



ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING
September 12, 2018 – 2:00 pm

Present: Mark Groza (Chair), Joe Bittorf, Thomas Bough, Sean Frazier, Pete Garrity, Mike Konen, Kathy Ladell, Brian McCormick, Vicky Nay, Michael Oswald, Erika Pinter, Glenn Roby, Laura Sala, Kamron Smith, Nikole Torres-Turnage

Guests: Debra Boughton, Sr. Assoc. AD/Finance & Operations/SWA; John Cheney, Executive Assoc. AD; Melissa Dawson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Director of SAASS; TJ Feuerbach, Sr. Assoc. AD/Development & Revenue Generation; Ryan Sedevie, Sr. Assoc. AD/Collegiate Advancement & External Affairs; Lisa Stocksdale, Assoc. AD/Human Resources & Donor Relations; Courtney Vinson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Sports Administration; Julie Colhoff, Head Coach Women's Soccer; Bradley Hoey, Special Projects Coordinator

- I. **Call to Order** – M. Groza called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – P. Garrity moved to approve; V. Nay seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Faculty Athletics Representative** – M. Groza stressed to the group the importance of relaying the information they obtain in the Athletic Board meetings back to their respective units, and urged members to send a unit representative if they know they will be absent.
- IV. **Open Discussion: Role of Athletic Board and Working Group Structure** – M. Groza briefly explained the Working Group structure, noting that within the Athletic Board there are four (4) Working Groups: Diversity Integration and Inclusion (D.I.G.), Finance and Facilities, Student and Staff Services, and External Affairs.

C. Vinson discussed the role of D.I.G. noting that their main objective is to make sure staff and students are well represented. C. Vinson asked for a volunteer to serve as a liaison between the board and D.I.G.; student representative, Kamron Smith, agreed to serve as liaison.

J. Cheney briefly described the Finance and Facilities Working group, which is comprised of constituents across campus from multiple areas including but not limited to Accounts Payable, Procurement, and the Physical Plant. The group meets monthly and discusses processes and updates on current and pending projects.

The Student Staff Services Working Group interfaces with campus partners and internal units to look at staff and student well-being. L. Stocksdale noted that the group will meet on September 20th, and are discussing a potential restructure for the staff portion of the meetings to focus on work-life balance.

The External Initiative Working Group is a collection of people “outward facing” (i.e. community/external units). R. Sedevie remarked that the main focus of these meetings is outreach, working closely with units such as Student Affairs and the Alumni Association, on ways to engage fans through corporate sponsorships, licensing, and branding.

- V. **Athletics Department Update** – S. Frazier provided a brief update on the fall sports (handout provided). The Men and Women's Soccer programs are both growing slowly as they adapt to new coaching staff. The Women's Golf team won their first tournament last week. Football currently has a 0-2 record, but have had an aggressive non-conference schedule thus far.

S. Frazier provided the group with two additional handouts. The first was an academic performance overview that provides a 5-year snapshot into the academic performance of the NIU student-athletes.

Notable was the cumulative GPA of 3.2, which is the highest recorded in Institutional history. The second handout was an overview on Athletics revenue generation. S. Frazier remarked that fundraising efforts such as Victor E. Ball and Huskies Invest were created in an effort to become more sustainable and to fill the gaps made by budget cuts. S. Frazier commended the Huskie Athletic Fund staff, noting that they have seen a 30% increase in revenue generation since FY13. Looking forward at other enhancements, the Nelson's have committed \$25,000 for renovations to the Nelson Club, which will enhance fan experience and hopefully drive premium area ticket sales.

Other updates:

- The Victor E. Ball is set for April 27, 2019 at NIU Naperville.
- The Apparel RFP is being resubmitted through Procurement. The goal is to have this complete by mid-October to meet the ordering deadline of November 1st for FY20.
- Naming Rights of the Convocation Center back in January were met with lukewarm responses. Conversations are being reengaged with potentially interested parties now that the facilities have seen several upgrades.
- Athletics is also re-visiting the Pouring/Vending Rights.

S. Frazier asked if the group had any questions. B. McCormick remarked that the HS bands were great at the home game and wondered if they could expand upon that for cheer or dance? T. Bough pointed out that something similar is done from a dance team perspective at the basketball games. G. Roby commented on the End Zone Club enhancements, noting that the trailer was a nice addition.

a. Introduction of New Employees

- Julie Colhoff, Head Coach WSOC* – C. Vinson introduced J. Colhoff, who comes to NIU from UIC. J. Colhoff relayed that it is her role to empower the student-athletes, to help them achieve their goals and to build a culture.
- Courtney Vinson, Sr. Associate AD/Sports Administration* – S. Frazier introduced C. Vinson, who comes to NIU from Clemson. She has taken over as Sport Administrator for Men's Basketball, Wrestling, and Women's Soccer.

