



ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING
November 8, 2017 – 1:00 pm

Present: Mark Groza (Chair), Vicky Nay, Brian McCormick, Thomas Bough, Glenn Roby, Mary Burns, Laura Sala, Pete Garrity, Yolanda King, Sean Frazier, Brianna Linco, Aubrie Purtell

Guests: Ryan Sedevie, Sr. Assoc. AD/Collegiate Advancement & External Affairs; TJ Feuerbach, Sr. Assoc. AD/Development & Revenue Generation; Melissa Dawson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Director of SAASS; Lisa Stocksdale, Sr. Assist. AD/Human Resources & Donor Relations; John Cheney, Sr. Assoc. AD/Internal Operations

- I. *Call to Order – M. Groza (1:01 pm)*
- II. *Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – P. Garrity moved to approve; B. McCormick seconded; motion carried unanimously.*
- III. *Faculty Athletics Representative – M. Groza*
- IV. *Major Issues:*
 - a. *Policy on Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships – L. Stocksdale/J. Rodgers*

In light of recent events that have unfolded at universities such as Auburn and the University of Arizona, NIU Athletics has been working on formalizing a policy on romantic and/or sexual relationships. The University has its own policy, however the proposed policy would be specific to athletics, and would be more overarching than the current University policy, discouraging physical relationships, whether consensual or not, between coaches/staff and student-athletes. Utilizing the current University policy, with assistance from Karen Baker and input from various Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches, Athletics has derived a first draft of the policy, which is currently being vetted through the OGC and Affirmative Action. L. Stocksdale encouraged the board members to review the proposed policy, which was provided to the group for the meeting.

It was asked how investigations into claims against the policy would play out. L. Stocksdale indicated that procedures for investigations would be situational, based on the type of claim, and any investigations would be conducted with the guidance of appropriate parties. B. McCormick asked how the policy would be implemented, if there was any way to incorporate the policy into the onboarding process. L. Stocksdale determined that it is the intent of the Athletics department to have a half to full day training session as a requirement of the onboarding process.

One concern the M. Groza brought up was that there may be gray areas, particularly for positions such as Graduate Assistants or volunteer coaches, who may have had preexisting relationships prior to taking on their new roles. He proposed the idea of a disclosure form that the employee would have to sign prior to engaging in services. Y. King asked what triggered Athletics' need to formalize a policy in this area. L. Stocksdale responded that they are looking to get ahead of some of the issues that have recently been uncovered at larger Universities, such as the University of Arizona where a male Assistant Track and Field Coach allegedly harassed and manipulated a female Track and Field student-athlete. Y. King noted that those situations were non-consensual, and was trying to gain a better understanding on the restriction of consensual relationships, asking if legal considered this to be more of a morality clause. M. Dawson responded that the current issues begged them to ask if our staff and student-athletes were protected, commenting that Athletics is unique in that the students are likely to spend more personal time with the coaches and staff than in any other department

within the University, and while it may not be illegal for two consenting adults to engage in a physical relationship, Athletics can set a standard for expectations of their staff. Y. King and M. Groza both shared some concern for the broad scope of the proposed policy. M. Groza reminded the group that this policy is just in the drafting stages, and will likely be revisited in future meetings.

b. NCAA MBB FBI Investigation – M. Groza

J. Rodgers was unable to attend the meeting, so M. Groza briefly went over the NCAA Men's Basketball FBI investigation, an investigation into a network of student-athletes that were being paid to play. The NCAA issued a mandate that all DI schools and the staff members involved with the Men's Basketball program were to be reviewed. Additionally, the MAC was asked to review the eligibility of all the Men's Basketball student-athletes. J. Rodgers, Athletics Compliance, and the OGC were present during these interviews, and at this time no irregularities were found with the NIU Men's Basketball program.

V. Liaison Reports:

a. Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.) – Y. King/ D. Boughton/ J. Rodgers

Y. King indicated that the Work Life survey is currently being reviewed by Molly Holmes. The group will be meeting again next week to continue working on their survey and action plan.

b. Finance and Facilities – J. Bittorf/ D. Boughton/ J. Cheney

J. Cheney mentioned potential issues with Bowl game logistics, including the purchase of passports for the staff/student-athletes on the chance that they are selected for the Bahamas Bowl. Athletics has decided to purchase these passports in advance, as there have been issues in previous years with this process. As far as facility projects go, these are at a stand-still based on a lack of funding. M. Groza asked about the reception of the indoor yard. J. Cheney responded that it went well considering it was the first time that it had been done, noting that the feedback they have received will aid in improvements for future events.

