



ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING
February 12, 2020 – 2:00 pm

Present: Mark Groza (Chair), Therese Arado (for Marc Falkoff), Tim Aurand, Thomas Bough, Matt Brendich, Sean Frazier, Lesley Gilbert, Kari Hickey, Mike Konen, Glenn Roby, Laura Sala, Aidan Shields, Kamron Smith

Guests: Debra Boughton, Sr. Assoc. AD/Finance & Operations/SWA; John Cheney, Exec. Assoc. AD; TJ Feuerbach, Sr. Assoc. AD/Development & Revenue Generation; Ryan Sedevie, Sr. Assoc. AD/Collegiate Advancement & External Affairs; Lisa Stocksdales, Assoc. AD/Human Resources & Donor Relations; Courtney Vinson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Sports Administration

- I. **Call to Order** – M. Groza called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – G. Roby moved to approve; L. Sala seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Faculty Athletics Representative** – M. Groza asked Kamron Smith to talk a little bit about the MAC Mental Health Summit. K. Smith remarked that the event was unique and provided a lot of insight on communication and relationships. The theme this year was bullying and there was a lot of story sharing. He indicated that his role at the summit was to take notes and bring back and share this information with coaches and staff. One thing he wanted to accomplish this year was ensuring the use of the information from the summit, noting that in years past there has been a lot said, but little action taken. M. Groza contributed that when it comes to mental health, the MAC is at the forefront of this initiative.
 - a. **Student-Athlete Major Breakdown** – M. Groza pointed out a document that he provided to the group showing the breakdown of student-athletes and their current majors as of spring 2020. He indicated that some institutions have cases of clustering, however NIU's breakdown shows student-athletes in over 60 different majors, providing a really good representation for the institution.
 - b. **Prior year APR Report** – M. Groza discussed the NCAA 2018-2019 Academic Progress Report (APR). APR is a metric set by the NCAA that measures retention and eligibility. The report provided shows that all NIU sports are well above the NCAA minimum of 930. T. Aurand asked what happens if a student-athlete leaves early. C. Vinson responded that it depends on where they are academically (i.e. if a student-athlete leaves with a GPA below 2.6, NIU would lose 1-point). M. Groza noted that men's basketball is monitored closely, since they tend to lose points more often from student-athletes leaving for professional contracts, transferring to other schools, etc.
 - c. **Sponsored Admissions Report** – M. Groza went over another document provided to the group in advance to the meeting that showcased the NIU student-athlete sponsored admission cases, noting that in 2019 there were 15 sponsored admit cases. M. Groza remarked on the changes to the admissions process beginning fall of 2021: If a student is coming to NIU with a 3.0 or higher, they will automatically be admitted; with a 2.5-2.99, they will be subject to a holistic review (the specifics of which will come at a later date), and any

with 2.49 or below will be up to a full committee review. He noted that current student-athletes indicated in the bottom chart of the provided document (2020) still have to go through the sponsored admits process. T. Bough felt the key takeaway to the admissions changes is that there will be more flexibility in recruiting new students. C. Vinson interjected that while the changes to the admissions criteria might open the door to more students being admitted, student-athletes would still be required to take the ACT/SAT and meet additional criteria in order for them to be eligible to compete in a sport program.

- d. **Student-Athlete Enrollment in Courses (Clustering)** – M. Groza discussed class clustering, pointing out a document that shows a breakdown of the current classes being taken by student-athletes in spring of 2020. Based on current enrollment, there are a few classes where the number of student-athletes comprises more than 50% of the class. M. Groza noted that in general NIU is still doing pretty good, but that he has already had a discussion with SAASS on monitoring these numbers.

- IV. **Athletics Director Update** – S. Frazier provided a brief update on the winter sports. Men’s basketball is coming off of a 6-game win streak and is currently tied for 1st in the MAC West. The NIU men and women’s basketball programs are the only Division I school that have active players who have scored over 2,000 points. S. Frazier also remarked on the wrestling program, which is having one of its best seasons.

S. Frazier discussed other Athletics updates. NIU will host the Chi-town Showdown on October 24th versus BYU at SeatGeek Stadium. There will still be 5 games played at Huskie Stadium. The hope in adding the 6th game is to tap into the large Chicago fan base. M. Groza asked if the BYU game (6th game) will be a part of the season ticket price. S. Frazier answered that it is not included, but that there will be an opt-out option when purchasing season tickets. M. Groza asked about the translation of premium areas, for example, if a person purchases passes for the Skybox, how does that translate at SeatGeek Stadium? T. Feuerbach responded that SeatGeek Stadium is equipped with 34 premium areas, and that they will be able to find equivalent areas to the ones purchased at Huskie Stadium.

S. Frazier also commented on other upcoming events: Homecoming is scheduled for October 24th (time to be determined based on TV scheduling). The Victor E. Bash is set for May 2nd. R. Sedevie noted that they are shifting away from the “ball” format, and are bringing the event back to campus. They are thinking of doing a carnival theme/something more interactive, and will make use of local corporate sponsors and the video board in the Convocation Center. The Huskie Summer Circuit will be June 2nd through June 4th, with Athletics Sr. Staff and Head Coaches traveling to Rockford, St. Charles, and Oakbrook to increase fan engagement. Lastly, Cram the Convo is schedule for February 22nd.

