Athletic Board
Wednesday, September 15, 2010
Holmes Student Center #406, 1:00p.m.

Present: Terry Bishop (Chair), Ken Zehnder, TJ Lusher, Paul Bauer, Todd Latham, Jan Rintala, Jeff Compher, Connie Fox, Marcia Dick, Matt Streb, Xavier Silas, Meaghan Bennett.

Guests: Dee Abrahamson, Sr. Assoc AD/Internal; Shelley Binegar, Assoc AD/Development and Marketing; Debra Boughton, Assoc AD/Business Affairs; Christian Spears, Sr. Assoc AD/Administration.

I. Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:08pm)

II. Board Introductions

III. Approval of June 16, 2010 Meeting Minutes

K. Zehnder made a motion to approve the June 16, 2010, meeting minutes. T. Latham seconded the motion.

Corrections were submitted by J. Rintala and T. Latham. Following those submissions, motion was carried unanimously.

IV. Introduction of New Athletics Department Staff Member

A. Kathi Bennett – Head Women’s Basketball Coach

J. Compher stated that this past April, Athletics learned that a new head women’s basketball coach was going to need to be hired. After a 22-day-long process, Kathi Bennett was hired. Athletics is very pleased that they were able to attract such an outstanding person as Coach Bennett. She has been successful at every level including Division III and has taken two programs to the NCAA tournament. She was instrumental in the turnaround at Wisconsin. As you think about the Women’s Basketball program and its future, it couldn’t be in better hands. Coach Bennett cares about the athletes and their experience.

K. Bennett stated how proud she is to be a Huskie. When asked where she is from she is happy to say that she is from Northern Illinois University because it is her home, it is where she wants to end her career and where she fits in.

She went on to say that she has hired one of the best staffs she has ever been part of. Marsha Frese is the associate head coach and the recruiting coordinator. She cares about all of the right things. She has great contacts and Coach Bennett has a great deal of trust in her. Joe Conroy, who was formerly a director of operations here before he went on to become a head coach for both girls and boys teams. He is a hard worker. EC Hill has great connections in Chicago and concern for the current players. She loves NIU. Danielle Gratton, the director of operations, is a hard worker, wants to coach and was a great player at Ball State. She finished her internship with the Atlanta Dream and then got her masters degree in one year.
The team has a long way to go but they are not going to take shortcuts. Character comes first and the team will do things the right way. When you see them play on their worst day, you will have no idea what they are doing but if you’re there on their best day, you will see what they are trying to do. You will be able to tell what their identity is and who they are. They have no choice but to play hard. They need to play defense, establish getting stops, getting back every possession, and keeping people out of the lane. They will be playing team ball. That is the foundation and the team will have to learn to play hard, to play smart and to play together. They must overcome individual play which will take some work but they will get there. Please come out and watch the team. Practices are not closed so come by anytime.

V. Faculty Athletics Representative – Jan Rintala

A. Volleyball game last night was really a tremendous event.
B. After the June meeting, the American Volleyball Coaches Association awarded their AVCA Team Academic Awards and NIU’s Volleyball team was one of the teams to be recognized. That is the second year in a row.
C. A letter from the Ohio faculty senate was received by NIU’s faculty senate regarding the cost of athletics and how many programs are subsidized. J. Rintala was prepared in advance for this topic but only a couple of faculty members commented on the letter. They are quite supportive of Athletics’ place on campus and acknowledge that it is part of the university experience. The president of Faculty Senate then asked if it would be advisable to have Jeff Compher present a financial report. It was agreed that at some point, he will be asked to do so at a Resource, Space and Budget subcommittee meeting. J. Rintala has volunteered to sit on that committee in case they discuss the issue.
D. Will be going to the Division IA Faculty Athletics Representatives meeting in Dallas at the end of this month. One of the topics to be discussed is concussions and concern for student-athlete safety and wellbeing. Will also be discussing the issue of agents and amateurism, especially in the sports of football, baseball, and basketball. Discussion is also anticipated regarding initiatives coming from academic concerns. The meeting will overlap a bit with the Division IA Directors of Athletics meeting. Should have something to report at the next Athletic Board meeting.

VI. Committees

T. Bishop stated that there are no subcommittee reports today but we do need to get the subcommittees populated. We ask that you sign up today for a subcommittee. It may be that we will assign people to committees if you don’t indicate your choice.

