Athletic Board  
Wednesday, April 21, 2010  
Holmes Student Center Room #406, 1:00p.m.

Present:  Terry Bishop (chair), Leanne Vandecreek, Paul Bauer, Todd Latham, Tim Aurand, Jan Rintala, Joe Matty, Jeff Compher, Earl Hansen, Connie Fox, Steve Sliga, Marcia Dick, Matt Streb, Adam Kiel (male student-athlete representative), Anna Coil (female student-athlete representative).

Guests:  Dee Abrahamson, Sr. Assoc AD/Internal; Debra Boughton, Assoc. AD/Business Affairs; Robert Collins, Deputy Director of Athletics

I.  Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:05pm)

II. Approved of February 17, 2010 Meeting Minutes

E. Hansen made a motion to approve the February 17, 2010 minutes.  P. Bauer seconded the motion.

J. Rintala submitted one minor correction to the minutes.  Having no other corrections or deletions, the motion was carried unanimously.

M. Streb then asked if there was an update on the wooden bat league.  J. Compher responded that the group will not be utilizing our campus facilities but they will be playing in Sycamore.  Athletics does not have approval to sell alcohol here which is one of the league’s requests.  State legislature has approved selling alcohol only at Illinois-Chicago and Illinois-Champaign-Urbana.

III. Faculty Athletics Representative – Jan Rintala

A. Winter Sport Academic All-MAC Student-Athletes

   Vince Castillo and Pat McLemore – Wrestling  
   Xavier Silas – Men’s Basketball  
   Jenner Sio – Indoor Track & Field

   We had some other sport athletes who were not selected as All-MAC First Team but did receive honorable mention.

B. Currently evaluating the first round of GSR data before it is submitted.

C. Every year, all members of the coaching staff who are involved in off-campus recruiting must pass a certification exam.  She will be proctoring those exams in late May or early June.

D. Yesterday the Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Education released their new interpretations of Title IX especially as it relates to the third prong
(accommodation of interests and abilities of the underrepresented population) that we have used to demonstrate compliance with Title IX through a survey.

One of the big pieces was that under the recent Bush administration, the designation was that anyone not responding to the interests and abilities survey could be counted as a ‘no interest’. The new guidelines say that is no longer the case. Something that may be relevant to us is that the new guidelines state if an institution is using the survey, surveying the undergraduate population is not enough to demonstrate compliance with prong #3.

Jan went on to say that if a survey is designed to see if current offerings are not meeting needs, if there were to be an athlete who is capable of competing at the Division I level, recognize that you can use that and suggesting other kinds of things to be considered such as club sports with an interest in moving up to intercollegiate competition, competitive sports within the service region, etc. Supporters of wrestling have already come out in opposition to this. T. Bishop asked J. Rintala to forward the information to him electronically.

J. Compher stated that D. Abrahamson will be attending Office for Civil Rights meetings on Friday in Chicago and then on to NCAA meetings on Sunday and Monday. T. Bishop said today is not the time to begin responding but in the fall, will have to get the Equity/Diversity subcommittee to address this issue. M. Streb asked if NIU Athletics uses prong #3. D. Abrahamson responded that Athletics did not count non-responses from the last survey. She added that NIU is still waiting to hear from OCR on the pending case.

J. Rintala added that institutions can still use surveys but they would be in addition to something else. T. Bishop said the question is whether the survey was used as a principle means of demonstrating compliance. It sounds as if there needs to be additional information. Other sports within NIU’s service region have been looked at. M. Streb asked about the students in the club sports and whether because of interest there NIU would have to add something. T. Bishop indicated that there is presently no simple answer. If there was interest within this service region in something NIU doesn’t offer, the question is did they go elsewhere because there is no opportunity to complete here. It is unclear if we could answer that. J. Rintala said there are more guidelines available so to keep reading papers and periodicals. She would expect that groups not only about support responding to this but also groups with affirmation action policies, in general. T. Bishop said the Equity/Diversity subcommittee will be working on that in the future. He also noted that a chairperson needs to be identified for that group.

**IV. Subcommittees**

A. Equity/Diversity – T. Bishop Waiting for information from OCR and Title IX seminars from Dee.
B. Budget – P. Bauer
   Will be handled under New Business.

C. Student-Athlete Wellbeing – M. Streb
   No report.

D. External Relations – T. Latham
   No report.

V. New Business

A. 2010 Football Comp Ticket Policy
   P. Bauer reported that the policy being presented today is the same as last year.
   E. Hansen made a motion to approve the 2010 Football comp ticket policy as presented. C. Fox seconded the motion.

Question was raised as to what happens if the number of tickets allowed is lower than the number of tickets used. That would result in an audit finding. Conversely, if the number of tickets used is much lower than those allowed, the suggestion has been that the number of allowed tickets be lowered.

P. Bauer asked if comp tickets can be counted toward attendance. J. Compher stated that they can be. When using paid attendance, a percentage of the price of the highest-priced ticket is used. Athletics uses paid tickets when reporting Football attendance.

Having no further questions or discussion, motion carried unanimously.

B. Athletics Cost Containment Measures – D. Boughton
   With the focus on campus currently on the budget, she thought it would be good to share with the Board what Athletics is doing in response to the current budget situation.

One of Athletics’ initiatives for the year is cost containment. Three areas have been identified to be addressed: cost identification, cost reduction and cost elimination. On April 1, a new process was rolled out on cost identification and to strategically identify resources before purchasing items or traveling.

