enrich their educational mission. Boston College students, faculty, and administrators participated in ACCAC events held during both fall and spring semesters. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, events were held virtually this year.

This year's Meeting of the Minds Conference (hosted by UNC) on April 9-10 involved 176 students and faculty from all 15 ACC institutions (<https://accmom2021.web.unc.edu>). Students gave poster presentations on their research on a variety of topics.

This year's ACC Inventure Prize Competition in April featured undergraduate inventors from 13 universities. All 13 of their three-minute pitches aired on PBS. The hour-long broadcast (up from 30 minutes) included judges questioning the top five presenters and a brief report on the commercial success of several winners in previous years. The three-minute presentations are available to view at (<https://accinventureprize.com/2021>). Boston College's team of Lurein Perera '21 (Computer Science) and Diksha Thach '21 (International Studies) presented their *GiveCard*, a specialized debit card for the homeless.

The ACC debate competition was able to draw upon more student availability and greater flexibility in the recruitment of judges because it was hosted virtually. Thirteen schools participated including Boston College. The topic for debate was: *"Resolved: ACC member institutions should adopt a rule requiring institutions to interview at least one qualified minority candidate for all head coach and athletic director openings."* The event was live-streamed and had over 150 people tuning in to witness Wake Forest edge out Notre Dame in the championship round.

The ACC Academic Leadership Network (ALN), which provides leadership development for mid-level academic administrators across ACC institutions, completed programming for its second cohort of participants with a virtual session in the fall. The initiative included up to five participants from each university who met to hear from speakers and participate in workshops on topics focused on leadership and mentoring. The goal of the ALN is to facilitate cross-institutional connections among academic administrators while building leadership capacity for the participating institutions.

Although a planned face-to-face conference among ACC administrators committed to increasing student turnout in state and federal elections had to be cancelled, the group held several swap-and-share sessions by teleconference.

### **B. Academic Achievements of Boston College Student-Athletes**

Several BC student-athletes were recognized this year for their combination of academic and athletic achievements. Zion Johnson (football), Clare Naughton (volleyball) and Lauren White (track and field) were awarded ACC Postgraduate Scholarships for distinguished achievement in academics, athletics, and community service, as well as potential for graduate study. They were honored along with the rest of this year's class of postgraduate scholarship recipients during a one-hour show on the ACC Network in May. All three winners are taking advantage of their extra year of eligibility due to the pandemic to return to BC next year and compete.

Johnson, a computer science major, was named to the All-ACC third-team at offensive tackle last fall. Johnson graded out as BC's top offensive lineman in 2020 after moving from left guard to left tackle in the preseason. He will be enrolling in the Woods College of Advancing Studies Cyber Security program.

Naughton, a political science major, played in all 43 of BC's volleyball sets in this year's pandemic-shortened season and had a team-leading 109 kills. In 2019, she finished third on the team with 290 kills while playing in 119 of the team's 128 sets. She will be enrolling in the Middle Eastern Studies masters program.

White, an international studies major, has been competing for the Eagles in both track and field and cross country this year. She earned an individual qualifying spot for the NCAA Cross Country Championships, where she placed 62nd. In February, she finished seventh in the 3K at the ACC Indoor Championships. She plans to enroll in a graduate program at Boston College.

During the past academic year, 37 BC student-athletes were named to the All-ACC Academic Team in their sport, recognizing not only superior academic performance, but also outstanding athletic achievement. Senior Laura Lopez (Women's Tennis) was selected by Boston College as its Female Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year. Senior Michael Karow (Men's Ice Hockey) was chosen by Boston College as its Male Senior Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

### **C. NCAA Measures of Student-Athlete Academic Progress**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) uses two measures of academic achievement as part of its Academic Performance Program (APP). These are the Academic Progress Rate (APR) and the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), both of which are calculated for all full or partial scholarship student-athletes at each NCAA Division I member school.

The APR considers the eligibility, retention, and graduation of student-athletes receiving athletics aid (and, for teams that do not award athletics aid, all recruited student-athletes). The APR awards one point for each student-athlete who is academically eligible to compete in the next semester and one point if that student-athlete returns to school for the next semester (or graduates). Accordingly, for the academic year each student-athlete can receive a maximum of

four points, two each for fall and spring semesters. The APR is computed by taking the total number of points actually received in a given year, dividing it by the maximum possible total points, and multiplying by 1000.

The primary use of the APR is on a team-by-team rather than an overall institutional basis. Teams must earn a four-year average APR of at least 930 (i.e., 93 percent of the maximum total points) in order to compete in postseason championships. Schools with teams whose four-year average falls below 930 also may be subject to penalties in the form of limitations on practice times, reductions in the maximum allowable scholarship aid, and coaching suspensions.<sup>1</sup> Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the NCAA has suspended both the public release of APR data and penalties for 2020-21 and 2021-22, but schools still must submit their data to the NCAA. Based on the most recent data, none of Boston College's teams would have been subject to penalties. Three BC teams recorded 4-year perfect scores of 1000.

The second measure of academic performance used by the NCAA is the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), which measures the percentage of student-athletes entering an institution who graduate within six years from that institution, excluding students who transfer out while still academically eligible to compete at their initial institution. The latest publicly available data cover the student cohort entering college in 2013. For Boston College, the overall GSR was 95 percent, tied for fourth-best in the ACC and is topped only by Northwestern (98), Notre Dame (98), Duke (98), Vanderbilt (97), Stanford (96), and Wake Forest (96) among Football Bowl Subdivision institutions. Twelve of the varsity sports that Boston College sponsors achieved the highest possible GSR of 100 percent. Further details on APR and GSR for individual sports and other NCAA schools can be found at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org), under Division I/Academics.

The NCAA distributes a portion of new revenues from the broadcast rights of the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship to institutions based on the academic achievement of their student-athletes. An institution has three ways to qualify: earn an overall, single-year, all-sport APR of 985 or higher; earn an overall all-sport GSR of 90 percent or higher; or earn a Federal Graduation Rate (FGR) for athletics that is at least 13 percentage points higher than for the school's entire student body.<sup>2</sup> Boston College qualified for the latest distribution on the basis of GSR and APR. The ACC has decided that revenue shares earned by member institutions will be pooled and distributed equally across all 15 institutions.

#### **D. Student-Athlete Community Service**

Most BC student-athletes take part in community service activities, organized through the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the Athletics Department's Student-Athlete Development Office. During the past year, student-athletes completed almost 5,000 hours of

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<sup>1</sup> The benchmark of 930 has been shown to predict a Graduation Success Rate (described below) of 50 percent, the minimum standard that the NCAA expects all Division I members to meet.

<sup>2</sup> The FGR measures the percentage of students who graduate from an institution within six years after entering that same institution as full-time, first-year students in the fall semester. When applied to student athletes, the FGR counts only those who receive athletically related financial aid in their first semester. It differs from the GSR by not counting student-athletes who graduate after transferring into the institution and by counting student-athletes as having never graduated if they transfer out even if they subsequently graduate from another institution. Its main advantage is that institutions report the FGR for all students as well as student-athletes, allowing for comparison between the groups.

community service with over 15 local and national organizations. While the student-athletes did not participate in many in-person volunteer engagements, they took advantage of other opportunities. These opportunities included zooming with their “Team Impact” player, virtual read-alouds, virtual fitness instruction, decorating cards for local nursing homes, hospitals, and for BC athletic trainers, to recognize the extra efforts of sports medicine staff to ensure a safe environment for student-athletes.