T. Bishop went on to give a brief explanation of what each subcommittee’s focus is. Equity-Diversity works on matters relative to gender and diversity issues. The budget subcommittee works on budget issues and financial systems but also ticket prices, complimentary ticket policies, etc. The student-athlete wellbeing subcommittee looks at the full range of the student experience from yearly matriculation to progress toward degree, housing and dining, interactions with peers and faculty and staff in the Athletics Department. The external affairs subcommittee works on a wide variety of areas such as media, community members, faculty, etc.
Each of the Athletics Department liaisons has been asked to develop a charge of things to be accomplished by the subcommittees. The equity-diversity subcommittee clearly has a task in terms of surveying incoming students this year. The budget subcommittee also has a pretty clear agenda for the year. Matt Streb is the chair of the Student-Athlete Wellbeing subcommittee. Todd Latham is the chair of the External Affairs subcommittee and Paul Bauer is the chair of the Budget subcommittee. We need a chair for the Equity-Diversity subcommittee.

VII. New Business

A. Missed Class/GPA Report – Dee Abrahamson

D. Abrahamson distributed copies of the Missed Class/GPA report which contains many years of data. When looking at a team's academic performance, rather than just looking at a single year, this gives a fuller picture (FY03 to FY10). As you look at the GPAs, you can see if a team would need to adjust its schedule to keep athletes in class longer. Over time, the data is pretty consistent. J. Rintala asked about sports with non-traditional season and if that is included in this information. D. Abrahamson said both semesters are included. For example, Softball and Tennis are competing now but Soccer and Volleyball will be competing in the spring. P. Bauer indicated that though a team's number shows it missing a certain number of days, student-athletes may not actually be missing classes, depending on their schedule. T. Bishop asked if there is a mechanism to track exactly how much class is being missed. It would just be for informational purposes. He would be more interested in exactly how many classes are being missed. It would be of value to include that type of information on this report. There might be a way to identify areas and get support systems in place. D. Abrahamson responded that the coaches don't travel everyone on the team. Some athletes may meet up with the team at their competition site. K. Zehnder asked if advisors in SAASS work with the athletes when they are registering for classes. T. Bishop said during the NCAA certification process, he was part of a committee that looked at that. In some cases, they take those things into consideration and other times they do not and look at it as the student-athlete's responsibility. In other departments, they get a list from SAASS of the practice times and they try to advise students to take certain class sections. J. Rintala stated that once athletes know their schedules, they go to their SAASS advisor and that is the point at which SAASS has the practice and competition schedules. C. Fox asked what else happens with this information and noted that there are no correlations on this chart but they could be run. D. Abrahamson said these are the averages of the 17 teams. C. Fox would like to run a set of correlations and offered to do so. She will be sent the information.

T. Bishop went on to say that through NCAA certification outcomes, the Athletic Board is to be reviewing this information on a regular basis. Though this information had not been presented in quite some time, it will be a regular presentation. NIU's student-athletes' academic performance is outstanding but we need to continue to review this information to head off any problems. J. Compher added that another indicator of success is GPA, GSR and APR, all of which will be reported to this group. If athletes stay at NIU and complete their eligibility, 94% of them graduate. Shows the value of retention and the value of being part of a team.

B. Academic Missed Class Policy – Jan Rintala

In reviewing certification process, it appeared that Athletics needed to look at this policy more closely. It was important to develop an internal policy related to missed class time.
M. Streb, J. Rintala, F. St. Clair, C. Spears, J. Compher and, eventually, the executive team worked on the policy. It was developed as a guideline for the coaching staff in terms of thinking about when coaches are scheduling and expectations for athletes about the priority of academics here.

This policy includes several pieces. There is a statement of philosophy, NCAA travel rules, the finals week policy and some additional guidelines for coaches about expectations in scheduling and the athletics administration’s expectations for the athletes. Additionally, to reinforce the academic piece, there is a bit of cost containment focus (i.e., not traveling individuals who are injured). The policy steps up the role of the sport AD to make sure the sports are adhering to the policy. J. Compher said this has been discussed with the head coaches, with the student-athletes at a team meeting and it is also included in the student-athlete handbook.

T. Bishop asked for support where there is a potential of conference-required competition in the form of a championship or bowl. In those situations, should there be something included where the sports for which that might be an issue are identified? That way, instructors would be aware at the beginning of the semester. He feels there should be a means of communication which would include reference to a bowl or additional competition of that sort. J. Rintala responded that it could be addressed via the SAASS office to include that in the letter the student-athletes take to their instructors. She went on to ask if it wouldn’t be better notifying instructors when the situation arises. S. Binegar asked about the possibility of adding a disclaimer on the SAASS letter that additional absences could occur should the team qualify to participate. M. Streb asked about instructors who limit the number of missed classes they allow. J. Rintala said that situation does happen sometimes. K. Zehnder referred to the statement that some sport programs may have more stringent guidelines. J. Compher said there are sports in that situation and they did not want this policy to be the only policy. Some coaches have other rules about being in class that don’t pertain to travel.

