

Boston College

Athletics Advisory Board Annual Report, 2007-08

This Annual 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) primary activities during the preceding academic year. Minutes of the AAB's meetings during the past year are appended to this report as Attachments A – H.

1. The Year's Highlights

BC student-athletes achieved many notable successes, both academically and athletically, during the past year. Some of the highlights are summarized in the remainder of this section.

A. ACC Academic Collaboration

The Inter-Institutional Academic Collaborative among Atlantic Coast Conference Universities (ACCIAC) mounted its third year of initiatives, with full participation by BC students. The collaborative is funded in part by a portion of the revenue from the conference championship football game. Under this program, five BC students received scholarship support for study abroad in Chile, France, Kuwait, South Africa and South Korea, respectively. The third annual "Meeting of the Minds" conference, designed to showcase undergraduate research at member institutions, was held at Florida State University in April, and several BC students gave presentations on their research projects. The first annual ACC student conference was also held under the auspices of the ACCIAC at North Carolina State University in February. A delegation of BC students, plus AAB member Professor Michael Malec, attended and discussed the topic, "Transforming International Education Through Service-Learning." For further details, please see the conference Web site, www.acciac.org and the BC page, <http://www.bc.edu/offices/international/acciac.html>.

B. Academic Achievements of Individual BC Student-Athletes

A number of BC student-athletes were recognized for their academic achievements and potential for future graduate study during the past year. Abigail Hasebroock (Volleyball), Kia McNeill (W Soccer) and Caitlyn Young (Field Hockey) were awarded ACC Postgraduate Scholarships for distinguished achievement in academics, athletics and community service. Although no BC student-athletes won NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships this year, Jennifer Heyde (W Cross Country) and Joseph Maloy (M Swimming) were named national finalists. A large number of other student-athletes also showed excellent academic performance. For example, 120 student-

athletes achieved cumulative GPAs of 3.50 or better as of the end of the spring semester, 2008.

C. NCAA Measures of Student-Athlete Academic Progress

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) continues to use two measures 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 to all student-athletes receiving athletically-related financial aid at each NCAA member school.

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 the same 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 reductions of the maximum allowable financial aid for that sport. Based on the most recent data, none of BC's teams were subject to these penalties. In addition, 10 of BC's teams received public recognition from the NCAA for having an APR among the top 10% of Division 1 institutions sponsoring that sport, while 22 of BC's 28 teams ranked in the top 30% for that sport. Further details can be found on the NCAA Web site: www.ncaa.org, under Academics & Athletics/Education & Research.

The second measure of academic performance introduced recently 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 when they are still academically eligible to compete at their initial institution. The latest data available cover students entering college in 1997, '98, '99 and 2000. For Boston College student-athletes overall, the four class average GSR was 96%, compared to a GSR of 77% for all Division I institutions. Further details on graduation rates for NCAA schools can be found at www.ncaa.org, under Academics & Athletics/Education & Research.

D. NCAA Certification

As noted in last year's Annual Report (available on the Provost's Office Web site, http://www.bc.edu/offices/avp/documents/athletic_advisory.html), BC is undergoing the NCAA's Athletics Certification process for the second time, the first having occurred ten years ago. The first major step in the process has been the preparation of a self-study of

the athletics program. This study has been prepared under the Chairmanship of Special Assistant to the President Dr. Robert R. Newton, with help from a broad cross section of the University community. The preparation of this report, plus gathering of responses to a draft from different University constituents consumed a major portion of the past academic year. The first version of the study has been submitted to the NCAA's Committee on Athletics Certification (CAC), and the CAC has responded, seeking clarification on several points. A revised version of the self-study will be submitted in preparation for a visit of a Peer Review Team in November, 2008, and the CAC's final certification decision will be rendered in February, 2009.

E. Athletic Program Highlights

BC teams achieved considerable success on the playing field during the past year. In the fall, the football team won 11 games and finished first in the ACC's Atlantic Division, which qualified them to appear in the ACC Championship game for the first time. The team also won its eighth consecutive bowl game, defeating Michigan State in the Champs Sports Bowl in Orlando in late December. In its third year of ACC competition, men's soccer won both the ACC regular-season and tournament championships, the first BC team to do so. Women's soccer was selected for the NCAA tournament for the fifth consecutive year. In the winter, the men's ice hockey team won BC's third all-time NCAA hockey championship in addition to the Beanpot and Hockey East championships along the way. In the spring, the sailing team won its first national championships in both the ICSA (Inter-Collegiate Sailing Association) women's and team competitions. BC also finished second in the coed dinghy championship races. In women's track and field, this year's female Eagle of the Year, Kasey Hill, was the ACC individual champion in both the pentathlon event at the ACC Indoor Championships and in the heptathlon at the ACC Outdoor Championships.

The ACC also gives a team sportsmanship award to one team in each of the separate sports that it sponsors. These awards are based on a vote of the league's players and coaches in that sport. This past year, BC won team sportsmanship awards in football, field hockey, volleyball, men's golf and women's outdoor track and field.

2. AAB Activities during 2007-08

A. AAB Monthly Meetings

The minutes of all eight AAB meetings held during 2007-08 are attached to this report. Our guests this year included a member of the BC Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs Donald Hafner, representatives from the Steering Committee and self-study subcommittees for the NCAA Athletics Certification process, Director of Athletic Development Jim Paquette, Associate Dean for Community Standards Brent Ericson from the Office of Student Development, Director John Mahoney and Sr. Assistant Director Danielle Wells from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance and Eligibility Aaron Aaker.

In view of the institutional energy that BC has had to commit to the NCAA Certification process during this past self-study year, it is not surprising that the certification process and the themes that it addresses also pervaded many of the topics discussed in this year's AAB meetings as well. For example, the AAB met with representatives of the Certification Steering Committee as well as representatives from the self-study subcommittees on two occasions. The first meeting in December (see Attachment C) was devoted to a discussion of the certification process, while the second in April (see Attachment G) provided an opportunity for AAB members to comment on a draft version of the self-study.

One major theme of the self-study is assessing the student-athlete experience at BC and, in particular, whether or not BC student-athletes have access to the same academic opportunities as other BC students. In fact, the latter question comes up each year in the context of the AAB's annual review of potential conflicts between teams' practice and travel schedules and available class times. This past year, the issue was discussed on several occasions (see Attachments B, C and H). As in previous years, concerns were raised about practice schedules for teams that have to share practice facilities (e.g., M&W soccer and lacrosse on the Newton campus, M&W basketball and volleyball in the Power Gym, M&W basketball and M&W ice hockey in Conte Forum, and many spring sports that use the Alumni Stadium practice bubble in winter weather) as well as teams that must use off-campus facilities (e.g., rowing, M&W sailing, M&W golf, M&W skiing, M&W track, and, at times when Conte Forum is not available, M&W ice hockey). At our final meeting this past spring (see Attachment H), special concern was raised about both missed class times and the physical toll on student-athletes in baseball and softball, occasioned by the large number of games that are played within a relatively compressed time period.