Service initiatives included:

- Distribution of thank you notes and hand sanitizer to every BC Athletic Department staff member, organized by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.
- A “Soles for Souls” shoe drive to collect footwear that student-athletes and staff could no longer use following the change in vendors for the Athletics Department, donating 150 pairs of shoes to underprivileged youth.
- All teams watched a documentary on Lou Montgomery, who was the first black student-athlete at Boston College and discussed with their teammates what he had accomplished.
- Each team and department participated in the annual Adopt-A-Child event which connects student-athletes and athletics staff with underprivileged children from neighboring communities. While the pandemic prevented gathering in person to celebrate, everyone purchased gifts online and had them sent directly to local shelters. All 31 varsity teams, as well as many coaches and staff, adopted at least one child. Overall, student-athletes, coaches, and staff adopted a record 200 children this past holiday season.

During the virtual Golden Eagle Awards ceremony in May, the Men's and Women's Swim and Dive team was presented with this year's Richard “Moe” Maloney Award for outstanding service. The award recognized the countless hours the Swim team spent with their “Team Impact” teammate, Jacob. Also at the Golden Eagle Awards Ceremony, Boston College's ACC Top Six for Service award was presented to Amaka Chukwujekwu (volleyball), Mia Karras (women's soccer), Declan McGranahan (men's sailing), Alexandra Hulsebosch (rowing), Deon Jones (football), and Tyler Days (football).

### **E. Athletics Program Highlights**

Several Boston College teams achieved athletic success this past year. Seven teams made NCAA championships: Men's and Women's Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, Men's and Women's Skiing, and Men's and Women's Fencing. Football received a bowl bid but decided not to play due to the pandemic. Lacrosse won the NCAA Women's Championship, after having come up short in the previous three title games. Women's Sailing placed third in the 2021 Inter-collegiate Sailing Association (ICSA) National Championship.

During the fall, football won five games against ACC opponents for the first time since 2009, going 6-5 overall, and received a bowl bid for the 19th time in 22 seasons. The team decided not to participate in the bowl due to the pandemic. Senior tight end Hunter Long garnered All-American honors and was chosen in the third round (81<sup>st</sup> overall pick) of the NFL draft by the Miami Dolphins, the highest pick for a tight end in school history. Two others were also drafted by professional teams, with senior linebacker Isaiah McDuffie selected in the sixth round by the

Green Bay Packers and tight end Jake Burt '20 chosen by the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League as the first overall pick. Nine football players were All-ACC team selections.

Field hockey posted a 9-5 record. Junior goalkeeper Jonna Kennedy was named the ACC Defensive Player of the Year and the ACC Field Hockey Scholar-Athlete of the Year, among other accolades. She was joined as an All-ACC first team selection by sophomore forward Margo Carlin, with senior midfielder Fusine Govaert and senior forward Elizabeth Warner as second-team selections. All four players also were honored as All-Americans in field hockey.

Women's cross country finished ninth at the ACC Cross Country Championship, led by senior Lauren White's eighth place finish—the best by a BC runner since 2015. White advanced to the NCAA Cross Country Championship in March, finishing 62<sup>nd</sup> overall. She was also named to the All-ACC team. Women's soccer alumna, Kristie Mewis, was chosen for the U.S. Olympic Team. In sailing, the Eagles were third at the ICSA Women's Nationals, after earning a spot in the field by a second-place finish at the New England Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association (NEISA) championship.

In the winter, women's ice hockey went 14-6 overall, falling to Ohio State in the quarterfinal round of the NCAA Championship. Four team members: senior defense player Cayla Barnes (first team), junior forward Kelly Browne (first team), sophomore forward Hannah Bilka (third team), and freshman forward Gaby Roy (all-rookie) were All-Hockey East selections. Barnes and two former Eagles were named to the USA Hockey roster for the World Championships. Barnes also was recognized with All-American honors.

Men's ice hockey went 17-6-1, winning its 18<sup>th</sup> Hockey East Regular Season Championship. The team ranked first nationally in polls from January through the end of the regular season, advancing to the national quarterfinals (Elite Eight) before falling to St. Cloud State. Sophomore goalie Spencer Knight was named a top-three finalist for the Mike Richter Award, which honors the top goaltender in men's NCAA Division I hockey. He also garnered Hockey East Player of the Year honors and received Boston College's Golden Eagle Award recognizing the most outstanding male athlete. Freshman forward Nikita Nesterenko was selected as Hockey East Co-Rookie of the Year and Coach Jerry York was tabbed as Hockey East Coach of the Year. Also receiving All-Hockey East honors were sophomore forward Matt Boldy (first team), sophomore defenseman Drew Helleson (first team), junior forward Marc McLaughlin (third team), and freshman defenseman Eamon Powel (all-rookie team). Boldy, Knight, and Helleson also were named All-Americans.

Men's basketball went 4-16 overall and 2-11 in the ACC during a season shortened by game cancellations due to the pandemic. Senior forward Steffon Mitchell ended his career as one of only three players to lead the Eagles in rebounding during each of his four seasons. He ranks in the top 10 in program history in rebounds, steals, and blocked shots. After the season ended in March, Earl Grant was named The Clement and Elizabeth Izzi Family Head Men's Basketball Coach replacing Jim Christian. Grant comes to BC from the College of Charleston, where he led the Cougars to a memorable run in 2017-18 that included the program's second-straight 25-win campaign, an impressive 26-8 overall record and 14-4 mark in Colonial Athletic Association play. The co-regular-season champions earned the No. 1 seed in the CAA Men's Basketball

Championship and defeated No. 2 seed Northeastern in an overtime thriller to punch the program's first ticket to the NCAA Tournament since 1999.

Women's basketball finished 7-12 overall and 2-11 in the ACC during a season interrupted at times by cancellations due to the pandemic. The team advanced to the second round of the ACC tournament by beating the University of Pittsburgh. Junior forward Taylor Soule was named All-ACC first team, junior guard Marnelle Garraud was selected to the ACC's All-Defensive team, and junior guard Cam Swartz was tapped for the ACC's All-Tournament team after a break-out 33-point performance in the ACC tournament win over Pittsburgh.

The fencing team had a strong year, as eleven team members competed at the NCAA Championships, representing the most in program history. At the ACC Championships, Rachel Liu won silver (second) and Gillian Lawlor won bronze (third) in women's sabre. On the men's side, Will Smith took silver in the men's epee. Head coach Brendan Doris-Pierce was named the ACC Men's Fencing Coach of the Year.

In women's track and field, Senior Lauren White and junior Anna Oeser placed fifth and eighth, respectively, at the ACC Indoor Championship in the 5,000m. White also was seventh in the 3,000m. During the outdoor season, sophomore Isabella Bruno registered the second-best mark in BC history in the triple jump, leaping 38'7.75" during a meet at UMass Amherst. Five Eagles qualified for the spring NCAA Championship East Preliminary round: White and Oeser (5,000m), freshman Sarah Flynn (3,000m steeplechase), senior Sorcha McAllister (10,000m), and freshman Marne Sullivan (800m). For the men's track and field team, Senior Marcus Manson set a school record in the 400m hurdles while finishing sixth at the ACC Outdoor Championship. Manson also advanced to the NCAA Championship East Preliminary round. Graduate student Avery McKenzie had the third-best triple jump in program history, finishing sixth at the ACC Outdoor Championship.

Skiing sent both the men's and women's teams to the NCAA Championship. The men's team placed eighth in both the slalom and giant slalom. Freshman Zach Simmons led BC with his 18th place finish in the slalom. He was 16th in the giant slalom. The women's team finished tied for seventh in the slalom and were ninth in the giant slalom. Senior Parker Biele was the top finisher for the Eagles, placing 17th overall in the slalom. She was 13th overall in the giant slalom. Earlier in the season, Biele became the first BC skier to win at an Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association (EISA) race, taking the giant slalom at the St. Lawrence Carnival. Simmons became the first male BC skier to podium at an EISA event at St. Lawrence.