Cost reduction has been going on for a long time and is not a new focus for the department. There is a general philosophy for the sports on regional scheduling (not flying to competitions as much as possible) which the sport ADs and coaches are really moving forward. There are some issues with Baseball and Softball because of the early spring weather conditions here and also some existing contracts but looking ahead, they will work within those parameters.

Secondary insurance is up for renewal and the focus is to manage those resources better. She and the head athletics trainer are working with local providers and the student-athletes’ insurance to identify cost saving measures.
Technology is another area which makes sense to focus on. There are new copiers in the department which also have scanning capabilities helping to cut down on the number of hard copies made.

Athletics has also implemented GradesFirst software which provides many benefits to the SAASS staff, sport ADs and coaches and it relates to electronic grade reports and tutoring reports. The use of this software has also resulted in better responses from the instructors relative to student-athletes’ grades.

Athletics is exploring work-study options for some of the areas in the department. It would not be applicable to all areas because it is not an option for areas which receive ticket revenue.

Working hard to get out-of-state student-athletes to switch residency to in-state. That move helps the scholarship budget, insurance costs, etc. E. Hansen asked about going to the IBHE with this. He is aware that SIU has done so and it might be something NIU should look at. J. Compher stated that there is a group on campus looking at that and Athletics would not want to duplicate those efforts. Reciprocal agreements are important and there has been lots of discussion but we will need to watch to see where it goes. In the meantime, there are advantages in looking at the process to see how student-athletes could get in-state residency as a means of cost savings. J. Matty said that the University will have a decision at the end of May.

D. Boughton continued her report by stating that Athletics is continuing to follow up on the missed class days policy which will also help with cost savings.

Expendable endowments is another area where there are some funding options and Athletics is working to identify those.

The University’s partnership with ISP also translates to cost reduction because ISP absorbs some of the costs for Athletics in several areas, one of which is media (TV and radio). The relationship is a very positive one and it is going very well.

Boughton then opened the floor to questions or comments. P. Bauer suggested that it sounds like the ISP representatives here are some of the best in the country. J. Compher agreed that the relationship is very positive and has given Athletics an opportunity to reconnect with past accounts. The ISP representatives are both NIU alums which helps bring credibility to what Athletics is doing.

C. Sports Update – J. Compher

1. Began the report by saying the University’s True North campaign wrapped up its final phase which was to challenge every department to participate. Athletics is very proud to say the department’s participation was 100% in giving back to the University. It is good to see that level of support. A few years ago, the percentage of participation was in the 30% range but the intent over the last few years was to go to 100%. Department most closely following Athletics’ percentage is the College of Business with 84%.
2. Personnel
Have a couple of retirements coming up. Bobbie Cesarek, who was first the Women’s Gymnastics coach and then the Associate AD/Compliance, will be retiring at the end of May.

Robert Collins, the Deputy Director of Athletics, will be retiring at the end of June. Retirement functions are in the process of being scheduled. Congratulations also to Robert Collins on receiving the Deacon Davis Award yesterday.

3. The University is currently going through a branding and marketing effort. Kathy Buettner is leading that effort and will be meeting with the head coaches as a focus group in that regard. Since they are ambassadors it is a positive to include them in the process. They will be meeting with her for approximately 90 minutes next week.

4. Football will be playing Iowa at Soldier Field in 2012 over Labor Day weekend. Looking forward to that game. People remember the last game there are also very excited about it. NIU will be playing Wisconsin at Soldier Field next year, as well. Our goal is to play there once every four years. It helps our coaches when they can tell recruits that we play there on a periodic basis. S. Sliga asked if the Athletic Department is leveraging those tickets. J. Compher indicated that people are being told that when the away games information is released and tickets are available for purchase, they would need to be a member of HASF and also a Football season ticket holder. It places more value on them in that way. The same will hold with the Soldier Field tickets. HASF members and Football season ticket holders will be seated first. Numbers for both those areas have increased this year.

P. Bauer said as it relates to Soldier Field, it seems to be a fair amount of work to get into that venue. It is possible to schedule there more than one year at a time? J. Compher responded that it is pretty much scheduled through 2014 so the earliest would be beyond that date. M. Streb asked if there has been any attempt to get a Big Ten team into Huskie Stadium. J. Compher stated that we are always trying and that conversations are ongoing.

T. Bishop mentioned that games at Soldier Field present an opportunity to reconnect with alums and friends and get them interested in coming to games in DeKalb. J. Matty said the Alumni Association is in support of the games at Soldier Field and would love to have games there every year.

5. This coming Saturday is the spring scrimmage along with lots of other activities. Athletics has partnered with the Alumni Association for the Grad Bash. The tugs event is already getting positive reviews so people are coming out to watch. The Tailgate Showdown begins at 11am that morning on the west side. There is a punt-pass-kick event sponsored by CAB. Athletics would like to make this weekend a sort of spring homecoming. Softball and Men’s Tennis have home matches that day, as well.

E. Certification – M. Streb
The Athletics Department recently received confirmation from the NCAA that it has been certified without conditions. That is the highest recognition an athletics program can receive.
VI. Announcements / Adjournment

T. Bishop announced that executive committee will meet next Wednesday, April 28, at 1pm and the full Board has a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 5.

J. Compher stated that Women’s Soccer has a match scheduled tonight at Huskie Stadium versus Wisconsin at 7:30pm.

M. Streb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. E. Hansen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm

The next meeting of the executive committee will be Wednesday, April 28, 2010, at 1pm in the athletics admin conference room in Convocation Center #200. The full Board will meet on Wednesday, May 5, 2010, at 1pm in Holmes Student Center Room #406.