

Boston College

Athletics Advisory Board Annual Report, 2013-14

This Report is intended to summarize for the University community both the major developments related to Boston College's intercollegiate athletics program and the Athletics Advisory Board's (AAB) activities during the preceding academic year.

1. The Year's Academic and Athletic Highlights

A. ACC Academic Collaboration

The Inter-Institutional Academic Collaborative among Atlantic Coast Conference Universities (ACCIAC) sponsored its ninth year of initiatives, with full participation by BC students. The ACCIAC currently makes available each year advanced study thesis research grants to undergraduate students at member schools through its Creativity and Innovation program. For 2013, nine BC students were awarded these grants, and BC had an additional twelve grant recipients for 2014.

The ninth annual "Meeting of the Minds" conference, designed to showcase undergraduate research at member institutions, was held at the University of Pittsburgh, April 3-5, 2013. Seven BC students were chosen this year to present original work on topics that included water contamination; the monuments of Burgos, Spain; institutional racism; Islamic practices in Morocco; public school prayer; perceptions of the racial achievement gap; and the French language and the evolution of cookbooks.

Each year in the spring semester, teams of five to ten student leaders each from the ACC member schools participate in a Student Leadership Symposium, aimed at sharing knowledge and information on a specific social topic. This past year, the symposium was hosted by the University of Miami on February 21 – 23, 2014, and focused on "The Next Generation of Social Change."

B. Academic Achievements of Individual BC Student-Athletes

Several BC student-athletes were recognized this year for their academic and athletic achievements and their potential for future graduate study. Anthony Bellitti (M Track and Field), Hannah Mulvey (Field Hockey) and Tory Speer (Softball) were awarded ACC Postgraduate Scholarships for distinguished achievement in academics, athletics and community service. They were honored at the annual ACC Scholarship Banquet in Greensboro, NC, in April. Thirty-six BC student-athletes were named to the ACC All-Academic teams in their sports, and Tory Speer was named ACC Softball Scholar-Athlete of the Year for 2014. A total of 404 BC student-athletes were named to the ACC's Academic Honor Roll for maintaining a grade point average of 3.0 or better for the entire academic year. In ice hockey, 4 BC student-athletes from the men's team and 12 from the women's team were named to the Hockey East All-Academic teams.

C. NCAA Measures of Student-Athlete Academic Progress

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) continues to use 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), and they are applied at each NCAA Division I member school for all student-athletes who receive athletically-related financial aid.

The APR looks at the eligibility, retention and graduation of all athletically-aided student-athletes (and, for teams that do not award athletic aid, all recruited student-athletes). The APR awards 1 point for each student-athlete who is academically eligible to compete in the next semester and an additional point if that student-athlete returns to school for the next semester. For the academic year, therefore, each student-athlete could receive a maximum of four points for the fall and spring semesters. The APR compares the total number of points actually received in a given year to the maximum total points.

The primary use of the APR measure is on a team-by-team, rather than an overall institutional basis. The NCAA has imposed a cutoff APR of 925 (i.e., 92.5% of the maximum total points), and any school with a team whose four-year average APR falls below that level in its sport may be subject to penalties in the form of reduction of the maximum allowable financial aid for that sport, or in some cases ineligibility for postseason competition. Based on the most recent data, none of BC's teams were subject to these penalties. In addition, 12 of BC's teams received public recognition from the NCAA for having an APR among the top 10% of Division I institutions sponsoring that sport.

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 from that institution, excluding students who transfer to another institution while still academically eligible to compete at their initial institution. The latest data available cover students entering college in 2003, '04, '05 and '06. For Boston College student-athletes overall, the four-class average GSR was 96%, compared to a GSR of 82% for all Division I institutions combined. Fourteen of the varsity sports that BC currently sponsors achieved the highest possible GSR of 100%. Further details on APR and GSR for individual sports and other NCAA schools can be found at www.ncaa.org, under About Us/Academics.