Academic advising was another aspect of the student-athlete experience at BC that came in for extensive discussion this year (see Attachments B and C). Questions were raised about the relationship between advising carried out by the office of Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) and advising by faculty and academic administrators. As a result of a recent reorganization, LRSA now reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs (rather than to the Vice President for Student Affairs, as before). In meeting with the AAB after his first few months as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Don Hafner expressed the hope that better integration might be achieved among all of the different offices that play a role in student academic advising, and he also hoped to involve faculty more actively in the advising function (see Attachment C). The question was also raised by AAB members, by a representative of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and by Don Hafner as to whether BC student-athletes receive sufficient encouragement to challenge themselves academically and to try to get the most from their education.

A second major theme underlying the NCAA Certification self-study is the issue of institutional control. The NCAA seeks to ensure that the governance of athletics programs involves sufficiently widespread participation from around the university as a

whole and that the athletics program operates in a manner consistent with the university's academic mission. One aspect of this larger issue that the AAB discussed this year was student-athlete admissions. Undergraduate Admissions Director John Mahoney and Sr. Assistant Director Danielle Wells were guests at our March meeting (see Attachment F), and they described the policies surrounding student-athlete admissions at BC. They acknowledged that a coach's level of interest can be a factor in the admissions decision of a recruited student-athlete, just as being the child of a BC alumnus(a) or of a BC faculty or staff member is a factor in other applicants' admissions decisions. However, all applicants must go through the same application process, and all are rated in terms of their potential for academic success at BC. In addition, John Mahoney pointed out that BC is one of just a handful of schools with Division I athletics programs in which the Admissions Director has the final say on all admissions decisions.

The NCAA Certification self-study called for a large amount of information to be gathered, and as in previous years, several AAB meeting discussions stressed the need for more and better information. One issue is the academic performance of BC student-athletes in- and out-of-season. A pilot study, conducted last summer for just three sports, indicated only small differences between in-season and out-of season GPAs for the three sports studied. However, male student-athletes did tend to complete fewer courses during in-season semesters, while there was no significant difference between in-season and out-of-season courses completed for female student-athletes in the three sports studied (see Attachment A). The hope was expressed (see Attachment C) that data gathered for the self-study by the Office of Institutional Research might be used to study this issue more extensively in the future.

The hope was also expressed that we could gather better data on student-athletes' own perceptions of their experience at BC (see Attachments B and G). Currently, student-athletes have an exit interview when they are leaving the program, but several AAB members thought it desirable to gather additional information on student-athletes' perceived experience here during each of their years in the program.

Finally, the AAB discussed two additional issues that are integral to the athletics program, although they are not taken up directly in the NCAA Certification process. Director of Athletic Development Jim Paquette discussed athletic fund-raising and its relation to other University fund-raising activities (see Attachment D). This included a discussion of the somewhat controversial donor-based seating plans for football and men's basketball. Associate Dean for Community Standards Brent Ericson from the Office of Student Development discussed the procedures that BC has in place for student disciplinary issues for all students (see Attachment F). These issues sometimes involve student-athletes, but Brent stressed that the established procedures apply to all students, whether student-athletes or not.

B. Committee Composition

This year, the Athletics Advisory Board welcomed newly elected members Bob Bloom (Law) and Paul Spagnoli (History) as well as newly appointed members Jessica

Greene (Institutional Research), Mike Sacco (Intersections Project) and Ed Taylor (CSOM, Accounting). At the end of the academic year, Dick Tresch (Economics) completed an elected term, and Michael Moore (Psychology) was elected by the faculty to a three-year term, beginning June, 2008.

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 athletic programs, and we are always open to your questions or other input.

The Athletics Advisory Board:

Robert Bloom (Law)

Mary Ellen Fulton (LSOE)

Jessica Greene (Institutional Research)

Michael Malec (Sociology)

Michael Sacco (Intersections Project)

Judith Shindul-Rothschild (CSON)

Paul Spagnoli (History)

Richard Tresch (Economics)

Edward Taylor (CSOM)

Robert Taggart (CSOM, Chair and
Faculty Athletics Representative)

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment A

Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
October 12, 2007
12:30 AM-1:30 PM
Fulton Hall 412

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Bob Taggart,
Members absent: Dick Tresch

Current Developments

Most of the meeting was devoted to a review and discussion of current developments in athletics:

1. BC is currently undergoing its second cycle of NCAA Athletics Certification. The first cycle was completed in 1999. The schedule for the current cycle calls for a self-study to be completed in May, 2008. This will be followed by a review and comments from the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification (CAC) in the summer of 2008. In the fall of 2008, a peer-review team will conduct a campus visit, and the CAC will issue its final report in February, 2009, in which the athletics program will be either certified, certified with conditions or not certified. A Steering Committee has been appointed to conduct the self-study, chaired by Robert Newton of the President's Office. The Steering Committee includes faculty, students, and administrators from around the University as well as athletics department staff members. The AAB is represented on the Steering Committee by Mary Ellen Fulton and Bob Taggart, both of whom have also been assigned to a subcommittee. The three subcommittees, corresponding to the three primary issues to be addressed in the self-study, include Academic Integrity, chaired by Associate Academic Vice President for Undergraduate Programs John J. Burns; Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being, Chaired by Assistant Dean (CSOM) Amy LaCombe; and Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance, chaired by Director of Student Services Louise Lonabocker. Some current AAB members felt that there had been greater involvement in the work of the subcommittees by AAB members during the first cycle NCAA certification ten years ago. There was a request that the AAB be allowed to read and comment on a draft of the self-study prior to submission next May.

2. Bob Taggart offered updates from the recent Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) fall meetings, which include athletics directors, senior woman administrators and faculty athletics representatives.

- The NCAA has appointed a Basketball Academic Enhancement Working Group to study the academic progress of men's basketball student-athletes and to recommend possible measures for improving academic performance. This mirrors the recent Baseball Academic Enhancement Working Group, which recently completed its work. The group concluded that academic problems in baseball

were primarily attributable to the large number of transfer students and that transfer frequency was in turn encouraged by the practice of splitting baseball scholarships into a large number of small pieces. The group's work resulted in new NCAA legislation that limited the splitting of scholarships and eliminated the one-time transfer exception for baseball. The legislation also stipulated that baseball student-athletes who were ineligible for competition in a school's fall semester would remain ineligible for the remainder of that academic year. Some AAB members argued that the issues identified by the group were not particularly applicable to baseball at BC and that more attention should have been paid to the number of games played during the season.

- The BC eligibility certification team recently discovered that an ACC initial eligibility rule, which differs from the analogous NCAA rule, was not being correctly applied. The rule applies to student-athletes who have not been certified by the NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse, and are thus considered "nonqualifiers." The NCAA rule stipulates that nonqualifiers can become eligible after satisfactory completion of two semesters of work at a four-year college, but the ACC rule is more stringent. In the case of 14 BC student-athletes, most of whom were "walk-ons" and thus had never applied for Clearinghouse certification, BC was able to show that their high school GPAs and SAT scores were such they would have been qualifiers had they applied. BC was also granted a waiver of the rule in the case of a 15th student-athlete who had transferred to BC from a university abroad and who had never taken an SAT exam. The waiver was granted on the basis of the student's strong high school record.

