Athletic Board  
Wednesday, December 4, 2013  
Holmes Student Center Illinois Room, 1:00pm

Present: Terry Bishop (Chair), David Changnon, Paul Bauer, Randi Napientek, Don Tidrick, Matt Streb, Sean Frazier, Joe Bittorf, Gretchen Schlabach, Hamid Bateni, Yolanda King, Jerry Blakemore, Peggy Simonds, Bill Cassidy, Connor Schomig, Lauren Noonan, Paul Julion

Guests: Debra Boughton, Sr Assoc AD/Finance and Facilities; Lindsey Hicks, Assoc AD/Compliance and Student Services; Mark Muhlhauser, Assoc AD/Major Gifts; Ryan Sedevie, Assoc AD/Collegiate Advancement and External Affairs; Christian Spears, Deputy Director of Athletics

I. Call to Order – T. Bishop (1:03pm)

II. Approval of September 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

J. Bittorf made a motion to approve the September 18, 2013, meeting minutes. D. Tidrick seconded the motion.

Having no corrections, additions or deletions, motion was carried unanimously.

III. Faculty Athletics Representative – M. Streb

A. Justine Schepler (Volleyball) is being nominated for an NCAA postgraduate scholarship and has a good chance to be competitive.

B. FARA met two weeks ago. Discussed conference restructuring but much more discussion will be held at the NCAA convention in January. Looks as if there will be no fourth division of the NCAA.

C. Graduation rates were released in October. There are two different reports: the FGR (Federal Graduation Rate) for the regular student body and the GSR (Graduation Success Rate) for the student-athletes. The GSR for all sports is at 85% which is the highest is has been since we started tracking this information. NIU is tied with Miami University in the MAC. Four of our sport teams had graduation rates of 100%. The Football team’s GSR is 85% and is the top in the MAC by 10%. This puts them 12th in the FBS and 3rd among BCS schools.

Looking at the FGR for the institution, it was 54% but for our student-athletes it was 78%. Very proud of how our student-athletes work in the classroom.

D. The Knight Commission just released today a report of money spent on athletics and academics. NIU’s average spent on academics, per student increased 45% from 2005-2011. For FBS schools, their average spent on academics per student increased only 24%. At NIU athletic spending per student-athlete, increased 33% over that period. For FBS schools, their average spent per student-athlete, increased 58%. D. Boughton stated that she will spend some time reviewing the academic spending information to see how other institutions are spending those funds. She will
share additional information at a later meeting.

IV. Athletics Department Update – S. Frazier

A. Fall 2013 Sports Update

S. Frazier began by saying the sports had a very solid fall and he did have a chance to meet with each team individually. NIU has a good group of student-athletes who are very passionate about NIU and the balance of academics and athletics. The athletics administrators will be doing exit interviews with the senior student-athletes. It is his belief that there is more capacity for success than is reflected in the teams’ records. There is quite a bit of effort being put forth. He feels very good about the framework and foundation in place but there is room for improvement at various levels. The coaches and student-athletes are putting forth a sincere effort in taking care of business academically and athletically. Our student-athletes are here for the right reason.

We are moving into the winter season so Men’s and Women’s Basketball and Wrestling are competing. Football has been an interesting phenomenon to watch. As a former football student-athlete, Frazier is familiar with the pressure. He and Coach Carey spend time together and it is obvious that there are quality people involved at our institution.

A phenomenal job was done in hosting the IHSA tournament. The community, the campus community and the region all came together do make it a success. We should be proud of the high level of quality of the event.

B. Bowl Scenarios

Very interesting situation right now. NIU is going to a bowl but we just don’t know which one. Frazier then reviewed the MAC primary and secondary bowl agreements and then the BCS bowl information. He explained that the primary bowls are those to which the MAC is contractually obligated. The secondary bowls are those to which the MAC would send teams only if the primary conferences tied to those bowls do not have eligible teams.

NIU is currently in the process of needing to win the MAC championship on Friday in order to be considered for a BCS bowl. The team has put itself in an excellent position to get to a BCS bowl again this year.