Swimming and diving had three members compete in the Olympic trials. Both senior Ali Kea and junior Haley Dolan raced the 50 meter freestyle at the U.S. Olympic Trials and junior Ashleigh Scott swam at Swimming Canada's Olympic Trials.

During the spring, lacrosse went 18-3 overall and 8-2 in the ACC, and captured the 2021 NCAA Championship – the first national title by a women's program in BC history. Senior attacker Charlotte North swept through every major award, including the Tewaarton Award - presented annually to the top female and male collegiate lacrosse player. North also took home the CWSA Honda Award, while being named the IWLCA Player of the Year, the NCAA Championship Most Outstanding Player, the ACC Player of the Year, and the ACC Scholar-Athlete of the Year. North set a new NCAA record for goals scored in a single-season (102). She received Boston College's

Eagle of the Year award, which recognizes the most outstanding female athlete. Midfielder Belle Smith was named the ACC Freshman of the Year. North (first team) and Smith (first team and All-Freshman team) were joined as All-ACC team picks by sophomore midfielder Hollie Schleicher (first team), graduate student attacker Cara Urbank (second team), junior attacker Jenn Medjid (second team), defender Hunter Roman (All-Freshman), midfielder Sydney Scales (All-Freshman).

The baseball team went 21-28 overall and 10-28 in the ACC, following a 9-1 start to the season. Junior outfielder/infielder Sal Frelick was recognized as the ACC Defensive Player of the Year. He also garnered All-American honors and was an American Baseball Coaches Association (ABAC) Gold Glove recipient. Frelick and Junior infielder Cody Morissette were named to the watch list for the Golden Spikes Award – presented annually to the top amateur baseball player in the country.

Softball went 13-32 overall and 8-24 in the ACC. Junior pitcher Susannah Anderson threw a no-hitter, the second of her career, and was named to the NFCA All-Region team. Junior catcher Gianna Boccagno led the ACC during the regular season with 16 runners caught stealing. Junior outfielder Ellie Mataya (second team) and Anderson (third team) were All-ACC selections.

In other sports, senior Amaka Chukwujekwu was chosen for the All-ACC second team in volleyball, while seniors Kirstofer Konradsson and Yufei Long were recognized as All-ACC third team respectively in men's soccer and women's tennis.

Starting June 1, 2021 Boston College Athletics began a 10-year agreement with Boston-based New Balance Athletics to serve as the Official Footwear and Apparel Provider for the Eagles. The deal includes the opportunity for Boston College student-athletes to be part of an annual internship program at New Balance. The partnership also will grant several BC teams access to the new state-of-the-art "TRACK@New Balance" that is currently under construction. The new sports complex at Boston Landing in Brighton will feature a 200-meter hydraulically banked track, seating for more than 5,000 spectators, and facilities for training, events, and recovery.

## **2. Athletics Advisory Board Meetings 2020-21**

The AAB met six times by Zoom teleconference during 2020-21. Our guests included Athletics Director Pat Kraft; Dr. Doug Comeau, Director of University Health Services and Primary Care Sports Medicine; Matt Conway, Associate Athletics Director, Facilities and Operations; Head Coaches Jason Lowe (Women's Soccer), Acacia Walker (Lacrosse), and Jerry York (Men's Ice Hockey); Jade Morris, Senior Associate Director, Student-Athlete Development; and five representatives from the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

The AAB spent a good deal of time this year reviewing policy and procedures regarding Covid-19, which was discussed at several meetings. The group also covered several other topics including sports medicine and nutrition, opportunities for student-athlete development, the distribution of student-athletes across majors and class sections, the participation of student-athletes in first-year formation programs, and student-athlete well-being. Due to the continual rearranging of competition schedules due to the pandemic, the AAB decided not to conduct its annual review of missed classes due to competition.

On **October 26, 2020**, the AAB met with Director of Athletics, Pat Kraft, who joined BC in June 2020 following the departure of Martin Jarmond for an AD position at UCLA. Pat provided an overview of his vision for athletics at Boston College. He began by thanking the group for inviting him to the meeting and mentioned he would be happy to visit as often as the group would like. He comes to Boston College from Temple University, where he served as director of athletics and deputy director of athletics over the past seven years.

Using a slide presentation, Pat shared with the group an outline of principles he sees as forming the foundation for BC athletics. These include basing success on developing and caring for the whole person; educating student-athletes to always give more of themselves both in their sport and in their community; taking action to address social injustice; creating an environment where student-athletes, coaches and staff can be honest and supportive with each other; and living out BC's motto of men and women for others.

As an example of these principles in action, Pat highlighted the efforts of Eagles for Equality, a student-athlete led initiative developed by the recently formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. The initiative seeks ways to engage student-athletes in programming and activities concerning social justice. As part of efforts by the Atlantic Coast Conference to promote equity, justice, diversity and inclusion during ACC Unity Week (October 24-31), BC Athletics and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee sponsored several events to educate and raise awareness.

Pat concluded his overview by highlighting his expectations for athletics staff and emphasizing fundamentals all must share. These include keeping student-athlete well-being as the first and most important priority, maintaining a focus on academic achievement, and treating all persons with respect and dignity. He noted that winning and competing for championships are of course important goals but only a component of this broader set of fundamentals.

In response to a question about how Athletics has managed the return to practice and competition amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, Pat noted the need to remain nimble in adjusting to evolving circumstances. Although the department set up plans in early summer to have most student-athletes return to campus over the next couple of months, the resources required for managing the return of football players led to a pause in bringing back the Olympic-sport athletes to ensure their safety. The protocols put in place regarding contact tracing and quarantining have worked well. Student-athletes who are "in-season" are tested three times per week.

Looking ahead to winter sports, Pat indicated that ensuring safety for the men's and women's basketball teams will be more of a challenge, given that the teams play multiple times per week and game officials work competitions in several different conferences. In addition, basketball is played indoors, so physical distancing is more difficult to achieve. Football has been simpler for pandemic protocols because competitions are played outdoors just once per week and game officials work only within a single conference. Pat felt that ice hockey may be somewhat easier to accommodate than basketball because travel is more localized with many competitions not requiring overnight stays, and the faster pace of the game may limit potential exposure.



A member asked about changes Athletics has made to support student-athlete mental health and well-being, especially during the pandemic. Pat mentioned that mental health support within athletics is woefully understaffed. He noted that at Temple, the department had two full-time mental health specialists. He has moved to increase support in this area by adding two psychology residents who provide 45 hours per week and by instituting an anonymous referral phone line. To better support overall student-athlete health, Pat mentioned plans to increase the size of the sports medicine staff.

Also, the recently launched “safe space” initiative will provide confidential contacts within athletics where student-athletes can express their concerns or frustrations. These designated safe spaces are available to all student-athletes and not just those who identify with an underrepresented or marginalized community. Any student-athlete feeling distressed or upset by current events is welcome to seek support.

A member asked whether the reduction in athletics revenue from lost ticket sales, reduced media rights, and other sources might affect the ability to field teams in the 31 sports Boston College sponsors. Pat noted that the schools where sports have been cut likely were planning to do so anyway and the pandemic may have simply hastened that process. He believes that a sport should be eliminated only when an institution cannot provide adequate support. Pat mentioned that Athletics is targeting some fundraising to help make up for part of the lost revenue. At the same time some expenses are down due to truncated seasons resulting in less travel, reduced facility use leading to saving on utilities and maintenance, and recruiting put on hold by the NCAA since last spring.

