Athletic Board  
Wednesday, January 16, 2013  
Holmes Student Center Room #506, 1:00pm

Present: Terry Bishop (chair), TJ Lusher, Todd Latham, Don Tidrick, Matt Streb, Joe Bittorf, Gretchen Schlabach, Hamid Bateni, John Moulton, Jerry Blakemore, Peggy Simonds, Bill Cassidy, Lauren Noonan, Paul Julion.

Guests: Carl Armato, Associate AD/Facilities; Shelley Binegar, Associate AD/External Relations; Debra Boughton, Associate AD/Business Operations; Laura Sala, Legal Services.

I. Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:03pm)

II. Approval of November 28, 2012, Meeting Minutes

TJ Lusher made a motion to approve the November 28, 2012 meeting minutes. J. Bittorf seconded the motion.

Following the submission of corrections, the motion was carried unanimously.

III. Faculty Athletics Representative – Matt Streb

A. M. Streb began by reporting on the fall academic performance of the student-athletes. The overall department GPA is 3.0. 62 student-athletes ended with a 4.0 GPA for the fall. Eleven teams had a cumulative GPA above 3.0 and three teams were above 3.5. The student-athletes did an excellent job in the classroom and thanks go to Liz Tovar and the SAASS (Student-Athlete Academic Support Services) staff.

B. The LEaD Huskies nominations deadline was yesterday. M. Streb and J. Compher will meet next week to make the selections.

C. USA Today is doing their annual article about the collegiate funding model for athletics. Information comes up about student fees and when these types of articles come out, it sometimes causes faculty groups to begin discussion of the student fees. If any of you hear discussion relative to that topic among your colleagues, let M. Streb know.

D. Going to MAC meetings in Cleveland at the end of the month with J. Compher and D. Boughton.

T. Bishop congratulated the students and coaches for their academic success and asked which teams had the highest GPAs. M. Streb stated that Women’s Tennis had the highest GPA in the department. Gymnastics and Women’s Golf were both over 3.5 and Men’s Golf earned a 3.4.

J. Blakemore then stated that he had heard a news story on the radio regarding the increase in athletics costs versus academic costs. He suggested that Board members may want to read that story and because of NIU’s participation in the Orange Bowl, the institution could be singled out as an example.

IV. Committees

A. Equity/Diversity – D. Tidrick
No report.
B. Budget – P. Bauer
   No report.

C. Student-Athlete Wellbeing – D. Changnon
   No report.

D. External Relations – T. Latham
   The committee is reviewing the first draft of the Men’s/Women’s Basketball survey, similar to the fall Football survey. T. Latham will report to the Board when the results are received.

V. New Business

A. FY13 Football Ticket Prices – S. Binegar
   S. Binegar presented an overview of the proposed FY13 Football ticket prices and also a rationale behind the pricing. Please note that the 2013 football schedule includes only five home games but next year the schedule goes back to six home games. There are no games this year at Soldier Field.

   The reason for the proposed general public season ticket price of $99 is because of the scheduled five home games, Athletics did not want to drop back too much on the pricing. The increase last year to $120 was in anticipation of dropping back to five home games. Also proposing that in addition to the five game tickets, purchaser would receive a sixth ticket which they can use in the post-season -- either for the MAC championship game or a bowl game. Normally Athletics doesn’t have to purchase the MAC championship game tickets and that has been the case with other bowl games NIU has participated in. However, should we go back to another BCS game, that would be different. Athletics feels it is value added for post-season travel. Purchasers will receive a sheet of six tickets that would include the additional post-season ticket.

   As it relates to the game at Purdue, part of NIU’s agreement is that we receive 1,250 tickets to resell but we retain that money. The plan is to leverage the Purdue game because people must be season ticket holders in order to have the opportunity to purchase the Purdue ticket.