D. Student-Athlete Community Service

Annually, most BC student-athletes take part in any of a large number of community service activities, organized through BC's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). These include visiting the Franciscan Children's Hospital, volunteering at the Boston Food Bank's Food for Families program, and reading to young students through the Help Educate through Athletic Responsibility (HEAR) program. For the fifth year, 22 BC student-athletes were chosen to participate in the Devlin S-AFE Service Immersion trip to New Orleans to help with the continuing rebuilding effort following Hurricane Katrina. The trip occurred during the second week of Christmas break.

E. Athletic Program Highlights

BC teams achieved considerable success on the playing field during the past year. In the fall, junior Liv Westphal of women's cross country earned a spot in the NCAA Championship, where she finished 17th of 254 runners and earned All-American honors. The field hockey team was selected for the NCAA tournament for the 9th time in program history and first since 2009. Junior Emma Plasteras was named first-team All-ACC and All-American. The football team won 7 games and earned an invitation to the Advocare V100 Bowl in Shreveport, LA. Senior Andre Williams led the nation in rushing yardage (2,102), earned consensus first-team All-America honors and won the Doak Walker Award as the nation's top running back. Williams and senior Kevin Pierre-Louis were also selected for the All-ACC first team. Women's soccer earned its eleventh consecutive bid to the NCAA tournament, and advanced to the "Elite Eight". Junior Stephanie McCaffrey was named to the All-ACC first team. In men's soccer, Zeiko Lewis was named the ACC Freshman of the Year.

In the winter, the men's ice hockey team won its fifth consecutive Beanpot championship and was selected for the NCAA tournament for the 15th time in the last 17 years, where it advanced to the Frozen Four. Head Coach Jerry York was named Hockey East Coach of the Year, and junior Johnny Gaudreau won his second consecutive Hockey East Player of the Year Award. Gaudreau also led the NCAA in scoring with 80 points, was named first-team All-American and won the Hobey Baker Award as the nation's outstanding college hockey player. The women's ice hockey team won the Beanpot championship and was selected for the NCAA tournament for the fourth consecutive year. Junior Emily Pfalzer won the Hockey East Best Defenseman Award, senior Taylor Wasyk was named the league's best defensive forward, and graduate student Corinne Boyles was the Hockey East Goaltending Champion for the second consecutive year.

In the spring, the lacrosse team won a program-high 16 games and advanced to the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament. Head Coach Acacia Walker was named Northeast Regional Coach of the year, while junior Mikaela Rix was named first-team All-ACC and All-American. In sailing senior Shelby Hamilton, sophomore Erika Reineke and sophomore Raul Rios earned All-American honors. At the end of the spring semester, Corinne Boyles (women's ice hockey), Johnny Gaudreau (men's ice hockey) and Andre Williams (football) were named Eagles of the Year.

2. AAB Activities during 2013-14

A. AAB Monthly Meetings

Our guests this year included Associate Athletics Director for Athletic Development Steve Novak; Head Coaches Alison Foley (W Soccer), Mike Gambino (Baseball) and Randy Thomas (W Cross Country and Track); Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) Director Dard Miller and Assistant Directors Lee Metzger and Clare Turkington, together with Head Coach Matt Kerr (M Cross Country and Track); and Associate Athletics Director for Compliance Carly Pariseau.

The AAB's monthly meetings this year ranged across a wide variety of issues. These included the role of athletic development in the funding of BC's athletics program, student-athlete recruiting in different sports, issues in athletics compliance, the NCAA's ongoing governance reorganization, and BC's possible participation in the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA). In part because of a request from Interim Provost Joseph Quinn to study the effects of the football team's switch this year to a morning practice schedule, the AAB devoted special attention to competition and practice schedules and the challenges faced by BC student-athletes in trying to balance academics with athletics.

