Athletic Board
Wednesday, November 16, 2011
Holmes Student Center Room #306, 1:00pm

Present:  Terry Bishop (Chair), Dave Changnon, TJ Lusher, Paul Bauer, Todd Latham, Don Tidrick, Matt Streb, Jeff Compher, Earl Hansen, Gretchen Schlabach, Hamid Bateni, Jerry Blakemore, Peggy Simonds, Austin Quick.

Guests:  Shelley Binegar, Assoc AD/Development and Marketing; Debra Boughton, Assoc AD/Business Affairs; Christian Spears, Sr. Assoc AD/Administration; Laura Sala, University Counsel.

I.  Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:06pm)

II.  Approval of October 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes

A.  Quick made a motion to approve the October 19, 2011 meeting minutes as presented.  D. Tidrick seconded the motion.  Having no corrections, additions or deletions, the motion was carried unanimously.

III.  Faculty Athletics Representative – J. Rintala

A.  Graduation Success Rate (GSR) Information
   Provided copies of the latest GSR information.  J. Rintala began her report by giving an overview of the report.  Transfers are not counted unless they start with you.  If they start somewhere else, they don’t count and that information is somewhat lost in these data.  Part of academic reform is to develop the GSR.  The data begins with athletes who enroll and then graduate from your institution.  If a student-athlete transfers into your institution, they must leave the institution in good academic standing.  The point of this report is to determine what institutions are doing for athletes for whom they are responsible.

B.  MAC Compliance Audit
   A representative from the Mid-American Conference has been on campus the last couple of days reviewing the compliance unit.  Both M. Streb and she have met with the representative.

C.  Spears added that per NCAA certification, the GSR and FGR (Federal Graduation Rate) information for a small number of sports identified during the last certification cycle were reviewed by the Athletic Board executive committee.

C.  FARA Meeting – M. Streb
   Attended a Faculty Athletics Representatives Association (FARA) meeting last week.  Most of the discussion centered around information coming out of the presidential retreat.  The association is very concerned about the cost of attendance issue from a Title IX standpoint.  The NCAA’s recommendation is not to give $2,000 to each Football player and that is an issue.  For an equivalency sport, the need there is to look at taking more academic aid into account.
There is very strong support for academic reform standards and providing a year of academic readiness. In their first year at a junior college, there would be no competition and the year would not count. This is in an effort to prepare student-athletes academically.

The NCAA’s certification process is going to be reworked and will be much more streamlined. Not all the details have been worked out so more information will be forthcoming.

A presentation was made relative to a student-athlete survey indicating they spend more than 40 hours per week on athletics endeavors.

**IV. Committees**

A. **Equity/Diversity – D. Tidrick**

D. Boughton reported that at the last Athletic Board meeting, there was still a question about the survey. She and C. Spears met with our university legal counsel. There seems to still be an opening as there is no response from the Office for Civil Rights regarding the survey. Based on the file, it appears we have met all of the guidelines. A memo to file was completed stating we had reviewed it and all obligations have been met. We will not be adding a men’s or women’s sport based on the results of our most recent survey.

We do still need to meet the survey requirements in order to meet the third prong of Title IX. Athletics initially considered outsourcing the survey but with our legal counsel’s guidance, we believe it can get done in-house. Fall 2012 was the target for getting the survey completed.

C. Spears said that based on the timing of the last survey, we are obligated to get the survey done in Spring 2013.

B. **Budget – P. Bauer**

D. Boughton distributed copies of the FY12 First Quarter report. The quarter ended on September 30, 2011, so there is not much activity reported. Tracking well on Football revenue. Please let D. Boughton know if you have questions.

C. **Student-Athlete Wellbeing – D. Changnon**

The subcommittee met last month. C. Spears reported that over the summer the athletics administration has been working on strategic planning and D. Changnon would like to see that plan in the near future.

