Athletic Board  
Wednesday, October 17, 2012  
Holmes Student Center Room #406, 1:00pm

**Present:**  Terry Bishop (chair), David Changnon, T.J. Lusher, Todd Latham, Don Tidrick, Matt Streb, Joe Bittorf, Gretchen Schlabach, David Taylor, John Moulton, Peggy Simonds, Rocco Taglia, Paul Julion

**Guests:**  Carl Armato, Associate AD/Facilities; Shelley Binegar, Associate AD/External; Debra Boughton, Associate AD/Business Operations; Christian Spears, Deputy Director of Athletics; Dr. Elizabeth Tovar, Assistant AD/Student-Athlete Academic Support Services

I.  **Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:03pm)**

II.  **Approval of September 19, 2012 Meeting Minutes**

G. Schlabach made a motion to approve the minutes.  J. Bittorf seconded the motion.

Several minor corrections were submitted.  Following those submissions, motion was carried and minutes were approved with corrections.

III.  **Faculty Athletics Representative – M. Streb**

M. Streb began by reporting that the Division I-A Faculty Athletics Representatives organization, of which we are a member, has an academic award which is given to graduating student-athletes.  Four of NIU’s student-athletes were recognized – Ryan Neir (Football), Kristin Hoffman (Volleyball), Jenner Sio (Track & Field), and Kelsie Passolt (Women’s Golf).  They have all had exceptional careers and contributed a great deal to their teams.

Matt said that he is getting ready for the next round of NCAA post-graduate scholarship nominations for the fall and will be submitting for Nabal Jefferson (Football), Mike Miscitti (Men’s Soccer), and Sue Hayes (Volleyball).

IV.  **Committees**

   A.  **Equity/Diversity – D. Tidrick**

   No report.

   B.  **Budget – P. Bauer**

   No report.

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

   Though the committee has no report today, Dr. Liz Tovar, Assistant AD/Student-Athlete Support Services, was introduced.  She has been on board approximately 18 months and is the director of the SAASS unit and reports to Dr. Anne Birberick.  She comes to NIU from Ohio State University.  Dr. Tovar has been asked to provide an overview of her experiences with the SAASS unit since her arrival in DeKalb.
Dr. Tovar explained that the past year in SAASS has been one of change and the unit is moving in a very positive direction. There have been changes in staff, policies, and the unit's overall standards. SAASS has moved to more of a student-focused approach with increased one-on-one student time and building relationships across campus. Not only has communication between SAASS and Athletics been enhanced, it has been enhanced across campus.

Highlights of the year have included the fact that she has four full-time academic coordinators on staff and they are very innovative industrious. Two of them are former student-athletes so they can relate to our current teams. Andy Owen has been here for some time and is very important to the program. John Bruno’s career has included his being in corrections and also in media relations.

Additionally, Dr. Tovar wanted to enhance the number of GAs, interns and tutors. Upon her arrival, she learned that one area to be improved was the tutoring program. She looks at those individuals as someone the student-athlete can talk to and help them as well as organize and motivate them effectively.

The staff operates on a ‘case management system’ where they review the week with the student-athletes to discover what they will need to have prepared. At the end of the week, the case manager checks with the student-athlete to find out what went well and what didn’t go well. Every single appointment is logged and documented. The athletics administration and head coaches get weekly reports regarding the student-athletes’ progress.

With regard to communication across campus, SAASS emphasizes that the student-athletes must go visit with their academic advisor in their major. That was mandatory beginning last fall. They are required to meet once per semester and develop a game plan about classes to take. There are forms which the student-athletes must bring back to the SAASS office.

The SAASS unit also wants student-athletes to participate in activities on campus. For example, all freshmen went to the Exploring Majors Fair if they were not in class or at practice. On September 18, SAASS held a faculty appreciation luncheon, especially for new faculty, to let them know what SAASS does and to provide an opportunity for them to meet the staff. This is something that Dr. Tovar wants to continue to do.

Summer Bridge Program is for all freshman Football, Men's and Women's Basketball student-athletes. They can come to campus in the summer before their freshman year begin, take six hours, and get a head start on their academic program. This past summer they focused on two classes – ENGL103 and LTRE190. A Mathletes TLC (themed learning community) was offered last spring as there are many student-athletes who struggle in math. They took the same math course which allowed them to be around each other, study together, and get that class completed together.