At our first meeting in September, AAB Chair Bob Taggart updated the group on two ongoing developments. The first was the admission to the Atlantic Coast Conference, as of July 1, 2013, of the University of Notre Dame (in all sports other than football and ice hockey), the University of Pittsburgh and Syracuse University. In addition, at the time of the meeting, the University of Maryland announced its intention to leave the ACC by the end of June, 2014, to join the Big 10 Conference, and the ACC had agreed to admit the University of Louisville, effective July 1, 2014. The group discussed, in particular, the greater distances that teams would have to travel for competition as a result of the new members, and its possible effect on classes missed by student-athletes. Second, the NCAA had announced a major year-long effort to revamp its governance structure. As of the September AAB meeting, the NCAA was still in the process of gathering suggestions from its member schools and conferences. The group then talked about possible future meeting topics and guests for the 2013 – 14 year.

Our October meeting was attended by Associate Athletics Director for Athletic Development Steve Novak. Steve had originally been scheduled to attend an AAB meeting in April, 2013, but the meeting had to be canceled when BC was closed in the wake of the Marathon bombings. Steve explained the importance of the athletic development effort, especially at a school with such a broad-based athletics program as BC has. BC sponsors 31 varsity sports with approximately 750 student-athletes. While varsity sports bring recognition to the university, and afford many opportunities for students to fully develop their talents, the athletics program also requires a substantial investment in facilities, staff and athletic scholarships. Other sources of athletics revenue, such as ticket sales and television, have natural caps: stadium or arena seating capacity in the case of ticket sales and the shared multi-year television contracts that are negotiated with conferences rather than individual schools in the case of television. Development, on the other hand, does not have a natural cap.

At BC, athletic development is integrated with the overall University Advancement effort. BC's approach is to first identify individuals who are interested in supporting the university in some way and then find the donation opportunity, either in the academic area or athletics that best resonates with that individual. While gifts of all sizes are welcomed, the primary effort of the athletic development staff goes toward major gifts, and considerable portions of this gift revenue go toward athletic scholarships and facilities. Not all varsity sports are funded equally, with funding priority going toward the revenue sports (football, men's and women's basketball and men's ice hockey) but also toward those sports that have used available funds efficiently to achieve program success.

Guests at our December meeting were BC Head Coaches Alison Foley (W Soccer), Mike Gambino (Baseball) and Randy Thomas (W Cross Country and Track). After describing their backgrounds and their time at BC, the coaches talked about the different NCAA regulations they

face on scholarship and roster limits in their respective sports and recruiting challenges they face. One of these challenges is facilities. BC has no track, for example, so the track team practices at Harvard, and practice times are dictated by the availability of those facilities. Soccer has a facility, but it is located on the Newton Campus, which has no locker room or showers, and time on the field must be shared between men's and women's soccer and lacrosse. Finally, baseball has its own field on the Chestnut Hill campus, but the field has no lights, and space must be shared with football in the fall. When recruiting prospective student-athletes, the coaches said that they try to overcome these facilities challenges relative to competing schools by emphasizing BC's high-quality academic program and its sense of community. In addition, they all agreed that BC's membership in the ACC is attractive to recruits who wish to compete at the highest level in their sports.

Another primary topic of discussion at the meeting was the challenges faced by student-athletes in balancing academics with athletics. Travel for competition poses special challenges, and Alison said that the longer travel distances required by the ACC's expansion last fall had heightened this issue. At the same time, all of the coaches said that they were impressed with the effort that their team members put into squeezing in study time on the road and keeping up with their courses. Balancing course scheduling with practice and competition time was cited as another challenge, and Alison advocated for some form of priority course registration for student-athletes.