- V. **Liaison Reports:**

- a. **Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.)** – C. Vinson reported that D.I.G. met yesterday, and they are working on community event. Another D.I.G. initiative is looking for ways to engage students in athletics’ events.
- b. **Finance and Facilities** – The Finance and Facilities working group met on the 5th. Updates included:

- i. Lesslie Erickson has left the Athletics department. Lisa Stocksdale has been assisting with the transition.
 - ii. The FY19 budget closed out; while there were higher expenses and lower revenue, Athletics was able to maintain in the black.
 - iii. LED lights were installed in the Chessick (approximate 3 ½ year return investment)
 - iv. Campus Updates:
 - a. Holmes Student Center will open Qdoba in the Spring
 - b. Infrastructure work
 - c. Build America project bringing security cameras to the dorms
 - v. Procurement Updates: Pouring Rights; RFP; BYU game. J. Cheney thanked all involved for their help in getting these things done.
- G. Roby asked how the pub is doing at the basketball games. J. Cheney noted that it is not drawing in new fans, but is definitely enhancing the current fan experience.

c. **External Affairs** – Will be meeting tomorrow.

VI.

Athletic Department Reports:

- a. **Title IX Overview & Prior Year Report on Title IX Compliance** – D. Boughton provided the group with a PowerPoint overview on Title IX and Title IX Compliance. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education programs that receive federal funds, including athletics programs. Title IX requires that members of both genders have the same opportunities to participate in sports. Institutions have flexibility in what they offer, but they have to meet certain requirements. The NCAA does not enforce Title IX (which is enforced by Federal and State Legislation), but does require institutions to have a certain number of sports per gender as well as meet certain financial aid requirements in order to maintain Division I FBS membership. Tests for Title IX compliance include accommodation of interests and abilities, athletic financial aid, and other athletic benefits and opportunities.

There are three ways to test compliance under accommodation of interests and abilities:

1. Proportionality
2. Continued program expansion for underrepresented sex
3. Fully and effectively accommodate underrepresented sex

NIU has annually met compliance with Test ONE (Proportionality), however as of fall 2019, the female undergraduate population surpassed the male undergraduate population (51.2%). D. Boughton commented that if NIU Athletics can no longer meet Test ONE, they will have to find a different test for compliance.

D. Boughton discussed roster goals, which are set based on goals/limits to meet Test ONE annually (coaches not accountable for medical or exhausted eligibility). D. Boughton remarked on the 2018-2019 participation rates and population comparison, noting that NIU was not in compliance because they did not meet their goal for female sport programs.

To meet compliance for athletic financial aid, athletics financial aid awards must be awarded proportionally (within 1%) to unduplicated participation rates. In 2018-2019 total aid for NIU was \$6,957,212, with \$4,167,692 (60%) awarded to male participants, and \$2,789,250 (40%)

to female participants. This meets the criteria as the unduplicated participation ratio is 61.5%/38.5%.

The final measure of Title IX compliance relates to other athletic benefits and opportunities. D. Boughton called this the “laundry” list”, and noted that access to all items (equipment, supplies, coaching, travel, locker rooms, etc.) must be equitable in order to be compliant.

- b. **Prior year NCAA Financial Report and Budget Discussion** – D. Boughton provided a PowerPoint presentation on the NCAA Financial Report. The NCAA Financial Report is an annual report required by the NCAA, categorizing the athletics’ departments past fiscal year’s revenue and expenses. The report is broken into 21 unique revenue categories and 23 expense categories, is far more granular than others and is audited. D. Boughton went over the revenue and expense categories, noting that Bowl Revenue was a new one added for conference distributions.

In 2018-2019, the overall revenue exceeded expenses by \$1.5 million. This money has been used to fill in gaps in the budget made by decreasing ticket sales, declining enrollment (and subsequent decrease in student fees), etc. D. Boughton also provided a handout to the group with a breakdown of the past three years of revenue as reported on the NCAA Financial Report. She remarked that reported salaries have remained relatively constant, but noted that these figures do not include benefits that are funded at the state level.

- c. **Revenue Generation – HAF Outcomes** – T. Feuerbach provided a handout to the group with multiple graphics to showcase different HAF revenue generating areas, noting that football and basketball’s numbers will post July 1st. He highlighted additional revenue streams, including licensing royalties, football game guarantees, Sodexo (concessions), Vivature, Adidas, etc. T. Feuerbach discussed Huskies Invest, remarking that there were 45-50 more donors than last year. He also pointed out the significant drop in revenue from the Victor E. Ball, which is why they are working to revamp this year.

- VII. **Announcements/Adjournment** – M. Groza alerted the group to the departure of Melissa Dawson from the University. The position of Sr. Associate AD/Director of SAASS will be posted through the Provost, with hopes of having a replacement by spring break. M. Groza stressed the importance of this role in the success of the student-athletes.

Groza also wanted to let the Board know that there could be an appeal for a student-athlete scholarship reduction that may require the voting members of the Athletic Board. He will keep the group updated.

G. Roby made motion to adjourn the meeting; T. Aurand seconded; meeting closed at 3:34 pm.