M. Streb and J. Rintala both mentioned the student-athlete exit interviews. The request was made to expand the interview questions to include some about student-athlete wellbeing and not just ask as a student-athlete is leaving but to track their experience here. That information could provide important information, especially in light of the large turnover in Student-Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS).

The subcommittee also discussed the idea that when students are coming to visit, especially those who have done well academically in high school (ACT of 25+ and GPA of 3.0+), we would want them to meet with Honors. That unit is very willing to meet with the students and the subcommittee feels it would be very useful. C. Spears responded that the Athletics Department is in line with the
subcommittee's suggestions and has already met with Honors. Currently there are only 13 student-athletes in Honors. It is an educational effort so Athletics needs to be sure to let the student-athletes know they could fit this into their schedules. Honors could send out a letter to that effect.

E. External Affairs – T. Latham
No report.

V. New Business

A. Athletics Update – J. Compher
1. Volleyball is going to the MAC tournament in Geneva, Ohio, as the top seed in the MAC. Their RPI is currently 16. The team is on a 15-game winning streak and will probably have three or four all-conference players, possibly Player of the Year.
2. Men’s Soccer went to the MAC tournament. Akron lost to Western Michigan and we beat Western Michigan on Sunday. Tomorrow at 1pm Athletics will be hosting the first round of the NCAA tournament. Would really encourage people to come out to support the team so we have a good turnout. Because this is an NCAA tournament, there are no complimentary tickets so they are $10 each. We will be playing Western Illinois University. Our Women’s Basketball team is hosting Western Illinois University tonight so they are bringing a group to the game.
3. Athletics hosted the NCAA Cross Country Regional event this past weekend. A field of 59 teams was here. We had tremendous cooperation and help from the College of Business Dean’s office. The teams were treated to a national caliber event on our campus. Carl Armato, Christian Spears, our game operations staff, and the coaches all did a great job.
4. Last night’s Football game was a nailbiter. We might have the best Football player ever to play here in Chandler Harnish. He had over 500 yards of offense himself. The team plays again on Friday, November 25, at 10am vs Eastern Michigan University. The winner will clinch the MAC West division. Our focus is pushing attendance for that game. Please encourage your friends and family to attend the game. We want to fill Huskie Stadium to honor this team appropriately. They will be the winningest team in the history of Huskie Football, should we win. Today, Athletics is launching a post-season fan site on the Athletics website. There will be information detailing the MAC Championship game in Detroit plus possible bowl information. For the game in Detroit, there will be fan buses, a train from Chicago, and students will receive free tickets to the game. The Huskie Marching Band will also be going to Detroit. Again, once we clinch the West Division, staff will begin taking orders for tickets.
5. With eight wins, there is no doubt that the Football team will go to a bowl game. If we go to the MAC championship game, we will be invited to one of the MAC’s three primary bowls. The GoDaddy.com Bowl is in Mobile, AL, on January 8 vs a Sunbelt team. This bowl does have the first pick this year. The Little Caesar’s Pizza Bowl is in Detroit on December 27 vs a Big Ten team and has the second pick. The third bowl is the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, formerly the Humanitarian Bowl, and is in Boise, ID, on December 17 versus a WAC team. There are secondary agreements with four other bowls: the Gildan New Mexico Bowl in Albuquerque on December 17; the Beef O’Brady’s Bowl in St. Petersburg, FL, on December 20; Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl in San Francisco on December 31; and the BBVA Compass Bowl in Birmingham, AL, on January 7.
D. Tidrick then asked if the Football team does win the championship on December 2, is there anything being planned to acknowledge that? J. Compher indicated that the Athletics Department is working on plans now. In addition, the Athletics Department is working with the Alumni Association on a pre-game tailgate in Detroit that the Alumni Association will be sponsoring at Ford Field. Rooms have already been block at the Renaissance Hotel. Should everything work in NIU’s favor, the Alumni Association is also planning a post-game function. The Foundation will be setting up shuttles to get people from the hotel to Ford Field. S. Binegar added that there is a home Basketball game at 3pm on December 3 and the bowl announcements will be made on December 4.