J. Bittorf expressed his appreciation at receiving the sport updates. P. Bauer asked for an explanation of the finances relative to a BCS bowl. D. Boughton explained that the way all bowls work is that the money goes directly to the conference, not the institution. If an automatic qualifier school goes to the BCS, they receive the often publicized (and large) payout. Non-AQ schools, such as ourselves, do not receive that large payout. Last year’s commitment from the MAC was coverage of approximately $3 million in ticket commitments. In addition to that there are the travel costs and the lodging expense last year cost a great deal. The leftover funds then go to the MAC and they disburse to the individual schools out of those funds. We netted approximately $500,000 last year from the conference.

D. Tidrick expressed his pride in what Athletics has brought to the university this fall.
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C. The search has just been completed to replace the Associate AD/Facilities and Event Operations position formerly held by Carl Armato. John Cheney will be joining NIU and comes to us from Oregon State University. His skill set definitely fills our needs for facility master planning and event operations. Athletics will draw on his expertise in those areas to continue to move forward. He will be in the office beginning January 6.

V. Committees

A. Equity/Diversity – TJ Lusher  
No report.

B. Budget – P. Bauer  
No report.

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

D. External Relations – D. Tidrick  
No report.

VI. New Business

A. FY13 Fourth Quarter Report – D. Boughton  
D. Boughton began by saying this is an information only item and then proceeded to provide an overview of the report. Following the review, T. Bishop invited Board members to e-mail Boughton with any questions relative to the information provided.

B. FY14 First Quarter Report – D. Boughton  
D. Boughton began by stating that because Wrestling and Gymnastics are not large revenue streams, and additionally with Athletics having oversight now for the Convocation Center and Huskie Stadium, the decision has been made not to ticket those two sports. There will still be some event staffing but there is also a cost savings in not ticketing. Aside from that, there is not much to report in the first quarter since there has not yet been a lot of activity. Following the review, T. Bishop invited Board members to e-mail Boughton with any questions relative to the information provided.

C. SAASS Director Update – C. Spears  
With the departure of Dr. Liz Tovar this past July, a national search was conducted to find her replacement. Dr. LA Love was offered and accepted the position. He will join NIU on January 1. He is currently the Associate AD/SAASS at Texas Tech. He is certainly up to the challenge here. S. Frazier thanked Dr. Streb for shepherding this process. He is very comfortable with this hire and the work Dr. Love did at Texas Tech. The search process was extended because the fit just did not seem to be there with the candidates initially identified.
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D. 2014 Football Season Tickets – R. Sedevie
Athletics would like to capitalize on the momentum realized from last year’s Orange Bowl appearance to the success this year’s Football team has enjoyed. Athletics wants to create an opportunity for fans to commit to NIU for 2014 through a “down payment” on season tickets for next year. The goal will be to capture the information from people who are genuinely interested in NIU and develop a flyer. 2014 ticket pricing will come to this group before being finalized. S. Frazier said the Board will have to convene earlier to approve season ticket prices. Based on the lateness with which Football schedules are provided to the MAC institutions, Frazier is committed to working with the conference office to get schedules released earlier. Quite a bit of information relative to Football will come to this group for review and approval.

J. Blakemore added when President Baker went to Springfield to meet with Governor Quinn, the conversation was about the Orange Bowl and the Football team, the upcoming MAC championship game, academics, how the team carried itself and the momentum created. The people in this room are largely to thank for that.

To get to the bowl game, Athletics has agreed with Prime Sport that they will be the official travel partner. Anything related to official travel will be available at www.niusportstravel.com. If you are interested in traveling to the bowl with the team, you need to work through Prime Sports.

VII. Adjournment

J. Bittorf made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Changnon seconded the motion. Motion was carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:17pm.

The next meeting of the Athletic Board will be on Wednesday, January 22, 2014. The room location has not yet been set. The executive committee will meet on Wednesday, Wednesday, January 8, at 1:30pm in the athletics administration conference room in Convocation Center #200.