C. FY11 Men’s/Women’s Basketball Ticket Prices – D. Boughton

There is no increase in the season ticket prices being presented today. The focus this year was to do more of the mini plans and walk-ups to get them to the events. Introducing the mini-plan at this point rather than in the spring. Athletics is refocusing on the casual fan.

S. Binegar said that season ticket sales over the last couple of years were studied and those numbers are decreasing. People like the Football mini-plans. It is difficult to get them to commit to a full season. Athletics wants to apply the mini-plan theory to Basketball. We need to be realistic that people cannot commit to a 15-16 game schedule. The mini-plans give them flexibility and they can choose which games they want to attend. A surprising figure was that mini-plans were renewed at 29% but those people have moved up to full season tickets. The Huskie Value Pack is 10 tickets that fans can use at either men’s or women’s basketball games. We want to encourage them to attend the games.

TJ Lusher made a motion to approve the FY11 Men’s/Women’s Basketball Ticket Prices as presented. C. Fox seconded the motion.

Having no further discussion, the motion was carried unanimously.
D. **FY11 Men's/Women's Basketball Complimentary Ticket Policy**

D. Boughton reported that there are no significant changes from the previous year’s policy. Removed the reference to graduate assistant coaches because Basketball cannot have them. This policy is not much different than last year.

K. Zehnder made a motion to approve the FY11 Men's/Women's Basketball Complimentary Ticket Policy as presented. TJ Lusher seconded the motion.

Having no further discussion, motion was carried unanimously.

E. **FY10 Fourth Quarter Report**

D. Boughton distributed copies of the FY10 fourth quarter report and reviewed areas of note.

The tuition waiver allocation had an unexpected increase as the IBHE policy on the gender equity pool (1% of all tuition income) was reviewed and recalculated which resulted in additional funds. The calculation for FY11 has been changed.

A year ago, the university contracted with a multimedia rights company, ISP, and Athletics has received income from this partnership.

Debra went on to say that corrections to the Men's and Women's Basketball projections were made for this year. As it relates to Sport Medicine, for FY11 Athletics has split supplies and operations and insurance premiums and claims into two accounts. Athletics is entering into a contract for secondary insurance which uses an aggregate. That process will be better in FY11 because it will help Athletics see where overages stem from. Overall, the teams did a great job managing their funds. If there are any questions, please contact her.

F. **FY11 Proposed Budget**

The proposed budget being presented today is in a bit of a different format. A new area shown is funds Athletics receives from renting the Nelson Suite at the Convocation Center. Transfers are monies we received from the NCAA which Athletics directed to summer school needs. Those monies are anticipated for FY11 but are not being budgeted. P. Bauer said summer school waiving of tuition is a more prominent issue because more students are enrolling in summer. D. Boughton said it will pay dividends as students graduate on time.

J. Rintala made a motion to approve the FY11 proposed budget as presented. M. Streb seconded the motion.

P. Bauer said the usual supplemental information is not included but is still available from D. Boughton. Please contact her with any questions you may have about the budget.

Having no further discussion, motion was carried unanimously.
G. Athletics Department Report – J. Compher
   1. Update on Jerry Kill
      Don’t think Coach Kill fully recovered from a surgery he had two weeks ago. He just needs to rest and seemed to be doing better when he saw him yesterday.
   2. To follow up on J. Rintala’s comments about the phenomenal atmosphere at the Volleyball game last night, we want to continue. The program is going in the right direction.
   3. During the Faculty-Staff portion of the True North campaign, 100% of the Athletics Department staff contributed to the campaign. The flashlights given to you today signify that commitment.
   4. Want to thank Meaghan and Xavier for their participation as the student-athlete representatives on the Athletic Board this fall.
   5. Two big soccer matches this coming weekend. The men are playing at Northwestern and the women are home against SIU-Edwardsville. P. Bauer mentioned that a Brazilian music student suggested to him having a samba band at the Women’s Soccer game last Friday, which they did. The marching band is going to the Illinois game this coming weekend.

VIII. Adjournment

M. Streb made a motion to adjourn the meeting. K. Zehnder seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

The next meeting of the Athletic Board is Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at 1 pm in Holmes Student Center #406. The executive committee will meet on Wednesday, October 6, 2010, at 1 pm in the athletics administration conference room in Convocation Center #200.