In response to a question about how Athletics is handling recruiting during the pandemic, Pat noted that the NCAA has imposed a recruiting “dead period” since the pandemic began and has extended it through the rest of this year. During this period, coaches cannot go on the road to recruit and prospective student-athletes cannot make official or unofficial athletics-related visits. He felt that this has benefited Boston College because the inability to visit campuses prevents recruits from seeing “shiny facilities” that might sway them, and instead leads these recruits to focus more on what schools have to offer in terms of coaches and staff, academics, and mission. He mentioned that Football so far this year has had one of the best recruiting classes ever and Lacrosse has landed some terrific candidates.

A member asked how Pat viewed the challenges Boston College faces competing in a town with four impressive pro sports franchises. Pat believes Boston College can compete effectively by telling stories about our student-athletes through the use of social media channels. He feels the BC brand is a strong and Athletics can boost it further by doing a better job highlighting the many successes of our student-athletes. Attracting younger fans to sports events is an important task for the ticket office. Winning, of course, helps enormously by bringing excitement to the community.

The discussion turned to how faculty can be of help to the Athletics Department and student-athletes. Pat mentioned that he hopes to make use of campus expertise on issues that may arise. As an example, he noted the possibility of drawing on faculty from the Law School to assist with analyzing NCAA legislation on name, image, and likeness.

Pat noted that earlier in his career he was a faculty member at Indiana University and Loyola University Chicago. He hopes to use the perspective he gained from being in the classroom to build relationships across campus with BC faculty and academic administrators. One member mentioned the importance of encouraging student-athletes to reach out to faculty for advice and counsel as one way of strengthening these cross-campus relationships.

The Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) met on **November 16, 2020** to discuss the return to athletics competition amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Dr. Doug Comeau, Director of University Health Services and Primary Care Sports Medicine, and Matt Conway, Associate Athletics Director for Facilities and Operations, attended the meeting and provided details on protocols and practices.

Doug discussed details of testing protocols for student-athletes. All tests are PCR methodology, using the Broad Institute or an on-campus lab for evaluating results. Turn-around time for tests at the BC lab is 4-5 hours. Teams in-season and competing have their members tested three times per week and teams out-of-season are tested once per week. Overall, athletics has had good success. Only one football player tested positive upon arrival in June and none since then. An outbreak in early September that affected some student-athletes in other sports was traced to an off-campus gathering and was contained through contact tracing, quarantining, and testing.

Matt described the athletics department's approach to facility use during the pandemic as focusing on what can be controlled while recognizing that risk cannot be completely eliminated. The phasing-in of sports activity, starting initially with football over the summer and then adding other fall and winter sports, was key to assuring the risk could be managed. Taking what was learned from small group activities and scaling up as more student-athletes arrived helped ensure a successful plan to return to competition.

As one example, Matt mentioned the weight rooms. Given the need to maintain social distancing during weight-room workouts, using the existing facilities in Conte and the Fish Field House meant having to take every other machine out of use. But by adding other weight room space and moving equipment to those locations, machines could be fully utilized. The repurposed locations have approximately doubled the square footage used for workouts and include the Quonset Hut on Newton Campus and the interior concourse near Gate A of Alumni Stadium, the latter having the advantage of being in the open air.

The early decision not to allow any fans at Alumni Stadium also opened up the option to use first-aid rooms and luxury suites as spaces for each team to have safe havens for studying. This also ensures student-athletes are with the same cohort of teammates. These additional study locations have helped Student-Athlete Academic Services accommodate the need for greater social distancing in their Yawkey Center locations, especially for student-athletes working with tutors and counselors.

Other changes have included limiting locker room use to only those teams currently in their championship season so that fewer student-athletes are present at any one time, and staggering practice times so arrivals and departures are spread out.

Matt serves on the ACC Covid-19 Football and Basketball planning committees, as well as a similar committee for Hockey East. He noted that seeing how other schools are handling the return to competition has been helpful in formulating the BC approach.

A member asked whether Notre Dame fans rushing the field after their football team's recent win over Clemson posed risks for the upcoming Notre Dame game at Boston College. Doug noted that PCR test results are shared among schools prior to upcoming competitions. In addition, the ACC Medical Advisory Group, of which he is a member, meets regularly to assess protocols and risks. All ACC teams in competition are tested at least three times per week. And given that Boston College is not allowing any fans at competitions, there is no risk from opposing-team fans at BC football games (nor for that matter from BC fans). Evidence on transmission of the virus for ACC football teams has shown no cases linked to competitions. In response to a follow up question about weekend social activity among BC students (athletes and non-athletes alike), Doug noted that this fall has seen fewer transports to the hospital for alcohol, which he took to mean students generally are being more cautious. Matt mentioned that student-athletes are invested in having a season and so are maintaining vigilance. Non-scholarship student-athletes and those whose seasons have ended have had more positive test results, although overall case numbers have been relatively low. Both Doug and Matt agreed that BC student-athletes have done a good job at staying safe.

A member asked about protocols for student-athletes who are in quarantine following exposure to a person who tests positive. Doug noted that these student-athletes are quarantined for 14 days with a test administered after 4-6 days. Another member asked how the pandemic has affected the mental health of student-athletes. Doug said that Athletics has seen an increase in mental health concerns this year. Approximately 20% have been related specifically to Covid-19 and about 80% have been due to other factors. He pointed to a recent increase in hours provided by mental health professionals and an e-referral system now in place as helping manage this need.

A question was asked about how the upcoming indoor sports of basketball and ice hockey, which play multiple games each week, may be more difficult to manage than outdoor sports like football, which plays one game each week. Matt noted that Hockey East will restrict its play to New England schools and have home / away games against the same opponent on weekends. Officiating crews will be tested three times per week and work both games of a home / away weekend. In men's and women's basketball, the ACC likewise is testing officials three times per week and is keeping officiating crews regionally located rather than having them travel throughout the conference. Although basketball seasons will begin with out-of-conference play, most of these games will be played either at home (women's first three games) or at a common location (Mohegan Sun Arena in Connecticut for men's first four games). Looking ahead to spring sports, Matt mentioned the likelihood that competitions may end up being only within the ACC, similar to what happened with soccer, field hockey, and football.

A member asked about news reports concerning significant outbreaks of Covid-19 at some ACC schools. One factor appears to be that at these schools, unlike at Boston College, more student-athletes (and students in general) live off campus. Another factor may be that having our own on-campus testing capacity has been helpful in assuring rapid results and avoiding delays that other schools have had using external labs (although Boston College has had good turnaround time with tests sent to an external lab at the Broad Institute). More generally, Boston College

has benefited from less density in Chestnut Hill, compared to schools located in more urban areas of Boston, meaning less chance of community transmission in locations just off of the college campus.

In response to a question about whether student-athletes would be heading home for Thanksgiving, Matt indicated that student-athletes who are not in season were given the same options as non-athlete students. If they leave and travel out of state, they are not permitted to come back to campus until January. As it turns out, first-year and sophomore student-athletes generally have opted to leave, while junior and senior student-athletes for the most part will stay to work out over the Thanksgiving break.

A member asked whether club sports are competing. Doug noted that since we can't control the protocols at other schools in club sports, BC teams are not competing. The club teams that are continuing to practice are being tested each week. Intramural sports are competing since all participants are BC students and are subject to our testing protocols. Matt mentioned that shuttling intramural groups into and out of facilities has been somewhat of a logistic challenge.