VI. **Major Issue: NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball Commission** – There have been a lot of changes in NCAA legislative over the past six months (handout provided). How does this affect NIU? C. Vinson noted that certain things NIU has already been doing. One change will be to the NBA draft; new legislation says if a SA wants to enter the draft they can do so and still have the ability to return to school so long as they do not take money from agents. Another notable change is to the tournaments that apparel companies host over the summer. The updated legislation restricts coaches so that may only attend 1 or 2 of these now. There will also be a change to Official and Unofficial Visits. Official visits will be extended to 15 allowed beginning the junior year of high school. This will give the student-athletes more opportunity to see what is out there before committing to a school, which will hopefully lower the amount of transfers. P. Garrity asked about the transfer rules. Beginning October 15th, student-athletes will be able to say they want to transfer and that is that. M. Groza indicated that this will provide the student-athletes with more freedom, but not necessarily without consequence as NIU would not be obligated to continue funding the transferring SA.

VII. **Liaison Reports:**

- Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.)** – TBA/C. Vinson
No updates.
- Finance and Facilities** – J. Bittorf/D. Boughton/J. Cheney
No updates, will meet this Thursday.
- Student Staff Services** – J. Salmon/M. Dawson/L. Stocksedale

No updates, will meet September 20th.

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

R. Sedevie noted that there are six (6) new members on the External Affairs Working group, so the main focus of the last meeting was introductions and integrating/explaining what the role is to the committee.

VIII. **Athletic Department Reports:**

- a. **FY budget report** – D. Boughton provided an overview of the Athletics' budget report. When the budget crisis began, Athletics was asked to cut \$1 million in FY17, then another \$2 million in FY18, and another \$0.5 million midway through FY18, and now another \$1 million in FY19. With continued budget cuts and declining enrollment, revenue enhancements are essential. D. Boughton broke down the sources of revenue: 27% from student fees, 11% from University allocation for tuition waivers, 8% from University support, 18% from external funding (i.e. ticket sales, media rights, etc.), 13% NCAA/Conference Guarantees, 8% from game guarantees (i.e. \$1.6 million to play Florida State), and 15% from Convocation Center/Huskie Stadium. D. Boughton then showed the group the breakdown of how the money is allocated: 27% goes toward salaries, 25% for scholarships, 10% for travel, 23% towards operating costs, and 15% for the Convocation Center. D. Boughton noted that these percentages are typical among all universities. T. Bough asked if the Convo numbers are equal on the source and use if it is a wash. D. Boughton responded that is not necessarily the case as the money is moved around in bond revenue and indirect overhead, which all goes to reserves.
- b. **Complimentary Ticket Policies** – J. Cheney provided the Complimentary Ticket Policy to the board, noting if an employee receives complimentary season tickets, the tickets are considered a taxable benefit. An alternate route would be to pick up complimentary tickets on a per game basis. An email is now sent out approximately two days prior to the contest, and requests must be emailed back on the online fillable form. The number of allowable tickets depends on the classification. J. Cheney stated that this policy is provided to the board, but no longer requires board approval. Changes to the policy included the amount of tickets coaches can receive for Football and the number of tickets Sr. Staff can receive for Volleyball. M. Groza pointed out that Athletic Board members are able to receive two (2) complimentary tickets to all home games.
- c. **Prior year IPP review** – C. Vinson noted that the APR is the best metric real time for monitoring NCAA eligibility. Points are awarded for all student-athletes on aid, 1 for eligibility and 1 for retention. In order to be eligible to participate in post-season contests, the APR cannot fall below 930. B. McCormick asked if NIU has ever had a team fall below, to which C. Vinson responded that they have not.
- d. **SAASS academic report** – M. Dawson provided the group with handouts that showed snapshots of the 2017-18 academic year. Student-athletes achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.2, which is the highest in program history. The goal of SAASS is to make sure student-athletes graduate and are well-rounded. M. Groza pointed out that the SAASS department is currently understaffed and wanted to commend M. Dawson and her staff on their ability to continue to push through.

IX. **Announcements**

- a. Brad Hoey – B. Hoey is overseeing the reinvisioning of the Varsity Club and is currently working on trying to reengage or further engage Alumni. The goal is to get our Alumni on all levels actively involved and to create a culture of "Once a Huskie, always a Huskie". B. Hoey is also working on sales of premium areas such as the Terrace Club, Coaches Club, Skybox, and Endzone Club. The Endzone Club has a new mobile suite, which has already become very popular.

- X. **Closing Remarks/Adjournment** – All students who go through the internal bookstore have been having a difficult time getting their books. SAASS and the Huskie Athletic Compliance office have been working diligently to resolve the issue, but M. Groza asked the group to relay the information to their units.
 - a. G. Roby made a motion to adjourn the meeting; P. Garrity seconded; motion carried unanimously.