The AAB held its annual review of practice and competition schedules for the various teams at the January meeting. Prior to this meeting, AAB members identify those class time blocks (e.g., Monday-Wednesday-Friday at 8, 9, 10 and 11 AM or 12, 1, 2, 3, and 4 PM or Tuesday-Thursday at 9 and 10:30 AM and 12, 1:30, 3 and 4:30 PM) that a given team's practice schedule leaves open for taking classes. Available class time blocks are then compared to the team's competition schedule to see which class time blocks would entail less than two full weeks of missed class (e.g., 5 or fewer missed classes in a Monday-Wednesday-Friday time block or 3 or fewer missed classes in a Tuesday-Thursday time block). Some sports tend to pose class scheduling challenges for student-athletes every year, primarily because of a large number of contests in the sport and frequent travel. These include volleyball in the fall, and baseball and softball in the spring. These challenges are mitigated somewhat by the fact that competition in each of these sports occurs entirely during one semester, leaving the other semester for team members to pick up needed classes they may have had to forgo during the competition semester. Other sports stretch across both semesters, but they vary in terms of course scheduling challenges. In fencing, ice hockey and swimming, for example, competition tends to be on the weekend, and travel is primarily local, so missed class time is not too much of an issue. In other sports, however, long travel distances and multi-day competition can make it necessary to miss a number of classes. This past year, this was true of men's and women's golf, especially in the fall, and men's and women's track in the spring. AAB members did note that increasing numbers of BC classes are offered in nontraditional time blocks (e.g. once per week in the late afternoon or evening). Some of these time blocks afford additional flexibility to student-athletes trying to balance class scheduling with their practice and competition schedules.

The AAB's March meeting was hosted in the Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) offices in the Yawkey Center by LRSA Director Dard Miller and Assistant Directors Lee Metzger and Clare Turkington. The first portion of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of student-athletes taking proctored exams while traveling for competition. Men's Track and Field

Head Coach Matt Kerr joined this part of the meeting. Both Dard and Matt explained that in recent semesters there has been a marked increase in requests by faculty for student-athletes to take proctored exams while traveling. For example, Matt reported that 15 of his team members had taken proctored exams this year during the ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships at Clemson. These exams can create difficulties in finding proctors (LRSA prefers that they not be coaches, but it is not feasible for LRSA staff members to accompany all teams on trips). In addition, student-athletes may not have as much free time on trips as faculty might believe, and hotel wi-fi access can be uneven. Dard and Matt expressed the hope that both student-athletes and faculty might be educated to think of exams during travel as a last resort rather than the norm.

The second portion of the meeting centered on the football team's switch this year from an afternoon to a morning practice schedule. Earlier in the year, Interim Provost Joe Quinn and Athletics Director Brad Bates had asked the AAB to study this issue and assess whether or not it had any academic implications for team members. Under the old practice schedule, team members primarily took classes in the morning, but under the new schedule, players largely took classes beginning at 1 PM or later. Dard, Lee and Clare argued that the new practice schedule made it more difficult to schedule skills-building sessions in LRSA for players with developmental learning needs. They also pointed out that some courses this past fall offered few, if any, sections that met in the afternoon. This issue arose for one or more courses in Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Communication, Earth and Environmental Sciences, History, a number of the languages, Psychology and Sociology. Finally, team members with Friday afternoon classes missed a number of class meetings because of either Friday night home games or Friday afternoon departure for Saturday away games. Under the previous afternoon practice schedule, players took only morning classes so rarely missed class. AAB members agreed to examine these issues further as part of their report to the Provost and Athletics Director.

The AAB held two meetings in April. At the first, our guest was Associate Athletics Director for Compliance Carly Pariseau. Carly reviewed with the group two areas covered by NCAA rules that might potentially involve faculty members, the first of which is academic fraud. Institutions are required to report to the NCAA instances in which either an institutional staff member or student-athlete(s) may be "knowingly involved in arranging fraudulent academic credit" or instances in which a student athlete's academic offense (e.g., cheating on an exam, plagiarism) "results in an erroneous declaration of eligibility." By contrast, instances in which a student-athlete is accused of academic misconduct, and the case is handled under the normal procedures that would apply to any student, without the student-athlete being erroneously declared academically eligible and subsequently competing, need not be reported to the NCAA. The second area is an impermissible benefit for student-athletes, defined by the NCAA as "any special arrangement by an institutional employee or representative of athletics interests to provide the student-athlete or his or her relatives or friends with a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation." For example, a faculty member may invite all students, whether student-athletes or not, in a class to his or her home for a meal, and that would not violate any NCAA rule, but if the faculty member confined the invitation only to student-athletes in the class, that would be considered an impermissible benefit.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to general questions and discussion. One topic was the revamping of the NCAA's governance system, which by this point had resulted in a preliminary proposal for a new structure from the NCAA's Governance Steering Committee. A