3. Based on a conversation at the final AAB meeting of 2006-07, Bob Taggart had agreed to gather some information about the academic records of members of selected teams. This information was presented for the fall and spring semesters of 2006-07 for all members of the baseball, softball and volleyball teams. These three teams were chosen because they had been identified in the past as subject to particularly difficult travel and schedule issues. First, some aggregate information was presented. For example, the distribution of semester GPAs was: ≥ 3.5 , 20.7%; 3.0 – 3.5: 28.9%; 2.0 – 3.0, 46.6%, ≤ 2.0 , 3.7%. Semester GPAs were slightly higher for out-of-season semesters than in-season semesters for both men and women, but the differences were quite small. Male student-athletes tended to complete fewer courses on average during in-season semesters (4.03) than out-of-season semesters (4.78), probably reflecting lighter scheduling to accommodate schedule and travel demands in season. For women, on the other hand, the average number of courses completed (4.48) was identical in- and out-of-season. Information was also presented on the class schedules of individual student-athletes. This was sorted by semester GPA for the entire group to preserve anonymity. The data revealed courses taken over a wide range of departments, reflecting both differing interests and university and school core course requirements. Apart from core science classes, the members of these three teams did not appear to take a large number of upper-level science classes. This may be attributable in part to potential conflicts between afternoon lab sessions and the practice and travel schedules of these particular teams.

4. Bob Taggart called the group's attention to the recent Knight Commission survey study of "Faculty Perceptions of Intercollegiate Athletics." The survey instrument was sent to 13,604 faculty members at 23 Division I institutions, and 2,071 usable responses were received. A primary conclusion of the study was that a relatively large portion of faculty members surveyed seemed to have little knowledge of and also felt disconnected from the issues facing college sports. Further information on the report is available at www.knightcommission.org.

Topics for Future Meetings

5. The final issue was a discussion of future meeting topics. Some members of BC's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) are scheduled to attend the meeting of November 9 to discuss their experience at BC. Donald Hafner, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, who is assuming responsibility for the Learning Resources for Student-Athletes program, will attend the meeting of December 7. The group also expressed interest in analyzing fall practice and competition schedules, hearing more about Admissions practices for student-athletes, talking to a representative from the Office of the Dean for Student Development, and discussing further the practice of seat licenses for football and men's basketball, perhaps with a representative from Athletic Development.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment B

**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
November 9, 2007
12:30 AM-1:45 PM
Fulton Hall 524**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Guest: A member of the Boston College Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Since only one SAAC member was able to attend, and since Athletics Advisory Board members were interested in that student's candid impressions, it was decided not to identify the student by name in the meeting minutes and to alternate feminine and masculine pronouns in reporting the student's comments.

The meeting was devoted to a discussion with the SAAC member about her experience as a student-athlete at Boston College. She said that she had loved her overall BC experience, but she did feel that student-athlete life could be improved in some ways. The following topics were discussed:

1. Solutions for Student-Athletes Experiencing Difficulty Enrolling in Needed Classes

The SAAC member expressed the wish that either some sort of priority registration system for student-athletes or a clearer system for obtaining course overrides could be established at BC. He said that student-athletes in some degree programs or majors experienced considerable difficulty in balancing their practice and competition schedules with scheduling needed courses. She thought these problems were particularly acute for pre-medical students. He also thought that some student-athletes felt forced into taking courses they were not completely interested in because of limited choices in the time slots they had available. She said that it was not always clear to students whether they should approach deans or instructors with course override requests.

Some AAB members noted that student-athlete visitors to previous AAB meetings had expressed similar feelings. There seems to be a widespread desire among student-athletes for a better system to help them register for needed classes while trying to work around the constraints of practice and competition schedules. Since an important part of the problem seems to be how to locate the best information about getting help with registration, this led to a broader discussion of sources of course advice for student-athletes.

2. Course, Instructor, Program and Career Advice

AAB members inquired whether student-athletes were encouraged to get course advice from Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) advisers more than from their

faculty advisers. Since student-athletes review their course schedules with LRSA advisers, the SAAC member felt that there was a tendency for them to gravitate to LRSA. During his time at BC, he had himself tried several sources of course advice. Based on her experience, she felt that LRSA advisers were not always sufficiently knowledgeable about different courses, instructors or degree programs. He believed that in some cases, student-athletes were steered into certain programs or majors even when they had different interests. In her own case, she felt that she had expressed a desire to be in one of the professional schools before she started but then arrived to find herself enrolled in Arts and Sciences until she spoke up and had this changed. He also felt that he had been steered into a language course as a freshman for which he had been overqualified.

The SAAC member said that his overall experience with faculty members at BC had been very favorable, and that she had found most to be very accessible. However, he did not feel that the system for getting course advice from faculty or administrators worked as well as it could.

She said that some of her best advice on courses and professors had come from fellow students. Among student-athletes, he felt that there had been a noticeable change in the attitudes of upperclassmen toward younger team members. In her opinion, older student-athletes are now more willing to offer advice and set an academic tone for their younger teammates than was the case when she first arrived. In response to questions, he said he believed that this was more a product of the individuals on different teams than a conscious effort by the coaches or Athletics Department.

Some AAB members expressed concern during this discussion that departmental and school sources of course advice may not be used sufficiently. They argued that faculty and school administrators are closer to the actual programs and hence better informed about course sequencing and course content.

The SAAC member cited the usefulness of alumni mentoring programs that had been established in some sports. Whereas they currently serve as a channel for career and other advice for players toward the end of their BC careers, she thought these programs could be beneficially extended to include advice on courses, majors and possible future careers for younger players.

3. Course Tutoring Help

The SAAC member discussed the availability of tutoring help for student-athletes. He felt that he had generally had a better experience seeking help from the Connors Family Learning Center than from LRSA. In her experience, she had found that she could get a tutor faster from the Connors Center. He also felt that the Connors Center sought faculty advice and recommendations in hiring tutors and that this had led to higher-quality tutors. Some AAB members said that their own preference was for students to use either the Connors Center or departmental tutors for tutoring help.

4. Student-Athletes' Attitudes Toward Academics

The SAAC member was asked her opinion of student-athlete attitudes toward academics at Boston College. He felt that most student-athletes here had chosen BC in the first place because they were serious about academics. In her opinion, there were isolated instances of teams where the attitude toward academics was more lackadaisical, but she did not feel that this was the norm. He felt that his own team had become stricter over time about monitoring team members' class attendance. She also repeated her feeling that upperclassmen student-athletes generally were doing a better job of emphasizing the importance of academics to underclassmen than when she first arrived. He did feel, however, that LRSA advisers sometimes placed too much emphasis on remaining eligible and graduating and not enough on getting maximum benefit from the available academic programs.

5. LRSA Facilities

The SAAC member was asked about the adequacy of LRSA facilities for studying and advising. While she said that she does not personally use LRSA study space, her impression was that overcrowding was not a major problem except for course registration periods when many student-athletes are trying to meet with advisers at the same time.

Referring to an informal discussion that had taken place via email and prior to the start of the October 12, 2007 AAB meeting, some AAB members said that they had heard complaints from other student-athletes about noise and overcrowding in the LRSA study space. They also felt that the policy of mandatory study halls in LRSA, as determined by coaches, should be reviewed.