   T. Latham asked if the MAC away game ticket swap was still going to be available this year. S. Binegar stated that J. Compher will bring this up at the MAC meetings coming up at the end of the month but it seemed to go very well and encourages fans to travel to games at other conference institutions.

   TJ Lusher then stated that because NIU Football had such an extraordinary year, in fact numerous years and building on that, she would prefer to look at a stable ticket price. It speaks to the value of the program. $100 for six tickets and the opportunity to swap a ticket is an amazing deal. What that would do is allow the Athletic Department to plan better and allow the fans to budget better. S. Binegar pointed out that NIU Football last year won its first MAC championship in 28 years but 400 season ticket holders dropped last year. TJ feels this is an educational process for the fans, as well.

   G. Schlabach suggested asking faculty and staff who are still in contact with their alumni to share
information from the Athletics Department with them. Keeping Football as a topic of conversation is important.

T. Latham asked about the possibility of adding a message about season tickets to the bottom of the billboards which Kathy Buettner’s unit purchased around the Chicagoland area. S. Binegar explained that the Orange Bowl is an example of lots of marketing taking place but the efforts were not necessarily coordinated across all areas. There is a need to be consistent and coordinated but the Orange Bowl has opened the door to the conversation. She went on to say that Athletics doesn’t have the ability to send information directly to the students but, for the Orange Bowl, was able to do so. That is not typically the case. We need to find the happy medium for sharing information. She has also been told that the vehicle for such information is NIU Today.

TJ Lusher then asked about the Huskieland Plan and why the drop in pricing. S. Binegar stated that only 120 of them were sold. We are still working on the gift card component and may go to offering “Doggie Dollars” instead which, for every Huskieland Plan purchased, the buyer would receive $50 in “Doggie Dollars” to use for parking at the game, concessions or VCB’s tent at the stadium. Athletics wants to provide opportunities for people to bring their families and also get new people coming to the games.

Also noted was the fact that chairback and benchback prices have not been increased since 1997. In an effort to place more focus on ticket sales, Binegar noted that she is adding two additional sales positions to her area as well as a GA position to focus just on students. P. Julion said tailgating for the students was good this season but when the Greeks leave the stadium, many other students leave as well.

TJ Lusher made a motion that we stabilize the ticket prices at $20 and accept all other prices as presented. T. Latham seconded the motion.

D. Boughton added the external group has done a great job figuring out how to appeal to many groups. The plan is to grow fans and retain the momentum. S. Binegar asked J. Moulton about whether the public is expecting Athletics to raise ticket prices this season. He indicated that he has not heard any conversation about that. Athletics will also be looking at game times because the best attendance was at night games.

Having no further discussion, motion was carried unanimously.

B. CPC Update – C. Armato

The skeleton is going up now so there is a great deal of visible progress. Flooring choices are being looked at for the Hall of Champions. It needs to be a non-slip surface that is easy to clean. The recommendation is also that the student-athletes do not walk on the surface with metal cleats. He will be meeting to address the doors leading from the Yordon Center into the CPC and considering the addition of keypads. Steel arrived before the holiday break and another shipment is scheduled to arrive this week. The precast will be arriving the first week of February and should take ten days to complete. Have still lost only three days to bad weather so the project is moving along at a good pace. The sport ADs will be meeting with representatives from Turner Construction and Pat Bell (NIU) about equipment needs before it goes to bid. C. Armato made the
offer to possibly have the March meeting at the Yordon Center followed by a tour of the facility.

VI. Announcement

A. At the next meeting, D. Boughton should present information relative to the Orange Bowl financials and the second quarter report. Also hope to have head coach Rod Carey introduced to the Board at that meeting, as well.

J. Moulton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. T. Latham seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:55pm.

*The next meeting of the Athletic Board is Wednesday, February 20, 2013, at 1:00pm in Holmes Student Center room #306. The Athletic Board executive committee will meet on Wednesday, February 6, 2013, at 1:30pm in the Athletics Administration conference room in Convocation Center #200.*