

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Faculty Athletics Committee
Minutes of Meeting: March 4, 2014

Present: **Committee Members:** Lissa Broome, Carol Folt, Beverly Foster, Paul Friga, Barbara Osborne, Andy Perrin, Joy Renner, John Stephens, Kimberly Strom-Gottfried, Deborah Stroman

Athletic Department Personnel: Bubba Cunningham

Other Advisers: Michelle Brown

Guests: Amanda Albright (DTH), Debbi Clarke (Consultant working with the Student-Athlete Academic Initiative Working Group), Chris Faison (Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling), Kevin Westerman (law student)

I. Preliminary Matters

Following introductions of all present, the minutes for February 4 and February 14 were corrected and approved.

II. Athletic Director's Remarks

Bubba Cunningham reported that the Women's Lacrosse and the Women's Soccer teams visited the White House on March 3 (at UNC expense) as part of a celebration of their recent NCAA national championships along with teams from other schools earning NCAA championships.

III. Black Student-Athletes

Professor Deborah Stroman led a discussion about race, power, and privilege and how this affects our black student-athletes. She referred to a study from the University of Pennsylvania Center for the Study of Race and Equity in the Education, "Black Male Student-Athletes and Racial Inequities in Division I College Sports," https://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/sites/gse.upenn.edu/equity/files/publications/Harper_Williams_and_Blackman_%282013%29.pdf, which was posted on the committee's Sakai site to be read by committee members in advance of the meeting. Professor Stroman noted the negative visual effect of primarily black players being coached by primarily white men. She described her goals for the discussion as being (1) to disturb the committee so that members would be interested in learning more about racial issues, including critical race theory; (2) to encourage committee members to interact more with people who do not look like them and to see and acknowledge differences in race, rather than be color blind; and (3) to be cognizant of the consequences of racism. Professor Stroman said she would post on Sakai an article called "Race without Racism," and information about an upcoming workshop on racial analysis.

Professor Stroman encouraged UNC to move the dial on this issue. We need to understand unintentional as well as intentional racism and how that might lead to the exploitation of black student-athletes. She suggested that the University focus on programming for black students that would help the campus feel more like a HBCU, with events designed so black students do not feel so alone. She urged that black male student-athletes become more engaged with the general student-body. She said the black students on campus do not know the black student-athletes and that isolation of the student-athletes is a problem.

Chris Faison from the Center for Student Success and Academic Counseling (CSSAC) said that CSSAC is trying to start an exit interview process with black students who leave the University before completing their degrees. He noted that most black students who leave are academically eligible, but leave for reasons related to a host of factors, including their comfort level within the University, a feeling of isolation within their major, or family issues.

Mr. Cunningham noted that the graduation rate for student-athletes, including black student-athletes, is higher at private institutions than it is at public institutions. Of the top ten schools in the report by graduation rates, Penn State is the only public institution listed. Moreover, the ten lowest schools on the graduation rate list in the report were all public institutions. Mr. Cunningham wondered whether the private schools are attracting a different cohort of students or are doing something different with their students that leads to better outcomes.

Chancellor Folt commented on a lunch that she recently held with the captains from the fall sports teams and discussion that took place about orientation. This might be an area where the private institutions do a better job. Many private institutions have short, pre-school trips for new students where they first establish connections. Students' start on campus is important and we need to consider opportunities to socialize among new students outside of the team atmosphere. Professor Osborne noted that our First-Year Seminars (especially if in the fall semester) can play a role here. Professor Renner noted that not all First-Year Seminar instructors are receptive to student-athletes in their classes because of the participatory structure of many of the seminars and concerns about missed classes. Professor Broome wondered whether student-athletes' community service work could be done with other student groups to help integrate student-athletes with other students.

It was also reported that at Duke every student-athlete has a mentor and that the mentors come from a broad range of backgrounds. Professor Stroman cautioned that sometimes there can be too much mentoring or the mentoring can look like trying to "fix" black student-athletes. She believes that it was important to provide black role models for black student-athletes. Professor Foster suggested that there was no single solution and that the University should develop a multi-pronged approach to addressing these issues.

Chancellor Folt suggested that perhaps faculty could be incentivized through grants or work with the Center for Faculty Excellence to attack these issues and share ideas with others.

IV. Chancellor's Remarks

Chancellor Folt summarized recent discussions about NCAA governance that would permit the five large athletic conferences (including the ACC) to have autonomy to adopt certain governing principles that would affect only the schools in those conferences and not the rest of Division I. Areas that are likely to be addressed include (1) an increased role and representation of student-athletes in the governance structure; (2) educational opportunities, including degree completion; (3) time demands on student-athletes, including dead periods; (4) health and well-being; (5) increased resources for student-athletes; and (6) academic preparedness and progression.

Chancellor Folt also discussed the ACC's strategic branding effort which has identified the academic strength of conference schools as distinguishing our conference from others.

The committee also considered how away games and foreign travel could be used to enhance the student-athlete experience by turning a burden (team travel away from school) into an opportunity (to learn about new places and cultures, perhaps with a faculty member present)

Chancellor Folt spoke about the independent counsel recently engaged to address unanswered questions about the course irregularities in the AFAM department. The counsel will be considering information collected by the District Attorney and go wherever that information and other independent investigation leads him.

V. SAAC Focus Groups

Professor Renner asked for feedback on the outline of questions for the Student-Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC) focus groups within a week.

VI. Closed Session

Upon a motion that was seconded and adopted, the committee went into closed session to discuss disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential. By motion, duly seconded, and adopted the committee returned to open session.

VII. Policy and Procedure Development

Professor Renner asked for feedback on whether the University Ombudsman would be a good place to send student-athletes who were experiencing difficulty with faculty members. Professor Renner had discussed this possibility with the Ombuds Office which was willing to be an intake point for these issues. The Ombuds Office could provide a variety of support to students from coaching them on how to deal with a particular situation to serving as a mediator between the student and the faculty member. The Ombuds Office says that their efforts work best when done at the lowest level possible without escalating the issue by taking it to a higher level. Part of their process is not to keep formal records, but they would be willing to talk with the committee about whether there are troubling trends or a need to change the institution's culture in certain areas. This could become part of our larger effort to educate faculty about how to improve communication and interactions with student-athletes in their classes.

Dr. Michelle Brown asked if the committee could review a draft of a policy regarding proctoring exams for student-athletes who were missing exams because of travel related to an away competition. Currently, ASPSA staff are not allowed to proctor the exams of student-athletes in this situation. The draft policy, however, permits this as a last resort if other proctoring options are not available. The Committee thought the draft provided a number of options from which faculty could choose according to the type of test involved and in the interest of fairness to the student-athlete.

VIII. Planning for Spring Semester Work

Professor Renner noted the planning items listed on the agenda and reminded the committee about its second meeting this month on March 19 at Chancellor Folt's home.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lissa Broome