As the discussion drew to a close, the group offered its appreciation for the work Doug and Matt, and their staffs, have done to ensure a safe return to sports for BC student-athletes.

The Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) met on **December 7, 2020** to review data on student-athletes distribution across majors, first-year formation programs, and class sections.<sup>3</sup> The Board also discussed NCAA proposals that would permit student-athletes to use their name, image, and likeness for compensation and proposals for changes to NCAA transfer rules.

The group reviewed data on student-athlete enrollment in individual class sections for all courses taught over the past seven semesters to assess the degree of clustering among student-athletes. Over this period, student-athletes accounted for about 7.2 percent of the undergraduate student body, so setting a benchmark a little higher, say at 10 percent, seems appropriate as a starting point for assessing clustering in class sections.

The number of class sections in which student-athletes made up 10 percent or more of the enrollment ranged from 325 to 354 over this period, with no discernable trend.<sup>4</sup> At higher percentages of student-athlete enrollment, the number of class sections falls off rapidly. For example, in fall 2020 the number of sections with 20 percent or more student-athletes was 111, the number with 30 percent or more student-athletes was 42, and the number with 50 percent or more student-athletes was 16. Classes with high percentages of student-athletes also tend to have low overall enrollment. Of those class sections in fall 2020 with 50 percent or more student-athletes, all but 3 had an overall enrollment of less than 10 (one was at 10, one at 12, and one at 16).

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<sup>3</sup> The AAB thanks the Office of Student Services and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning for providing the data reviewed at the meeting.

<sup>4</sup> See Addendum Table 1 for data on class sections with student-athlete enrollment. Data are for all class sections in which student-athletes are enrolled and include some graduate-level classes.

The number of class sections also declines rapidly as the absolute number of student-athletes in a class rises.<sup>5</sup> For class sections with 10 percent or more student-athletes, the number with at least 5 student-athletes ranged from 96 to 115 over the past seven semesters, while the number with at least 10 student-athletes ranged from 17 to 20 and the number with at least 20 student-athletes ranged from 1 to 4.

Another way to assess clustering is to consider the distribution of student-athletes across class sections in which at least one student athlete is enrolled.<sup>6</sup> During fall 2020, sections with 10 percent or more student-athletes accounted for about one-third of sections having student-athletes enrolled. This falls sharply at higher percentages of student-athlete enrollment. Sections with 20 percent or more student-athletes accounted for a little over one-tenth of sections with student-athletes, those with 30 percent or more student-athletes accounted for about 4 percent of such sections, and those with 50 percent or more student-athletes accounted for 1.5 percent of such sections.

Student-athlete enrollment in courses whose format is coded as “Undergraduate Independent Study” has averaged 3.6 percent of total enrollment in these courses over the past 4 years, or about 11 such enrollments per semester. Student-athletes are half as likely to be enrolled in independent study classes as non-athletes. These enrollments are spread over student-athletes representing many teams, with the vast majority of teams having at most one or two student-athletes enrolled in any given semester.

Members agreed that other than for a few class sections, clustering of student-athletes does not appear to be a concern. And for those sections with a large number and/or large percentage of student-athletes, this probably arises due to scheduling constraints from practice schedules that limit a more even distribution across class sections. In addition, some courses are of greater interest to student-athletes because of their content and thereby tend to attract more student-athletes. Members suggested following up on classes with a disproportionately large presence (40 percent or more) of student athletes to assess the distribution across teams. The AAB will continue to monitor these data to assess possible effects on enrollments from the early registration system for student-athletes that was launched last spring.

The group reviewed data on the distribution of student-athletes and non-athletes across schools, majors, and concentrations for the past four years. Student-athletes over this period were 7.2 percent of the undergraduate student body. In the fall of 2021, 40 percent of student-athletes were enrolled in the Carroll School of Management, 5 percent in the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, 53 percent in the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, and 2 percent in the Connell School of Nursing. These data show that student-athletes are enrolled in a broad array of majors and represent a disproportionately large share in only a few. But they are underrepresented in humanities majors and, with the exception of biology, in the sciences. They are also slightly less likely to double or triple major than non-athletes.

As of Fall 2020, 20 percent of student-athletes who had declared a major were majoring in Communication compared with 7 percent of non-athletes for the largest percentage-point difference across majors. In Marketing, 8 percent of student-athletes were majors compared

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<sup>5</sup> See second and third panels of Addendum Table 1.

<sup>6</sup> See bottom panel of Addendum Table 1.

with 3.5 percent of non-athletes. A sizeable disparity was also seen in Management and Leadership, where 5 percent of student-athletes were majors compared with 1.5 percent of non-athletes, and in Finance, where 17 percent of student-athletes were majors compared with 13 percent of non-athletes. For those majors chosen by 5 percent or more of student-athletes, Communication was the most popular (20%), followed by Finance (17%), Economics (10%), Marketing (8%), Biology (6.5%), Management and Leadership (5%), Applied Psychology and Human Development (5%), and Political Science (5%). Most majors show no discernable trend in enrollment by student-athletes over recent years, exceptions being a surge of almost 4 percentage points from two years ago in Finance and a decline over the past four years of 3 percentage points in Applied Psychology and Human Development and 3 percentage points in Economics. The decline in Economics enrollment coincides with the addition of econometrics as a requirement for the major.

The disproportionate representation of student-athletes in some majors may reflect the belief that those majors are useful for careers related to sports, such as broadcasting and marketing, or more generally, careers in business. Communication has relatively few required courses, so switching into that major later in one's college career may be easier than for other majors that have many required courses. Given the constraints of practice schedules, selecting a major with more course options might make scheduling classes easier. Student-athletes also might be seeking out majors that are perceived to be easier, although this "option" would be available to all students. The lower share of student-athletes compared with non-athletes in science majors may in part be due to difficulty scheduling lab requirements, some of which are slotted for three or four-hour time blocks, although Biology is an exception with 6.5 percent of student-athletes as majors.

Student-athletes are about twice as likely to have not yet declared a major compared to non-athletes, with 17 percent of student-athletes in fall 2020 listed as undeclared compared to 8 percent of non-athletes. Under NCAA rules, student-athletes have until the end of sophomore year to declare a major or concentration. A possible reason why student-athletes are far more likely to be undeclared than non-athletes may be that they are heavily focused on their sport and so don't make the time to consider their curriculum options and choose a major. Delaying the choice of a major, however, could be beneficial by allowing students more time to discern their academic interests and career goals.

One member pointed to the vast underrepresentation of student-athletes in humanities majors and suggested the need for academic counselors to better market these disciplines. Another member noted the disproportionately high share of student-athletes in some management majors and wondered if student-athletes are more likely to enroll in the Carroll School of Management because its strong national reputation is emphasized during the recruiting process. Student-athletes (or their parents) might also view it as better preparation for a job. But some student-athletes struggle with the more analytic curriculum in management and one member asked whether student-athletes end up transferring out to other schools at Boston College at a higher rate than non-athletes. After the meeting, a Board member followed up on this question with Ethan Sullivan, Undergraduate Dean in CSOM, who reports that CSOM does not track transfers by athletic status.

Members reviewed data on student-athlete participation in first-year formation classes and programs. These data include the numbers of students enrolled in core renewal classes,

Courage to Know classes, Freshman Topic Seminars, and 48Hours retreats. All of these courses and programs provide opportunities for reflection on topics related to personal growth and development.