B. FY13 Football Ticket Prices

1. Single Game / Season Tickets

S. Binegar began discussion by explaining the proposed single game pricing. Noting for Promotional 1, the NCAA regulations allow us only to count a ticket if it sold at 1/3 of the highest priced ticket. For Promotional 2, this would be handled on a case-by-case basis. T. Bishop added for clarification that the group seats can be anywhere. The promotional price of $1 is for Huskie School Band Day. If a ticket is scanned, it counts so those $1 tickets would count in attendance for us.

As it relates to season tickets – Option 1 keeps the season discount percentage the same as it was this year. Option 2 retains the season ticket pricing from this year but at a larger discount. The question becomes whether people would rather keep the same percentage discount or the actual ticket price. It is important to note that the 2013 Football schedule includes only five games at Huskie Stadium.

The floor was then opened to questions or ideas. J. Compher said that today Athletics is asking the Athletic Board to grant the latitude to go with either option as focus group input is still being sought. Athletics would like to give those groups the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Athletics is seeking feedback from the Athletic Board because this group does not meet again until January and is asking for the latitude from this group to decide the best course of action. D. Changnon suggested offering tiered season ticket plans. T. Bishop suggested it could go either way but he suggested keeping the lower pricing to move people up from the mini-plans. S. Binegar asked if there is opposition to either plan. D. Tidrick said everything goes up but it might be off-putting to tie the price of the tickets to the number of games.

T. Latham said one concern is whether we want to pack the Stadium which seems to be important since it helps the game experience. He is interested in getting the focus groups’ thoughts on this.

J. Rintala asked if people got over their feelings about the high price of the Soldier Field tickets? J. Compher responded that NIU sold most of the higher priced tickets at Soldier Field. He feels we got very little push back on pricing. J. Rintala went on to say that her feeling is that prices should increase and supports D. Changnon’s proposal. She only purchases one season ticket but for those who purchase multiple tickets, it is a bigger deal. We are giving people the opportunity to keep their best seats, which is good. T. Bishop added that these prices need to be passed today since Athletics would like to begin marketing and renewals prior to our next meeting.
T. Bishop asked if there is any opposition to approving the pricing and leaving the flexibility up to Athletics? The agreement would be to delegate to the Athletic Department but make it broad enough with parameters in terms of the principles of expecting success, going to the next level, what you will be doing in the future, etc.

With that in mind, the Athletic Board will delegate to J. Compher and accepts the proposal presented with the various options. A. Quick made a motion to approve the ticket options presented or a combination thereof. D. Tidrick seconded the motion.

Having no further discussion, the motion was carried unanimously.

2. Soldier Field Showdown III Ticket Prices
   S. Binegar began by stating that this is a different model next year. It is a revenue share with them for which we have a mutual agreement. There is no discount for the season ticket holders this year. S. Binegar wants to be clear that there is one price per section rather than different ones.

   J. Rintala made a motion to approve the proposed pricing for the Soldier Field Showdown III. TJ Lusher seconded the motion.

   J. Compher and several members of the Athletics Department have met with representatives from the University of Iowa Athletics Department and they are very excited about the game. We share the revenue after $3 million. This plan is better for each institution.

   Having no further discussion, the motion was carried unanimously.

VI. Announcements / Adjournment

   T. Bishop announced that today's meeting is J. Rintala's last Athletic Board meeting as she prepares to retire at the end of December. We want to acknowledge her years of service, professionalism, and quality of effort she brought to the role of Faculty Athletics Representative and he thanks her on behalf of the Athletic Board and the University.

   The next meeting of the Athletic Board will be at 1pm Wednesday, January 18, 2012, the location is yet to be determined. The executive committee will meet on Wednesday, January 11, 2012, at 1:30pm in the Athletics administration conference room in Convocation Center #200.