6. Non-Academic Issues

The SAAC member also expressed his opinion on several other issues that were non-academic but still related to the quality of student-athlete life. First, she thought that sports medicine could benefit from having more doctors on call. He believed there had been instances of student-athletes needing surgery who faced delays because of a lack of available doctors. She also thought that student-athletes might be provided more flexibility to choose their own doctors. He believed that the training table could be improved and that current per-meal charges seemed high relative to the available quality. Finally, she said that she felt the Special Assistance Fund, available to student-athletes, should afford more flexibility. For example, he thought that some student-athletes felt constrained to use this fund for medical insurance and that this precluded using it to meet other needs.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment C

**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
December 7, 2007
12:30 AM-2:00 PM
Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Bob Taggart, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Mike Sacco

Visitors from the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Athletics Certification Effort: Steering Committee Chair, Bob Newton; Subcommittee Chairs, Joe Burns, Amy LaCombe, Louise Lonabocker; Steering or Subcommittee members, Ursula DellaPorta, John Hegarty

Guest: Donald Hafner, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs

Bob Taggart introduced two new members of the Athletics Advisory Board (AAB), recently appointed by Fr. Leahy: Jessica Greene, Director of Institutional Research and Ed Taylor, Carroll School faculty member in Accounting. A third new appointee, Mike Sacco, Associate Director of the Intersections Project, had a previous travel commitment and will join the group at future meetings. We were also joined by a number of members of the NCAA Athletics Certification effort, who had requested an opportunity to meet with the Athletics Advisory Board to aid in preparation of the Certification Self-Study and by our guest, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Donald Hafner.

Don Hafner began with a short statement of the impressions he had gained thus far, during his first year as Vice Provost. He spoke of the place of Boston College (BC) student-athletes (SAs) in the larger undergraduate student population at BC and of the issues he saw for SAs. First, he had concluded that, with nearly 800 SAs participating in 31 varsity sports at BC, the SA population is hardly a homogeneous group and should not be viewed as such. Nonetheless, he did feel that certain issues might touch substantial segments of the SA population. One issue is that, while Don felt that BC is justifiably proud of its high SA graduation rates, he wondered if SAs here received sufficient encouragement and support toward high academic achievement. For example, he expressed the hope that larger numbers of SAs would be viable applicants for nationally-competitive academic fellowships in the future, noting that it had been many years, for instance, since a BC SA applied for a Rhodes Scholarship. A second issue is whether or not BC student-athletes are academically and/or socially isolated in some ways, thus depriving them of the full range of experiences available at BC. As examples, he cited his belief that, because of practice and competition schedules, not all academic majors are equally feasible for SAs and that their opportunities to participate in study abroad programs may also be limited. He also wondered if time spent with teammates, in the interests of team unity, prevented SAs from experiencing the full range of social

connections available to other BC students. Finally, Don felt that achieving improvements in student advisement was an issue for all BC students. He said that one of his goals is to achieve better integration of the various student advisement functions and to increase faculty involvement. He wants this integration to include Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA), which now reports to his office.

Following Don's opening observations, a general discussion followed, which included both AAB members and our visitors from the NCAA Certification team. The primary issues addressed were the availability of academic opportunities to BC student-athletes, student-athlete advisement, and the NCAA Certification process.

1. Student-Athlete Academic Opportunities

Some AAB members supported Don Hafner's observation that not all academic programs were equally feasible for student-athletes. The question was raised of whether it is even feasible to offer equal academic opportunities to student-athletes when running a Division I athletics program. Members pointed out that competition and travel schedules, plus practice times that are dictated by pressure on available facilities, block out large segments of available class times in certain sports. This makes it very difficult for SAs in these sports to follow academic programs in such areas as nursing and the sciences. Baseball, men's and women's golf, field hockey, women's lacrosse, softball and volleyball were cited as susceptible to these problems. One member raised the issue of whether women's teams faced disadvantages in terms of practice times relative to men's teams. The hope was expressed that, with new facilities planned for the Brighton campus, facilities pressure might be alleviated somewhat and that greater use might be made of evening practice times. At the same time, it was acknowledged that neighborhood pressure could curtail the use of lights for evening practices.

Two members of the Certification Steering Committee expressed their thoughts on these issues. John Hegarty (Men's Ice Hockey) conceded that Boston College's move to the Atlantic Coast Conference had posed scheduling challenges for available facilities, and had necessitated more practices being moved off campus. He did argue that, with recent facilities upgrades and more experience in handling the number of televised sports events, facilities pressure has been alleviated somewhat. For example, he mentioned that men's ice hockey had somewhat fewer off-campus practices this year than last. John did acknowledge, however, that pressure on facilities was likely to remain an ongoing issue, and some AAB members expressed the opinion that more attention should be devoted to athletics facilities scheduling issues in BC's long-range facilities plans.

Joe Burns (Associate Academic Vice President for Undergraduate Programs) argued that student-athletes need not have access to all class time blocks each day in order to have the same academic opportunities as other students. He also pointed out that it is University policy for all undergraduate students to allow them into sections of classes that they have to have in order to complete a program of study. At the same time, he argued that we must address the question of when it simply becomes too inconvenient for student-athletes to undertake certain programs of study.

2. Student-Athlete Advisement

AAB members raised the issue of whether student-athlete academic advisement places too much emphasis on simply graduating and not enough on striving for greater academic success. Based on comments from a member of BC's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), who visited our last AAB meeting, the question was posed of whether student-athletes are steered into certain majors or courses in the interests of remaining eligible and graduating, even if they are overqualified for those courses or programs. It was argued that relatively few BC student-athletes will go on to play at a higher level and, thus, that they really need to get the most out of their undergraduate education. An AAB member also argued that greater faculty involvement in SA advisement was needed to help steer them through the obstacles of balancing academic program requirements with practice and competition schedules.

Don Hafner said that one of his objectives was to build more strength in the faculty-advisee relationship for BC undergraduates generally. He said that a common complaint among undergraduates is inconsistent advice from different quarters, and Joe Burns agreed that better coordination is needed among advising units. Don expressed the concern, that especially in cases of inconsistent advice from formal advisors, students might be most inclined to follow the advice of other students. While other students may have had the actual experience of taking a particular course with a particular instructor, Don felt that faculty could bring a longer-term perspective on the components of a well-rounded education and on the range of future career opportunities. Another issue that came up was the fact that admissions profiles of at least some SAs may differ from the typical profile of a BC undergraduate. It was argued that faculty members should consider this in offering course and program advice. Don agreed and stated that another objective he had was to make more data available to faculty advisors in online form on students' academic backgrounds.

3. The NCAA Athletics Certification Process

Certification Steering Committee Chair Bob Newton pointed out that some of the issues discussed thus far, as well as other issues, would be the focus of the NCAA Certification Self-Study, currently in progress. He asked the three subcommittee chairs to briefly explain their portions of the self-study in more detail, and he asked Director of Institutional Research, Jessica Greene, to describe the kinds of data she was in the process of gathering to support the self-study.

Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee Chair, Louise Lonabocker (BC Director of Student Services) characterized the focus of her group as documenting broad and consistent involvement of campus groups outside of the Athletics in the oversight of the athletics program as well as campus-wide NCAA rules education efforts. She said that the NCAA requires a periodic compliance review for each member institution and that a review by Atlantic Coast Conference staff in the spring of 2006 had resulted in assigning primary responsibility for SA eligibility certification and for

athletics financial aid to Ursula DellaPorta and Jenna Brown, respectively, of the Office of Student Services.

Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being Subcommittee Chair Amy LaCombe (Assistant Dean, CSOM) described her committee's charge as providing specific information on relative budgets, facilities and practice times for men's and women's sports as well as on minority representation among Athletics staff members and on admissions profile and the racial or ethnic compositions of teams in different sports. She also noted that the committee is charged with documenting student-athlete well-being programs in place around the University. The description of the gender-equity portion of the Subcommittee's work sparked a discussion of men's and women's teams alternating practice times from one year or one semester to another in cases where they share practice facilities. Such alternation does currently take place in basketball and soccer but not in ice hockey.

Academic Integrity Subcommittee Chair Joe Burns (Associate Academic Vice President for Undergraduate Programs) said that his group is gathering information to show whether or not student-athletes receive the same academic treatment and opportunities that other BC students receive. This includes examination of SA admissions profiles relative to other BC students and of support systems in place for SAs.

Jessica Greene, Director of Institutional Research, then described the data-gathering efforts she is undertaking to support the work of the different subcommittees. For example, she is preparing to examine Senior Survey data for both SAs and non-athlete BC students to see if there are any systematic differences in student satisfaction between the two groups. In addition, she is gathering information on admissions profiles and graduation success for both student groups.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of possible data-sharing benefits that the Certification Self-Study might provide for the AAB. For example, data might be assembled on SA choices of majors, broken down by sport or by revenue-producing and non-revenue-producing sports. SA academic performance relative to admissions profile compared to other BC students might also be analyzed. Such information, in anonymous form, might in turn provide useful evidence on the types of questions raised earlier in the meeting as to whether sufficient encouragement for academic achievement is given to BC SAs.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment D

**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
February 1, 2008
12:30-1:45 PM
Conte Forum 320**

Members present: Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Judith Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Robert Bloom, Michael Malec, Michael Sacco, Bob Taggart

Guest: Jim Paquette, Director of Athletics Development

The entire meeting was devoted to a presentation by and conversation with Jim Paquette, exploring the role of Athletics Development and its relationship with overall University Development. Particular attention was paid to the connection between Development and the donor-based seating arrangements adopted last year for men's basketball and this year for football.

Jim stressed the full integration and collaboration between his staff of eight and the 175 employees of the Office of University Advancement directed by Vice President Jim Husson. The two offices fully share research information about prospective donors, and Athletics Development is careful to avoid even the appearance of competing with University Advancement. All contributions to Athletics Development (also known as the Flynn Fund) go straight to More Hall.

In its operations, Jim's office tries to follow six principles: respect, good judgment, clear communications, task-focus, continuous improvement, and integrity. Since 1992, the office has steadily increased its fundraising. In 2004, it raised \$10 million for the first time. In 2005, when the University opened the Yawkey Athletics Center, it represented the first building constructed entirely with external funding. In 2007, Jim's staff generated \$19 million in donations. The long-term goal of Athletics Development is to eliminate the significant annual subsidy (currently about \$8.5 million) from University general funds to support Athletics.

On the subject of donor-based seating (DBS) for sports events, members of the AAB have frequently expressed concerns that it represents poor public relations for the University. DBS requires significant financial contributions to Athletics in return for the right to purchase season tickets. In explaining the system, Jim argued that the practice is very widespread in NCAA Division I athletics, and that at BC it affected only 16 percent of football seats, a quarter of seats for men's basketball, and no other sports. Moreover all fulltime University employees are exempted from the required donations.

Some members of the Board have suggested the advantages of allowing all contributions to the University (rather than specifically contributions to Athletics) to qualify under the

system. Another suggestion has been to give people points toward qualification in proportion to their duration as season ticket holders. It is unfortunate, in this view, to make special financial demands on those who have stuck with football or basketball through good years and bad.

In response, Jim insisted, first, that no one lost the right to purchase *some* season tickets under DBS. Athletics made a careful, personal effort to provide alternative seats for anyone unwilling or unable to make the necessary contribution to the Flynn Fund. In the second place, the goal was to create a DBS system which would be simple and clear, rather than an elaborate point system, even if a more complicated system might “make people feel better.” He noted that the existing system was consistent with the long-time practice of requiring Flynn Fund contribution for access to football parking, and that other contributions to the University have not been counted for this purpose. Finally, he argued that DBS was necessary both to encourage contributions from those who follow BS athletics and to free up prime seats for those who have made large contributions. According to Jim, 91 percent of football season ticket holders at the fifty-yard-line had *not* been donors before the adoption of DBS, and their long-term occupation of these seats made it impossible for Athletics to reward major contributors.

Finally, Jim argued that the University had approved DBS after careful study at the highest level. While there had undoubtedly been some ill feeling among donors to the Law School, it seemed clear to University Advancement that DBS was not creating any significant problems for overall fundraising.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment E

**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
February 15, 2008
12:30 AM-1:45 PM
Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: None

Guest: Brent Ericson, Associate Dean, Community Standards, Office of Student Development

Almost the entire meeting was devoted to a discussion with Associate Dean Brent Ericson. The focus was on disciplinary issues among Boston College student-athletes, as well as BC students more generally, and the procedures in place for dealing with these.

Brent explained, by way of background, that he had assumed his current position as Associate Dean for Community Standards four months ago, succeeding Mike Ryan, who recently retired. Prior to that, Brent served in the BC Office of Residential Life, where he also dealt with disciplinary issues. Through several positions he has held, Brent now has more than seven years' experience in the areas of student affairs and student conduct. Brent is also currently working on his Ph.D. in the Lynch School of Education.

Brent felt that there is a perception among BC students generally that there is one system in place for dealing with disciplinary issues among BC student-athletes and a different system for dealing with other students. However, he argued that it is the philosophy of the Office of Student Development to have one system and set of procedures for dealing with all students. The goal of the system in all cases is to promote a safe and healthy community where students can get an education. Actions taken are aimed at helping students develop and learn from situations in which they may have made poor decisions.

A. Types of Behavioral Issues Dealt With by the Office of Student Development

Brent said his perception is that BC student-athletes as a group do not tend to get into disciplinary trouble more often than the general student body. When they do, however, the situations are often more publicly visible than with the student body as a whole. Brent was asked if student-athletes in the higher-profile revenue sports (e.g., football, men's ice hockey, men's and women's basketball) tended to get in trouble more often than student-athletes from other sports. He thought that they probably did to some degree. However, he also pointed out that football, in particular, is the largest team and, as such, it offers more possibilities for student-athletes to engage in group activities, such as off-campus parties, that may lead to trouble.

Brent listed some types of disciplinary issues that tend to arise among student-athletes. He said that the most common of these are related to drugs, or, more frequently, alcohol. He felt that many of the alcohol-related problems arose from parties involving teams or groups from a team. Of drug-related problems, he felt that most were related to marijuana, and among BC students generally, his sense was that marijuana issues had been more prevalent this year than in previous years. Brent said he had heard concerns expressed by the BC athletics administration about cocaine use on campus, but he said that cocaine-related issues represented a relatively small proportion of disciplinary cases coming to the attention of the Office of Student Development.