Data on enrollment in core renewal classes since their launch in 2015 show student-athletes have accounted for just over 3 percent of students in these classes (which are open only to first-year students), below their overall share during this period of 8.4 percent of first-year undergraduates. The structure of core renewal classes, which include labs and evening reflection sessions in addition to regular class meetings, may make it difficult for student-athletes to fit these courses into busy practice schedules. Seven sports have never had a student-athlete take a core renewal class and most other sports have just one or two taking a class in any given semester. The main exception is Rowing, which accounts for 29 out of 109 student-athlete enrollments in these classes. One reason for this may be that incoming student-athletes in Rowing are relatively strong academically and so may be seeking out challenging courses. The early morning practice schedule in Rowing on Tuesdays and Thursdays also may help make it easier to schedule core renewal labs and reflection sessions.

The group reviewed data for the past six years on enrollment in Courage to Know classes and Freshman Topic Seminars. Faculty members teaching these classes serve as advisers to their students.

Student-athletes accounted for 21 percent of students enrolled in Courage to Know classes over the period fall 2015 to fall 2020, well above their overall share of 8.4 percent among first-year undergraduates. This represented about half of all first-year student-athletes, much higher than the roughly one-sixth of first-year non-athletes taking the course. The reason for the sizeable enrollment of student-athletes may be because the course is offered in numerous sections across class time blocks, making it easier for student-athletes to schedule. In addition, orientation counselors strongly recommend the class to student-athletes as being useful for acclimating to college life.

Student-athletes in Freshman Topic Seminars, which are open only to Morrissey College students, accounted for 3 percent of the students registered for these classes since 2015, less than half their overall share of 6.6 percent among first-year Morrissey College undergraduates. This represented about 9 percent of first-year Morrissey College student-athletes, much lower than the 20-percent share of non-athletes taking these classes. These one-credit seminars are graded on a pass / fail basis and are a vehicle for first-year students to get to know a faculty member. Members suggested that orientation counselors be encouraged to promote Freshman Topic Seminars to incoming student-athletes.

Relatively few student-athletes participate in 48Hours retreats, accounting for about 3.5 percent of students in this program, less than half of their overall 8.4 percent share among first-year undergraduates. The low participation rate likely reflects conflicts with practice and competition schedules. But retreat attendance among all students has been falling over the past few years, and so participation rates of student-athletes may reflect broader forces.

Members wondered whether the underrepresentation of student-athletes in most of these formation programs might reflect a lack of awareness by student-athletes when they are registering during the summer before first year. One member expressed concern that student-

athletes are steered away from these programs given busy practice schedules and the challenges of adjusting to college life. Bob agreed to follow up with SAAS about its efforts to promote formation courses and programs.

Some members noted that student-athletes who have considered topic seminars might see them as a burdensome “sixth” course that doesn’t count for any requirements. One member suggested that the core renewal classes, which require significant engagement on the part of students, may be intimidating. As a way of exploring how student-athletes perceive formation courses and programs, several members proposed adding questions to the annual athletics survey overseen by Jade Morris, who heads up student-athlete development, and possibly partnering with SAAS to hold focus groups with student-athletes.

At the time of the AAB’s December meeting, two major proposals were expected to be voted on by the NCAA Division I Council at January’s NCAA convention. One proposal would permit student-athletes to be compensated for the use of their name, image and likeness (NIL). The proposal would not allow institutional involvement except as far as providing educational resources and oversight of registration requirements. Student-athletes also would not be allowed to use any marks or insignia from their schools in marketing their NIL. The other NCAA proposal would create a uniform transfer policy, allowing all student-athletes to transfer once during their undergraduate college career without having to sit for a year in residence before participating in competition. Currently, the sports of football, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s ice hockey, and baseball do not have this one-time exception.

During the discussion that followed, one member raised a concern that first-generation student-athletes (especially those who are not on full scholarship) might feel pressure to monetize their NIL. This member also felt that the time commitment involved would come at the expense of academics. Another member emphasized that the growing role of “social media influencers” could allow student-athletes even from non-revenue sports to devote energy and resources to these ventures. Other members wondered how schools would be able to navigate limits on use of institutional marks for social media influencers and whether student-athlete businesses would be able to market on campus the products they endorse. Bob noted that the proposal would prohibit use of institutional marks on social media and would not permit marketing or sale of products on campus (only lessons are permitted, but with the student-athlete renting facilities at market rate). Amendments addressing these issues have been proposed but are unlikely to be considered in January.

On **March 1, 2021** the AAB met with head coaches Jason Lowe (Women’s Soccer), Acacia Walker (Lacrosse), and Jerry York (Men’s Ice Hockey). Each coach was invited to offer an update on their team and specifically the challenges they’ve faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jerry York began by noting his team’s season had been shortened to 21 games, with potential cancellations and rescheduling present each week. The team and staff (per protocols for teams in competition) are tested for COVID-19 three times per week on Monday’s, Wednesday’s, and Friday’s, with results early the next day. Changes to the playoff format for Hockey East involve having all rounds as single elimination games. Overall, Jerry felt the year had gone well, given the challenges. He acknowledged the efforts of Fr. Leahy and his staff, along with athletics administrators, to ensure a safe return to sports.



Acacia Walker mentioned she has been impressed with how her team has managed to get through this difficult year. Because of COVID-19 protocols, team members have not been able to spend much time together other than during practices or competitions. This has meant having to deal with issues and problems independently rather than relying on the support of teammates. Simple things like going out to lunch or social gatherings in dorm rooms have been off limits, removing informal ways that team members bond with each other. Added to this is the uncertainty of whether any given game or practice might be cancelled. The team has sacrificed a lot to be able to play but with no guarantees. Acacia has emphasized to her team the many hours athletics staff have worked to allow sports this year and that they cannot take playing for granted.

Jason Lowe noted how the later start for soccer in the fall, which began practice on the first day of class rather than a few weeks earlier, meant a compressed period of preparation before their first ACC match. COVID-19 protocols had just been finalized and were being implemented as the season began. The fall segment consisted of eight games against ACC opponents, and this year the team will play a spring segment consisting of non-conference games. The NCAA tournament has been moved to the late spring. The team played the full schedule of eight games in the fall and avoided COVID-19 disruptions but faced a 14-day pause in activity more recently. Jason noted that on-line classes during the pandemic have been beneficial in allowing flexibility for student-athletes. He pointed to an international student from Germany who was able to make progress on her academic program while restricted from traveling to the United States. Although she didn't play for Boston College this year, she was able to start her first year remotely. Jason also noted the extra year of eligibility granted by the NCAA for fall (and winter) student-athletes will allow some to come back for another season while continuing as graduate students. At the same time, however, the pandemic has led to less contact by students with faculty and has caused stress related to uncertainty about family members' health.

A wide-ranging discussion followed, touching on several topics including mental health, social justice, remote course formats, and transfer rules.

One member asked whether coaches had observed an increase in mental health issues among their student-athletes. All agreed that it has been a challenging year for students and that mental health concerns had increased. Student-athletes are not used to taking advantage of some of the resources available and may be hesitant to engage with counselors due to perceived stigma. Some student-athletes may prefer the anonymity of University Counseling while others may prefer the immediacy of having counseling available in athletics facilities. The advent of tele-health meetings, while making it easier to access support, may also be viewed among some students as having to do yet another "Zoom." One coach noted that Fr. Tony Pena, Director of Campus Ministry, is an important resource who is available to meet with students.

In response to a question about how the pandemic's effect on sports has hindered the development of community on campus, the coaches agreed that the inability to host fans at sporting events has shown how important sports are to campus life. Particularly for first-year students, sporting events serve as a way of being part of the larger community. One coach mentioned how Conte Forum is eerily quiet these days without the usual spontaneous interactions among coaches, staff, and student-athletes.