striking feature of the proposal was a system allowing for greater autonomy for members of the “Power 5” conferences (ACC, Big 10, Big 12, Pacific 12 and Southeast) over certain issues, including the specific benefits allowable under athletic scholarships. Carly argued that this system would create a problem for BC, which lacks the resources for athletics that some other schools have, so BC might not be able to enhance scholarship benefits as much as some schools but would still have to compete against those schools for prospective student-athletes.

Our second April meeting was devoted to two topics, the first of which was the academic implications of the football team’s new practice schedule. Bob Taggart reported on two pieces of additional information he had received since the March meeting. Data provided by the Office of Student Services on the distribution of classroom use across different times of the day indicated that roughly half of all time blocks used for classes on each of Monday through Thursday occur during the 1:00 – 7:00 PM period. On Fridays, slightly less than 40% of all Friday classroom use occurs during the 1:00 – 4:00 PM time period, when football team members could feasibly take Friday classes. The data are limited by not distinguishing between undergraduate and graduate classes, or between university core classes and electives, but they do not suggest that the switch to a morning practice schedule has led to sharply diminished class opportunities for football team members. Bob also reported on an interview he had conducted in late April with five senior members of the football team. As seniors, all five had experienced both the afternoon and morning practice schedules, and all five said they preferred the morning schedule. The most frequently-mentioned reason was that, having all of their football responsibilities finished for the day by 1 PM, the players felt better able to concentrate on their classes in the afternoon. Several players said they felt the morning practice schedule had actually opened up some useful class scheduling opportunities, and one player believed he had heard fewer complaints from teammates this year than usual about not being able to schedule needed classes. The discussion concluded with AAB members encouraging departments to spread the meeting times for multi-section classes across the day, to the extent possible, and encouraging the football team to continue showing as much flexibility as possible around the noon hour. During the spring, for example, players had been allowed to take needed classes that began at 12 PM, rather than 1 PM, and approximately one-third of team members took advantage of this flexibility.

The final meeting topic was a report from AAB member Kathy Bailey about her trip to attend the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) annual meeting. COIA is an alliance of faculty senates from 63 of the NCAA Division I’s Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools, or about half of all FBS schools. The group organizes an annual meeting to discuss topics on the interaction between major college sports and the educational mission of sponsoring schools. This year, specific topics included academic integrity, with particular reference to the academic support units that schools provide for student –athletes, the NCAA’s current effort to reorganize its governance structure and the problem of concussions. Kathy reported that the COIA Steering Committee invited BC to become a member, because, even though it lacks a faculty senate, a majority of the AAB’s voting members are elected by the faculty. On the basis of her experience, Kathy recommended that BC accept the COIA invitation, and at the conclusion of the meeting, the AAB’s voting members unanimously voted to recommend that BC become a COIA member.

B. Committee Composition

At the beginning of the year, the AAB welcomed newly-elected member Michael Cassidy (Law). At the end of the academic year, Bill Keane (Mathematics) completed his elected term on the Board, and Michael Malec (Sociology) was elected to a new three-year term, beginning June 2014. Don Fishman, Jess Greene, Burt Howell and Ed Taylor also completed their appointed terms, and the Board is currently awaiting new appointments from Fr. Leahy.

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

The Athletics Advisory Board, 2013-14:

Kathleen Bailey (Political Science)	Michael Cassidy (Law)
Donald Fishman (Communication)	Jessica Greene (Institutional Research)
Burton Howell (Intersections)	Richard Jackson (LSOE)
William Keane (Mathematics)	Robert Murphy (Economics)
Edward Taylor (CSOM)	Robert Taggart (CSOM, AAB Chair and Faculty Athletics Representative)