Dr. Tovar wants to send make the message is out that SAASS is available to help each athlete on campus, regardless of their GPA. The group is setting high academic benchmarks and 12 of the athletic teams had a 3.0 GPA in the spring. Her area will continue to focus on teams who are not hitting that mark and will do whatever they can to assist the athletes.
Dr. Tovar then opened the floor to questions. The question was asked as to how tutors are identified. Dr. Tovar stated that she had reached out to the DeKalb school human resource services office and asked them to send out an e-mail to their top-performing teachers who would be interested in coming to help. They were able to identify six who are now working with the at-risk students. Many of our tutors are graduate students and SAASS also targets certain departments and asks them to send graduates over who are interested in helping. SAASS also looks for students who may have been in certain program who might be willing to help, especially with the core courses. If you know anyone who would be good for SAASS to contact, please let Dr. Tovar know.

D. External Relations – T. Latham
T. Latham presented the data returned from the season ticket holder survey. The majority of our season ticket holders are from the Chicago area. Overall, there is a 97% satisfaction with season tickets.

The next step is to survey the 2012 Men’s and Women’s Basketball ticket holders. The Football survey did include mini-plans and season comps.

S. Binegar stated that a secret shopper from a professional company is going to attend the last two home Football games this season. We want them to participate in the entire experience, take notes, analyze them, and then report back. She also pointed out that there was some negative feedback but it was not particularly constructive.

V. New Business

A. FY12 Fourth Quarter Report – D. Boughton
D. Boughton began by giving a brief overview of the report as presented. The tuition waivers and athletic fees are the large portions of the budget. Salaries continue to grow as we work to hire the best people we can when positions are available.

G. Schlabach asked about bowl appearances and how they are supported. D. Boughton responded that Athletics does budget for bowl opportunities each year based on figures from the Mid-American Conference. She went on to say that the Board really sees only the student fee-generated revenue that supports Athletics. There are general revenue dollars, conference revenue streams, interally-generated funds, etc. The NCAA revenue is in a different account.

B. NAAC Certification Program – C. Spears
New regulatory guidelines are about to be disseminated nationally through the NCAA. The goal is to streamline some of the burden placed on Athletics because in some instances, it takes years to adjudicate cases. NIU, with President Peters being a member of the NCAA’s Presidents Cabinet, has had the opportunity to be involved in the discussion. C. Spears is president of NAAC (National Association for Athletics Compliance) and this is a time of significant change in intercollegiate athletics. J. Compher asked C. Spears to let the Board members to know that NIU is well-represented in the national conversation. We will be one of the first institutions to be ready for these changes. The first portion of the changes takes effect in August, 2013 and the next group takes effect in August, 2014. During the next six months, there will be lots of work nationally to get this system running.
C. CPC Update – C. Armato

C. Armato provided a status report on the CPC project. With so much activity, if you have any questions, please contact him directly. The estimated date of completion is October, 2013, as Athletics would ideally like to have the grand opening on Homecoming, 2013.

D. Basketball Changes – S. Binegar

There are some changes coming up for the 2012-13 basketball season. The main one is that the benches will be switching. The home bench will move to the west end of the court and the visitor bench will be on the east end. The location of the Sixth Man Grille is also new this year as it is moving to the south lobby of the Convocation Center. This is good news as the donors will not have to navigate stairs to get to the location. It will also keep fans out of the same tunnel that the team uses. With the success of the Oktoberfest event for football, donors will be able to purchase beer and wine in the Sixth Man Grille. Athletics is hopeful that the change in location and availability of those beverages will make a better atmosphere.

VI. Announcements / Adjournment

A. November meeting – T. Bishop noted that the November Athletic Board meeting is currently scheduled on Wednesday, November 21. That is problematic because that is the beginning of the Thanksgiving holiday for students and faculty and many of the Board members may not be available. J. Mickey will work on rescheduling that meeting to Wednesday, November 28.

T. Latham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. TJ Lusher seconded the motion. Motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 2:40pm.

The next meeting of the Athletic Board is Wednesday, November 28, 2012, at 1:00pm in Holmes Student Center room #406. The Athletic Board executive committee will meet on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, at 1:30pm in Athletics Administration conference room in Convocation Center room #200.