One member raised the concern that some student-athletes who leave to go pro have not had the opportunity to complete their degree. One coach pointed out that the Woods College has been able to help in some cases. And this may be easier in the future if more online classes are offered, particularly via the Woods College, whereby student-athletes who have gone pro might be able to finish their remaining coursework remotely. This could be especially helpful in soccer where the major league drafts for men and women occur in early to mid-January.

With many classes being offered in remote formats as a result of the pandemic, one member wondered if the asynchronous format (class sessions that are recorded and then accessed by students at any time) was more difficult for student-athletes to keep up with. Since an asynchronous class does not meet at a regular time, the concern is that students might put off watching the classes and intend to “catch up” later. The coaches all felt there had not been any greater difficulty for this format than others. One coach mentioned that counselors in the Student-Athlete Academic Services office had been quite helpful in keeping students on track with on-line learning. An AAB member noted that the experience gained during the pandemic with remote learning might have a silver lining by allowing students to not miss class when traveling if their courses are taught remotely as either live streams or recorded. One coach thought this would reduce the stress associated with travel for student-athletes. Another coach agreed that remote learning certainly was more flexible but felt it was not necessarily better, as students would lose the physical connection with faculty.

One coach asked about the experience of AAB members teaching remotely. A member said that the hybrid format (where part of the class is in person and part is remote) is toughest to manage. This member found teaching with the synchronous format (live at a scheduled time) works well for a smaller-size class where all participants can fit on to a Zoom screen. Another member noted it is harder to engage students in larger classes, but much easier in small groups.

The discussion next turned to the issue of social justice. A member asked how the coaches were supporting initiatives associated with promoting diversity and inclusion. One coach mentioned involving the entire coaching staff to help student-athletes think differently and empathize with others. The aim here is to develop student-athletes into leaders on this issue across campus. Another coach mentioned the diversity modules that all student-athletes and athletics staff participate in as a way of fostering greater understanding. One AAB member wondered whether bystander intervention programs for racial issues could play a role. These programs train individuals to intervene when a situation is developing that involves racism. The group agreed this might be something to pursue once people are back in person.

The group next discussed a proposed change to the ACC intraconference transfer rule. This change would have the ACC default to the NCAA rule whereby student-athletes in all sports except baseball, men’s and women’s basketball, men’s ice hockey, and football are allowed a one-time exception to compete immediately upon transferring as an undergraduate. Student-athletes in the five non-exception sports can apply for a waiver but generally must sit out from competition for one year after transferring. Currently the ACC rule requires transfers in all sports to sit out for one year, unless they receive a waiver. A proposal to change the NCAA rule to allow an exception in all sports is currently pending and may go forward later this year. Coaches were in agreement that additional change is likely with regard to transfer rules. Allowing a one-time exception in those sports that currently do not have it could provide

opportunity for student-athletes who are don't play much on their current team. But coaches were concerned that this not evolve into free agency for student-athletes.

The members thanked the coaches for meeting with the Board and asked that they feel free to get in touch if there was anything the Board could assist with.

The Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) met on **March 25, 2021**. The meeting was devoted to a discussion with Jade Morris, Senior Associate Director, Student-Athlete Development. Jade began with an overview of her office's work. She reviewed adjustments made to provide remote programming. Early on in the pandemic, athletics made use of social media to check in on student-athletes and assess how they were doing at home. One day a week, a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) member would operate the Athletics Department's Instagram account to provide a glimpse into what was happening with them.

After the semester had ended, Jade's office took steps to actively engage student-athletes with virtual programming. These included, among other items, a SAAC organized book club and networking events with alumni. Attendance has been good at these virtual events, and even somewhat higher than at events before the pandemic. Because they've been virtual, the alumni events have included a more geographically diverse group. Jade sees a balance of virtual and in-person programming going forward after the pandemic, taking advantage of the best features of both forms of delivering programming.

Jade next described efforts to support mental health services during the pandemic. One area that has been particularly difficult over the past year has been navigating between the need for social interaction among student-athletes and the concern about testing positive and hurting one's team. Athletics has increased the number of hours of counseling by employing interns from the Lynch School of Education and Human Development. The department also is making available *Talkspace*, an on-line mental health app that student-athletes can use to access 24/7 counseling. Jade mentioned that Athletics is now using *RealResponse*, a real-time reporting system that allows student-athletes to report issues anonymously with the information going directly to their sports administrator for follow up, providing a safe-space for voicing concerns.

Jade concluded her overview by mentioning efforts to prepare Athletics for the arrival of opportunities for student-athletes to benefit from their name, image, and likeness (NIL). The department is surveying student-athletes as to what they know and may want to do with their NIL. Jade mentioned that Athletics is partnering with *Athliance*, a company that has developed NIL opportunity and disclosure management software to assist compliance offices with managing requirements of forthcoming NCAA NIL legislation.

A member asked for Jade's thoughts on how student-athletes would monetize their NIL, for example, perhaps through YouTube channels. Jade mentioned some are already involved with business ventures through the NCAA waiver process for activities that are not sports related. She expected that student-athletes would find it attractive to market their NIL as part of their work at camps and clinics. She also mentioned student-athletes likely would use NIL as influencers for brands and products. Another member asked whether using *Athliance* might lead to de facto institutional involvement, something that the NCAA is likely to prohibit. Jade noted that the intent is for this software to provide an organizational framework for managing NIL and a way for schools to implement compliance with disclosure requirements. Even though

the NCAA has not yet approved final legislation on NIL, this software tool will help get Boston College ready.

The general discussion that followed touched on several issues. One member asked about the effects of the transfer portal that was implemented a couple of years ago following changes to NCAA transfer rules. Jade mentioned that coaches have differing opinions on the increased ability of student-athletes to transfer. As for student-athletes themselves, she said they generally support being able to more easily transfer as this allows for moving on when things are not working out. With the extra year of eligibility that the NCAA has allowed due to the pandemic and the concomitant increase in roster sizes, having the ability to transfer can help student-athletes who might otherwise not have opportunities to compete.

In response to an observation about the recent unequal treatment of female basketball players compared to male counterparts at the NCAA tournaments, Jade noted that at Boston College she felt that female student-athletes speak up when they believe they are not being treated fairly. She also believes Athletics makes efforts to ensure equity.

A member wondered if the extra time for academics due to some sports being cancelled last spring and the flexibility of on-line learning had led student-athletes to perform better academically. The move to allow generous pass/fail grading last spring makes it difficult to assess effects on grades during that semester. But the data for Fall 2020 does show some improvement in overall GPAs. Members commented that on-line learning generally makes keeping up with classes easier when teams are traveling. But for asynchronous classes (those that use only recorded sessions available for viewing at any time), some students may put off their class work since they are not meeting at a set time and so could fall behind.

In response to a question about what lessons had been learned from adjusting to the pandemic and what we might want to keep going forward, Jade mentioned continuing to host some events with a virtual component. This format appears to encourage greater attendance and can provide for a broader set of programming by drawing on, for example, alumni who are geographically dispersed. Jade also mentioned that student-athletes have gained a greater appreciation for gratitude in being able to play sports this year and have shown resilience in the face of adversity. She hopes these traits can continue to be a central part of athletics culture at Boston College.

One member asked how the shift in several fall sports to the spring season has affected the ability to provide facilities and support services to the greater than usual number of in-season student-athletes. Jade noted that it has been a challenge but some additional staffing for sports medicine trainers has helped. Also, creative use of areas in the Alumni Stadium and Conte Forum concourses have expanded the space available for strength and conditioning while providing for social distancing. In addition, the football weight facility has been used by other sports to accommodate the expanded need for training space.