Brent felt that the preponderance of issues coming to his office tended to come from Residential Life. In addition to alcohol and drug-related problems, these also included damage in dormitories after games, sometimes by student-athletes but also by other students as well. Brent was asked if he felt that BC's move to the ACC, with the associated travel demands and competitive pressures, had resulted in any step-up in disciplinary issues. He responded that the BC student body in general tends to be quite competitive, and he does feel that game day incidents among students generally, especially those involving alcohol, may have ratcheted up a notch since the move to the ACC. He did, however, point out that complaints from off campus about BC students had been down in recent years. A member of the Athletics Advisory Board also argued that steps taken on campus, such as fencing in and restricting access to the Mods, had dampened game-day incidents.

Brent had also heard stories that suggested some amount of hazing occurring on some teams. However, he said that such incidents rarely rose to the level of formal reports to his office and that BC had had no major hazing cases.

Brent was asked if sexual harassment or sexual assault incidents were very common among student-athletes. He said that there had been some incidents, but that these have comprised a small proportion of disciplinary issues. He was also asked if recruiting visits for prospective student-athletes were a source of disciplinary problems, but he felt that such problems were relatively infrequent.

A Board member inquired about the incidence of gambling among student-athletes. Gambling is a clear violation of NCAA rules, but Brent was also asked if it is a violation of University policy. He replied that money changing hands in the residence halls among any students for gambling activities is a violation of University policies. He has the sense that various forms of gambling among BC students are fairly widespread, but few formal reports have come to the attention of his office recently.

B. Disciplinary Procedures

The discussion then turned to the formal procedures that the Office of Student Development uses in dealing with student disciplinary issues and the extent to which these are codified. Brent said the primary sources of incidents coming to the attention of his office are, in order of frequency: (1) Residence Advisors, (2) the BC Police

Department, (3) event staff at athletic contests, and (4) other members of the BC community (e.g., students, faculty, administrators). Of these, Residence Advisors and the BC police generate the great majority of incident reports.

The Office of Student Development typically informs at least one other administrative unit, such as an appropriate dean in the student's school, of these reports. Academic integrity issues are referred directly to the appropriate dean and are not dealt with by Student Development. In the case of student-athletes, the team coach is informed and sometimes the athletics administrator who has oversight for that team.

About 90% of cases are handled administratively by the Office of Student Development. The student is asked to come in and discuss the facts of the case, and a judgment is rendered as to whether the student is responsible or not.

If the student is deemed responsible, the offense may carry a mandatory sanction, as prescribed in the *BC Student Guide*. These may include drug or alcohol education and treatment, housing probation (under which a second offense results in loss of University housing), University probation (under which a second offense results in suspension), community restitution in cases involving damage in the surrounding neighborhood, and immediate suspension in the case of more serious offenses such as selling drugs or assault. University suspension usually entails imposing conditions on the student's eventual return.

Many cases do not fall into clear categories, however, and are dealt with individually. In such instances Student Development may exercise some discretion over what sanctions to apply. For example, in the case of student-athletes, Brent said that he had occasionally reduced a normal University sanction when a team coach had already imposed sanctions of his or her own. Whether sanctions are mandatory or under the discretion of Student Development, student learning and avoidance of similar behavior in the future are emphasized. Frequently, students are referred to someone in the University with student formation responsibility as a final step in the judicial and disciplinary process.

Students do have the right to deny allegations that they are responsible for a particular incident, and they may ask that their case go to a hearing board. In the case of less serious offenses, a panel of 5 students, drawn from a judicial board of 15 students hears the case. In the case of more serious offenses, an Administrative Board, consisting of three administrators, hears the case. The Administrative Board may also be brought in immediately in the case of serious offenses, such as assault or offensive behavior motivated by some form of bias, and it has the right to impose immediate suspension, subject to a University hearing. Students who dispute a finding of responsibility and have their cases brought to a hearing board have the right to call on witnesses and can also choose a faculty member or administrator to serve as their advisor.

There was considerable discussion among Board members of how often student-athlete disciplinary issues might be handled within a team and never brought to the attention of the Office of Student Development. Some members expressed concern that, to the extent

this happens regularly, it may feed the perception that there are two disciplinary systems in place, one for student-athletes and one for all other students.

Brent responded that any incidents brought to the attention of Student Development are handled by Student Development under the usual procedures. While such incidents are reported to team coaches and relevant athletics administrators, and while coaches may impose their own sanctions on student-athletes, the incidents are never simply handed over to the coaches to deal with. Brent did acknowledge the possibility that certain incidents might be known only to a team and coach and might never be reported to Student Development. Examples could include incidents occurring on team trips. Other Board members argued that the same could occur on service trips or other non-athletic types of student activities. Concern was also expressed that, if Student Development sometimes reduces normal sanctions on a student-athlete because the team had levied its own sanctions, this could contribute further to the perception of a two-tier system for student disciplinary action. However, Brent responded that his goal is to assess whether a student has learned from the experience and has shown signs that the behavior in question will not be repeated. He said that, for this reason, he would also consider reducing customary University sanctions in the face of court-imposed sanctions, such as community service.

C. Other Student Conduct Issues

Brent was asked if he was aware of a recent campus Web site, juicycampus.com, devoted to salacious material about individual students on college campuses and other forms of “cyber bullying.” Concern was expressed that such activity could even lead in some cases to increased risk of student suicide. Brent said that he was aware of the site and that Interim Dean for Student Development, Paul Chebator, was currently discussing the issue with University Counsel.

Brent was also asked if his office ever dealt with graduate students. He said that, because most incidents originate in dormitories, cases involving graduate students are not frequent. However, now that the University has begun to offer some graduate housing, he thought that there could be some increase in disciplinary issues related to graduate students in the future.

D. Other Business

Following the discussion with Brent, there was brief discussion of a proposal made by a Board member to ask Athletics to look into an available system for cleaning athletic equipment so as to reduce the threat of germs and infection. A suggestion was also made that Sports Medicine add a physical therapist on staff so that student-athletes would not have to go off-campus for needed physical therapy. The Board supported having Bob Taggart pass these recommendations on to the Athletics Administration and report back on any plans to implement them.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment F

**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting
March 28, 2008
12:30 AM-1:45 PM
Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Bob Bloom

Guests: John Mahoney, Director of Undergraduate Admission and Danielle Wells, Sr. Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission.

Almost the entire meeting was devoted to a discussion with guests John Mahoney and Danielle Wells of the student-athlete admission process at BC. John began by giving an overview of the process, and then Danielle filled in the mechanics of how the process works.

John began by arguing that the combination of an academic institution with a competitive, Division I athletics program really is an odd fit that can generate conflicting goals. He pointed out, for example, that in basketball and football, especially, college sports are really the “minor leagues” for the professional leagues in those sports. Nevertheless, he argued that BC had long ago made a commitment to sponsor a broad-based athletics program that would be not only competitive but successful. As a result, John felt that the Admissions office faces a delicate balancing act in accommodating not only students with outstanding intellectual ability but also student-athletes who will contribute to the success of their teams.

Based on meetings with his counterparts at other schools, John’s assessment is that there may be fewer than 10 schools in the country with large, Division I athletics programs, where the office of Admission has as much control over student-athlete admissions as here at BC. Examples of such schools included Duke, Northwestern, Notre Dame and Stanford.