G. Roby asked about the RFP Naming Rights. J. Cheney hopes to have this wrapped up in early 2018 for implementation next year.

c. Student Staff Services – J. Salmon/ M. Dawson/ L. Stocksdales

M. Dawson had nothing to add as the topic of their discussion was the Policy on Romantic and/or Sexual Relationships.

d. External Affairs – G. Roby/ R. Sedevie/ T. Feuerbach

G. Roby indicated that the Huskie Fan Advisory Board met last night to continue working on ways to engage the fans.

VI. Athletic Department Reports:

a. 16-17 NCAA Financial Report and Athletic Department Budget Discussion – M. Groza

Discussions on this topic will be tabled until the February meeting. M. Groza noted that all the NCAA data could be found online at the US Department of Education IPS website. He encouraged the group to visit the website, where they could view NIU's data in addition to other Universities.

b. SAAC Initiatives – A. Purtell

A. Purtell discussed their SAAC group, which focuses on promoting student-athlete involvement. The group meets once a month, and is comprised of approximately two student-athlete representatives for each sport. Some of their initiatives include canned food drives,

Diversity and Inclusion enterprises, the Unity March, community involvement projects, planning for the Victors, etc.

c. *SAASS Annual Report – M. Dawson*

The annual report was provided to the group. APR reports show that all of NIU's teams far exceeded the 930 benchmark, which is an important metric used by the NCAA.

M. Groza discussed his attendance at the FARA Conference recently, noting the pressure that is placed on the academic units and the potential for far greater pressure with the possibility of monetary rewards for meeting APR/GSR benchmarks. M. Dawson said the main concern with this is the probability of Universities pushing their student-athletes into "easier" majors to meet the numbers.

d. *Evaluation of staff and coaches overview – L. Stocksdale*

L. Stocksdale went through a PowerPoint presentation which outlined the process for staff, coach, and student-athlete evaluations within the Athletics department, with an overview on the points of assessment, deadlines and review of materials.

The staff evaluation is initiated by the Senior Administration beginning in April/May to be completed by the end of June. The employee being evaluated is asked to complete a self-evaluation in addition to their supervisor providing an anonymous 360 Qualtrics link to the employee's peers. The Qualtrics reports come back to the supervisor, who sets up a time to meet with the employee, (Head Coaches must also meet with the Director of Athletics) to go over the results. The evaluation is signed by the employee, supervisor (and AD when applicable), with copies provided to the employee and saved to their HR file.

J. Cheney discussed the evaluations that are provided to the student-athletes, which they use to dig deeper into all of the aspects involved in the student-athletes' experience. Two different versions of the survey are sent out, one for returning student-athletes and the other for Seniors (this version is more holistic, inquiring as to how the current year compares to the previous years). These surveys provide important feedback that can assist in the improvement of the program and the student-athlete experience. For instance, if several student-athletes report an issue with an Athletic Trainer, the department would know to look further into the problem and possibly determine if that trainer was a good fit for the program.

e. *Football/Volleyball season ticket prices – J. Cheney*

J. Cheney will provide the group with something next week. Volleyball ticket pricing will change unless game numbers change significantly. Athletics is working on restructuring the Football ticket pricing in an effort to simplify the options for the fans, narrowing down to nine different price points. The upcoming season will include several high-level games, with three anticipated Saturday games (final schedule is still being determined by the MAC). Athletics is working on different price scenarios, and the HAF is hoping to get a donor guide and ticket renewal information out just after the first of the year.

VII. *Athletics Director Update– S. Frazier*

S. Frazier provided a quick update on the fall sports programs, noting that the next few weeks will be very busy for Athletics as the fall sports begin to transition into the winter sports and the football team has become Bowl eligible.

S. Frazier also commented on the current state of the Athletics budget, sharing that the department will be asked to make significant cuts on top of the significant cuts that have already

been made as the University struggles during these tough times. This only emphasizes the need to push fundraising opportunities like the Huskies Invest Campaign and the Victor E. Ball.

VIII. *Announcements*

a. *Huskies Invest: A Week of Giving – T. Feuerbach*

T. Feuerbach discussed the Huskies Invest Week of Giving, which began on November 6th, and will go until November 10th. Athletics is looking to raise \$100,000, and is currently at 38% of their goal. The primary focus for this campaign is to support the cost of attendance and to kick off the Campaign to Sustain.

b. *Victor E. Ball – T. Feuerbach*

The date for the Victor E. Ball is set for April 14, 2018 at the NIU Naperville campus. Price points will be lower this year at \$3,000 for a table of 10, or \$450 for single tickets. Invites and save the dates will go out soon.

IX. *Closing Remarks/Adjournment*

- a. The next Athletic Board meeting will be on February 14, 2018. G. Roby called the meeting to a close at 2:15pm; P. Garrity seconded.