In response to a question about when fans may be returning to competitions, Jade noted that for spring sports each student-athlete is being allowed two tickets per game. This is in keeping with the opening guidelines of the State of Massachusetts. Although this may seem like only an incremental change, having the ability to invite two family members or a couple of friends has

made an important difference for these student-athletes. Looking to the fall, Jade mentioned that the hope is to have more fans at competitions, although much remains uncertain.

The group thanked Jade for meeting with the Board and asked that she feel free to get in touch if there was anything the Board could assist with.

Also at this meeting, the group was updated on the recent hiring of Earl Grant as Head Coach of Men's Basketball. Earl is coming to BC after seven years as head coach for the College of Charleston. He also has served as an assistant coach for Clemson University.

The group was also apprised that the appeal of *NCAA vs. Alston* will be heard before the U.S. Supreme Court on March 31, with the outcome of that case having some implications for how the NCAA proceeds on NIL legislation and new student-athlete transfer rules.

On **May 3, 2020**, the AAB met with several student athletes, including Dennis Grosel (Football), Bibi Liu (Women's Golf), Declan McGranahan (Men's Sailing), Taylor Soule (Women's Basketball), and Jewel Strawberry (Volleyball).

After introductions by the student-athletes and Board members, one member asked whether student-athletes living on Newton campus had difficulty getting to Conte to catch the team bus when leaving early in the day for competitions because the BC shuttle bus doesn't start running until 7:00 a.m. on weekdays and 8:30 a.m. on weekends. The student-athletes indicated that for first-year students this can sometimes be an issue. Some teams try to arrange for their members to live on the main campus to avoid this problem.

In response to a question about the early registration system launched a year ago, student-athletes indicated that it had led to a much better experience when registering for classes. Rather than just looking for any class still open in order to fill a slot in their schedule, student-athletes now have more choice and can tailor their course selection more closely to their preferences. One student-athlete mentioned that the new EagleApps course information and schedule application made it much easier to explore course choices.

The student-athletes felt that the recent expansion of physical space for Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) on the second floor of the Yawkey Center and the remodeled space on the fourth floor, has been beneficial. On the issue of taking tests while traveling for competition, student-athletes indicated that it can be a struggle to find acceptable tutors at the competitor's institution, given that SAAS does not typically provide a tutor to travel with the team. On the question of how faculty have responded to requests for flexibility, several student-athletes indicated that for large core classes there often is less ability on the part of a faculty member to provide accommodation, say for an exam, given the way these classes are structured. As an extreme example, one student-athlete mentioned being summarily dropped from a course during her first year by the academic department after missing what was considered to be too many classes. On the other hand, faculty members teaching elective classes in majors, which tend to be smaller, frequently are able to be flexible with makeup exams and other course requirements. One student-athlete mentioned the Navigate course management system that SAAS employs as a very helpful tool for keeping professors up to date on student-athlete travel conflicts.

Following up on the student-athlete who was removed from a class, one AAB member wondered if this student might have been better served during summer registration if their athletics schedule had been more carefully taken into account when choosing classes. Some student-athletes felt that SAAS needs to be more closely involved in the first-year summer registration process, although one student-athlete noted that SAAS lacks sufficient staff and has to prioritize. In addition, schedules for weight lifting come out later in the summer than overall practice schedules, so student-athletes registering early in the summer may not have complete information about their scheduling constraints.

The discussion next turned to nutrition, and in particular, how the fueling station was working out. With the COVID pandemic, regular dining facilities have been restricted and don't offer as much variety as in the past. Student-athletes on tight schedules often don't have the extra time to wait in line at a dining hall. The fueling station in Conte can help bridge the gap, but for some teams that have early practice, when they return late morning, they frequently find little food still available. One suggestion is to provide a staff person who would look out for teams in this situation and restock the fueling station just prior to when the student-athletes return from practice. Some teams do have their own fueling station and/or meals provided in their locker rooms, but this is not an option for all sports.

For student-athletes living in dorms with kitchens, some felt that the requirement to have their meal funds on a dining card restricted their ability to purchase groceries for cooking. Although the "local market" (community supported agriculture farm share) used to allow purchases with dining cards, that has now changed, and payment is through the GET Mobile app using funds not linked to dining cards. Graduate student-athletes who live off campus are not required to have dining cards and instead receive stipends that they use to purchase groceries.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, Bob asked how the student-athletes felt about the recently approved change to NCAA transfer rules that removed the requirement for student-athletes who transfer in the sports of baseball, men's and women's basketball, football, and men's ice hockey to sit out a year before competing. The change brings transfer rules for these sports into alignment with those in all other sports, providing a one-time exception for transferring. While recognizing concerns about team cohesion and roster management, particularly for sports with small teams, the views expressed were that this change will be beneficial overall for student-athlete well-being by providing additional flexibility to student-athletes.

The members thanked the student-athletes for meeting with the Board and encouraged them to reach out in the future if there were any issues or concerns the group could help with.

### **3. Committee Composition**

In June 2020, Elizabeth Wallace (English) began a three-year elected term. In the most recent spring semester, Sheila Tucker (CSO) and Sara Moorman (Sociology) were reelected to second three-year terms.

Please feel free to seek out any AAB member with questions or concerns you may have. One of the Board's primary functions is to serve as a channel for communication between academics and athletics, and we are open to your input.

**The Athletics Advisory Board, 2020-21**

Sharon Beckman (Law)

John J. Burns (Office of the Provost)

Jessica Greene (Institutional Research)

Ryan Heffernan (Mission and Ministry)

Robert Murphy (Economics, AAB Chair  
and Faculty Athletics Representative)

Sara Moorman (Sociology)

Michael Naughton (Physics)

Delvon Parker (CSOM)

Sheila Tucker (CSON)

Elizabeth Wallace (English)

**Addendum Table 1****Class Sections with Student-Athlete (SA) Enrollment**

	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020
# Classes with $\geq 10\%$ SAs	349	330	351	346	346	325	354
# Classes with $\geq 20\%$ SAs	85	99	109	96	115	111	111
# Classes with $\geq 30\%$ SAs	26	29	40	30	45	41	42
# Classes with $\geq 50\%$ SAs	10	12	10	9	15	17	16
# Classes with at least 1 SA	1031	984	1063	954	1050	987	1077
# Classes with at least 5 SAs	121	115	135	116	136	108	137
# Classes with at least 10 SAs	26	25	31	23	25	24	26
<b>For Classes with <math>\geq 10\%</math> SAs:</b>							
# Classes with $\geq 5$ SAs	98	96	107	98	115	86	112
# Classes with $\geq 10$ SAs	18	17	20	17	15	17	17
# Classes with $\geq 20$ SAs	3	3	2	2	3	4	1
<b>Percent of All Classes with SAs:</b>							
Classes with $\geq 10\%$ SAs	33.9%	33.5%	33.0%	36.3%	33.0%	32.9%	32.9%
Classes with $\geq 20\%$ SAs	8.2%	10.1%	10.3%	10.1%	11.0%	11.2%	10.3%
Classes with $\geq 30\%$ SAs	2.5%	2.9%	3.8%	3.1%	4.3%	4.2%	3.9%
Classes with $\geq 50\%$ SAs	1.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%	1.4%	1.7%	1.5%

**Source:** Office of Student Services

**Note:** Data are for all class sections in which student-athletes are enrolled and include some graduate-level courses. Enrollment in class sections is identified by department number and does not adjust for cross-listed classes. Student-athletes represent 7.2 percent of undergraduates over the past seven semesters.