Danielle Wells, who serves as the chief athletics liaison in the office of Admission, then explained more of the mechanical details of student-athlete admissions. She emphasized the importance of good communication with coaches, and especially early communication in the case of high risk candidates. She said that most coaches at BC understand the processes that have been established and are quite cooperative. To foster better understanding, the office of Admission updates a written policy on student-athlete admissions each year and sends it to all coaches.

There are seven members of the admissions staff who serve as athletics liaisons, and each is assigned to at least one sport. These liaisons serve as the focal points for communication between Admissions and those particular sports.

Since student-athlete recruitment usually begins prior to the normal college admissions process, coaches often ask for “early reads” on their prospects during the summer prior to their senior year in high school. An early read requires freshman, sophomore and junior grades plus some kind of standardized test score (possibly a PSAT if the SAT has not been taken yet). An early read can give a coach a sense of where a particular prospective student-athlete might fall in the applicant pool and whether or not such a candidate could be potentially admissible. Regardless of the results of an early read, however, all prospective student-athletes must ultimately undergo the normal BC application process.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment G

Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting

April 10, 2008

1:30 PM-3:00 PM

Fulton Hall 412

A special meeting of the Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) was called to give AAB members an opportunity to comment on a draft of the Self-Study Report that has been prepared as part of the NCAA Athletics Certification process. Several representatives of the Certification Steering Committee attended to hear and discuss these comments.

AAB members present: Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Representing the Steering Committee: Steering Committee Chair Bob Newton, Steering Committee staff member Anne Black, Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee Chair Louise Lonabocker, Academic Integrity Subcommittee Chair Joe Burns (note: the Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being Subcommittee was represented by AAB member Mary Ellen Fulton. In addition to being AAB members, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene and Bob Taggart are also members of the Steering Committee).

Bob Newton began by noting that this was one of a series of meetings at which Steering Committee representatives were gathering comments on the Self-Study from different campus groups. In addition to the AAB, these include the Provost's Advisory Council (PAC), Undergraduate Government of Boston College (UGBC), Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and a general forum open to any members of the BC community. At this point in the process, the Steering Committee's primary objective is to identify and correct any factual errors in the draft Self-Study and to identify any areas in which the Self-Study draft suggests a clear lack of conformity with NCAA operating principles.

A few factual issues had been identified by AAB members in written communication before the meeting. These included a correction to the AAB's informal guideline on missed classes. The correct guideline is that student-athletes should not be forced by practice schedules or other constraints to take courses for which team competition and travel would cause them to miss two weeks of class or more in a semester (e.g., student-athletes should not have to miss more than 5 classes that meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday or more than 3 classes that meet on Tuesday and Thursday). The draft self-study also contained a statement that, "...since joining the ACC, conference schedules, despite added travel time for some teams, have presented fewer class conflicts." In response to questions, no one present could cite any specific evidence to support this statement.

Going sequentially through the three main sections of the Self-Study draft, the discussion did not identify areas in which the group thought BC clearly did not conform to NCAA operating principles. However, AAB members' reading of the Self-Study draft did raise points, under each of the three sections, at which they thought current BC practice could be improved.

1. Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

One AAB member raised the concern that, while the Self-Study draft accurately described the flow of information between the Athletics Department and other campus departments and groups, such as the AAB, the information flow seemed to be primarily in one direction. This member questioned whether there were sufficient communication channels in place for information and opinions to flow from the rest of the community back to Athletics. One suggestion was for the Provost's Advisory Council to devote one meeting (held jointly with the AAB) each year to Athletics issues and then relay any concerns raised in that meeting to the Athletics Department. Bob Newton pointed to some recent changes in organizational structure, such as Student Services and Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) now reporting to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, as possible means for strengthening communication from BC's academic enterprise to Athletics.

Another AAB member argued that current rules on the composition of the AAB (of the five elected members, three must represent the College of Arts and Sciences, while the other two must represent BC's professional schools), as described in the Self-Study, are not ideal. This member argued that the professional schools each pose their own, separate set of issues for student-athletes in terms of course scheduling and achieving a workable balance between academics and athletics. As a result, this member believed that all three professional schools in which undergraduates may enroll (Education, Nursing and Management) should be represented on the AAB at all times.

2. Academic Integrity

A number of issues were raised about the relationship between academic counselors in LRSA and academic advisors within the schools. Concern was expressed that these two groups sometimes offer conflicting advice, and one AAB member expressed the view that more needs to be done to reinforce the primacy on academic matters of the academic advisors within schools.

There was some discussion of student-athlete academic performance, and Bob Newton passed out some confidential data on the admissions credentials (standardized test scores and secondary school core class grades) of BC student-athletes versus non-athletes. One AAB member expressed the hope that the AAB could examine periodically the academic performance of student-athletes once they have enrolled at BC, broken down by sport, relative to non-athlete BC students.

Concern was also expressed about the number of contests in some sports each year. It was pointed out that limits on contests in each sport come from the NCAA and that competition among schools for student-athlete recruits would tend to keep any one school from scheduling fewer than the maximum allowable contests.

3. Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being

It was noted that BC had made significant effort over the last decade to comply with Title IX guidelines by hiring more women coaches and increasing funding for women's sports.

Some concern was expressed that, while men's and women's basketball and soccer swap practice schedules from one semester to another to provide greater class scheduling flexibility for team members, men's and women's ice hockey do not. One member of the Steering Committee argued that women's ice hockey has the option to practice in the early evening but chooses not to do so. An AAB member argued in response that televised events in Conte Forum force both men's and women's ice hockey teams to practice off campus approximately 20 times per year and that off-campus ice time in the evening is extremely difficult to secure.

One AAB member raised a student-athlete welfare issue that had come up in an earlier meeting this year with a representative of the BC SAAC. The SAAC member had said that student-athletes coming to BC without health insurance were sometimes forced to use funds from the NCAA's Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund to purchase health insurance instead of using it to meet other needs, such as clothing. The AAB member expressed the hope that some other means could be found to provide health insurance for student-athletes who could not afford it on their own.

A comment was made that BC needs to find better ways to assess student-athletes' experience throughout their time here in order to identify issues and seek improvements. Currently, the Athletics Department conducts exit interviews with graduating student-athletes, but these are used in part in the personnel evaluations of coaches and are thus confidential. There is also information the Senior Surveys, and this can be broken down by student-athletes and non-athletes, as in the document handed out by Jessica Greene at the preceding AAB meeting. However, there is currently no systematic effort in place to gather information on student-athlete well-being throughout their BC careers.

4. The Certification Process

The meeting concluded with some questions about the NCAA Certification process from this point on. Bob Newton explained that the Self-Study would be reviewed for completeness by NCAA staff and then by the committee that will visit BC next fall. In response to a question about the consequences of not being certified, he pointed out that certification does not necessarily rely on an institution's complete conformity with all NCAA operating principles. However, if there are areas of less than full conformity, the institution must present a plan for improvement. Progress toward implementing such plans would then be assessed in the subsequent NCAA certification.

AAB Annual Report 07-08 Attachment H

Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting

April 25, 2008

12:30 AM-1:45 PM

Fulton Hall 412

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Mike Malec, Ed Taylor

Guest: Aaron Aaker, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance and Eligibility

The meeting was devoted to questions and discussion concerning practice and competition schedules for the different BC teams for both fall and spring. Sr. Associate Athletics Director Jody Mooradian had been originally scheduled to attend but was unable to because of a last-minute schedule change, and Aaron Aaker was kind enough to attend in her place.

Prior to the start of the schedule discussion, one Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) member expressed the wish to go on record as commending the University and the team coach for taking swift and decisive action in a recent case involving sexual assault allegations against a BC student-athlete.

In the schedule analyses conducted by AAB members for fall and spring, a few questions came up that were common to several sports. For example, AAB members had asked if there was any flexibility in scheduled strength and conditioning sessions in case a team member wanted to take a class during those times. Aaron answered that it was common practice to afford flexibility in strength and conditioning times. Students taking a class during their team's scheduled time could do their strength and conditioning at other times. He said that it was also quite common for coaches to ask their team members to attend, say, two strength and conditioning sessions per week, even though more than two sessions might be built into the team's overall schedule.

Another common question concerned the actual amount of time needed to attend a scheduled practice. For example, could a student-athlete with a scheduled practice at 3 PM take a MWF 2 PM class? Aaron answered that this varied somewhat by sport and especially by whether or not a particular team needed to use off-campus practice facilities. For example, he said that when the golf team had a scheduled practice at 1 PM, team members needed to be finished with class by 12PM in order to get over to the golf course in time for 1 PM practice. Aaron added that coaches generally tried to give student-athletes some flexibility on practice times when these conflicted with needed classes. For example, if a particular team member needed to take a science lab one afternoon per week, that team member might be allowed to skip or shorten practice for that day. However, he added that this varied by sport as well. In individual sports, like

track and field, it might be easier for a coach to afford some practice flexibility, because it might be easier for a team member to practice on his or her own. In team sports, like basketball, where the effectiveness of practice depends more on the whole team being present, this might be more difficult.

Several questions also arose concerning the schedules for Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and other in-season or post-season tournaments. For example, does the entire team need to be present for the entire tournament schedule? Can tournament schedules be arranged to take better advantage of Sundays so as to minimize missed class time?

Aaron answered that the length of time team members needed to be present at a tournament differed somewhat by sport. In swimming, for example, he said that all team members generally swam each day and needed to be present for the entire time. In golf, team members need to be present for a practice round and then all rounds of competition. However, each school is represented at the ACC Championships by just five men and five women. In basketball, teams usually return home as soon as they are eliminated from competition, so the length of the tournament depends on the team's success.

Aaron was not sure how much flexibility the ACC might have with respect to tournament schedules. He did believe that more limited flight schedules on Sunday might limit the use of Sundays as the final day of tournament competition. He also pointed out that the ACC imposes its own limits on how early teams are allowed to leave campus for a tournament and that these limits are generally more stringent than those imposed by the NCAA.

Another question that came up with respect to more than one sport was whether or not practice schedules could be juggled between MWF and TTH to give student-athletes more flexibility for taking classes. For example, if a team practiced in the afternoon on MWF, classes could be taken in the morning on those days, but if practice occurred in the morning on TTH, that would allow afternoon classes to be taken on those two days. Aaron felt that, for teams using off-campus practice facilities, possibilities for doing this were often dictated by the availability of the practice facilities and by the logistics of transporting the team to and from the practice site.

Next, there was considerable discussion of the lengthy (56 games each) competition schedules in both baseball and softball. One AAB member said that many players were mentally and physically exhausted by the late stages of the season in addition to the toll that the season takes on their studies. Aaron pointed out that the problem had actually become somewhat worse, since NCAA legislation that went into effect this year pushed the permissible date for the first competition later in February without reducing the number of games. Whereas the teams used to play 3 games on the weekend and usually one during the week, the shorter available period for games now often results in two mid-week games.

Related to the health and welfare of baseball/softball student-athletes, there was some discussion of what activities count toward NCAA limits on the number of hours spent on

practice and competition in a week. Aaron stated that any competition day counted as 3 hours of activity, even if the actual time spent on pre-game practice and the competition itself might exceed 3 hours.

Some AAB members felt that BC should voluntarily decide to play fewer than the maximum allowable games. Aaron thought that the response from Athletics would be that it is difficult to be competitive in student-athlete recruiting if you don't play a full schedule. There was then some discussion of whether the ACC could collectively agree to limit the number of games below the NCAA maximum. Aaron said that this was feasible in principle and thought that the Ivy League had adopted such a measure. However, in view of the prominence of baseball in the ACC and the conference's aspirations to field national championship-caliber teams, he didn't believe the ACC schools were likely to agree to this.

There was then some discussion of whether BC could elect not to compete in the ACC in baseball and then voluntarily reduce the scheduled number of games. Aaron responded that a practical difficulty for this suggestion is the fact that most teams compete in a conference and conference games are typically scheduled over weekends. This might make it difficult to schedule opponents on weekend days. The possibility was also raised that the sports in which BC would compete in the ACC may have been part of the negotiations when BC joined the ACC. While not all ACC schools sponsor every sport in which the ACC competes, no one present could think of an example of an ACC school that sponsored a sport but did not participate in ACC competition in that sport.

In response to a question about the likelihood of reducing the allowable season through new NCAA legislation, Aaron gave a brief rundown of the NCAA legislative process. He pointed out that, as a result of concerns over the low Academic Progress Rates (APR) in baseball generally, a working group had recommended several pieces of baseball legislation that had been enacted. These included, for example, a stipulation that if a baseball student-athlete were not academically eligible for competition in the fall semester (even if his team had no scheduled fall competitions), he could not then be eligible for competition the following spring. This measure was designed to preclude baseball student-athletes from neglecting their studies during the spring season and then making up any deficiencies the following fall. However, the package of baseball legislation that was enacted did not include any reduction in the number of games per season.

Some AAB members recommended that BC drop baseball altogether and suggested that Bob Taggart, as Faculty Athletics Representative, make this recommendation to Director of Athletics Gene DeFilippo. There was also a suggestion that the AAB might invite some baseball and softball players to a meeting next fall to hear more about problems that their sports' schedules may impose on them. However, some thought that this might put these individual students unfairly on the spot. This in turn led to reiteration of a suggestion made at the last AAB meeting that all student-athletes be surveyed anonymously each year, in a manner similar to course evaluations, to assess their experience in their sport as well as any problems they might face.

Finally, there was discussion of the possibility of designating a staff member in Athletics as an ombudsman to advocate for student-athletes on welfare issues. As an example, one AAB member believed that a number of senior student-athletes in rowing had elected not to participate in their sport this year because participating would require them to compete in a regatta over Commencement weekend. The regatta is scheduled to take place on Sunday, May 18, so seniors on the team may have been able to get back in time for the Commencement ceremony itself on May 19, but, at a minimum, they would have had to miss Commencement-related activities on Sunday. It was suggested that an ombudsman might be able to work to reach some resolution of conflicts of this type.

Aaron responded that there was no one person currently in Athletics who plays this role. He felt that being alert to student-athlete welfare was a shared responsibility of the entire Athletics staff. He also said that each sport had an Associate Athletics Director Sport administrator who evaluated the sport each year on a variety of dimensions, including student-athlete welfare. Aaron felt that Senior Associate Athletics Director Jody Mooradian probably came closest to filling an ombudsman's type of role, but that she bore no official "ombudsman" designation.