



ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING
February 8, 2023 – 2:00 pm

Present: Courtney Hughes (Chair), Vincent Becker, Aaron Fogleman, Sean Frazier, Kari Hickey, Jeanna Hunter, Tom Libert, Brian McCormick, Aidan O'Brien, Marcella Otto, Jerri Reynolds, Glenn Roby, Laura Sala, John Siblik

Guests: John Cheney, Deputy AD/Executive Assoc. AD/Operations; Lisa DeRango, Sr. Assoc. AD/Human Resources & Finance Administration; TJ Feuerbach, Sr. Assoc. AD/Development & Revenue Generation; Anton Goff, Sr. Assoc. AD/Director of SAASS; Ryan Sedevie, Sr. Assoc. AD/Collegiate Advancement & External Affairs; Courtney Vinson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Sports Administration; Owen Maisva, Assistant Director DEI & Gender Equity (McClendon Leadership); Sondra Parys, Head Volleyball Coach

- I. **Call to Order** – C. Hughes called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – B. McCormick moved to approve; T. Libert seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Introduction of Head Volleyball Coach, Sondra Parys** – C. Hughes introduced NIU Athletics' new head volleyball coach, Sondra Parys. Sondra competed as a player in the Mid-American Conference and has been a coach at Loyola for the last five years. S. Parys gave a quick introduction, noting that with her strong NIU connections (both parents were alums), and having been a former student-athlete in the MAC, she felt this was the right time and place for her. She is currently working on hiring full-time staff and has already started recruiting.
- IV. **Faculty Athletics Representative** – C. Hughes discussed the different majors that the current student-athletes were pursuing at NIU (document provided in the Teams folder). She compared NIU's majors to other NCAA Division I schools and noted that the numbers very similar with minimal variations. The variations in areas such as kinesiology or STEM, could be attributed to many different things (i.e. program offerings). M. Otto noted that many student-athletes, in her experience, are drawn to sports management as they feel they will have an edge due to their experience as an athlete. She also noted that these numbers can be skewed depending on an institution's offerings/focus.
- V. **Athletics Director Update** – S. Frazier provided an update on current sport programs and upcoming events (overview document available in Teams folder). Winter sports are underway. Men's basketball has had a very challenging non-conference schedule but are playing well at some of the more challenging matchups. Women's basketball has had a successful non-conference schedule thus far; they will be playing tonight at 6pm in the "Play4Kay" pink game, supporting breast cancer awareness. Wrestling is at the top of the MAC west right now and the gymnastics team is holding strong as they near the end of the season. S. Frazier added that spring sports are gearing up, with women's golf already bringing home a win in the Falcon Florida Classic.

S. Frazier briefly discussed the new HAF season ticket subscription plan, which will make it easier for season ticket members to tailor their specific needs. T. Feuerbach added that in years past, season ticket members had to make a certain level of donation to acquire certain benefits (i.e. \$1,000 donor receives parking, tent pass, etc.). That structure doesn't cater to a vast number of fans, so they felt it prudent to offer the ability for people to pay for the things they actually want

to have or be a part of instead of paying a certain amount for benefits, with the ultimate goal is to make it easier for the end user. They acknowledged that this will be an adjustment for many, but that HAF and ticket staff will be available to help during the transition. T. Feuerbach noted there would likely be some bumps in the road, but he and his staff have already started making calls in advance to the launch to discuss with season ticket members that might be impacted to try to mitigate future issues.

S. Frazier also commented on the NCAA Convention and the NCAA Transformational Committee. The NCAA is going through certain reforms under Division I rules. A lot of recommendations in areas such as mental health, life skills, scholarships, etc. were put forth at the Convention. S. Frazier remarked that there will be further meetings to discuss the impact, but at this time they just wanted to make the board aware as there will likely be a financial impact. The Athletics staff are working through the pieces now on what will be needed to implement, how this will be funded, etc. C. Vinson added that there will be actionable requirements, areas in which all DI NCAA institutions will have to meet. They will be meeting with representatives in the next week or so to discuss how to connect some of those dots internally without breaking the bank.

Lastly, S. Frazier wrapped up his overview with a few important dates. The Victor E. Bash (VEB), one of Athletics' premiere fundraisers, will be May 1st through May 6th. R. Sedevie noted the VEB will be similar to years past with a mixture of virtual and in-person components featuring an online auction, wine and spirits pull, and an in-person event (to be announced once finalized). The dates have also been identified for the Huskie Summer Circuit (June 5th, 6th and 7th). The Summer Circuit gives alumni and supporters a chance to see and speak with NIU's head coaches, Sr. Staff and key personnel at different locations. Finalized sites are still being determined, but will likely include St. Charles, Rockford and Oakbrook.

VI. **Liaison Reports:**

- a. **Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.)** – C. Vinson remarked that the D.I.G. Working Group has been working through the DEI framework for the NCAA Transformation Committee. Attestations are due to the NCAA by August 1st. Once the framework has been reviewed, they will likely ask ADEI to certify prior to having Sean Frazier and President Freeman submit the Attestation back to the NCAA. D.I.G. is also working through programming surrounding Black History Month and looking into Women's History Month.
- b. **Finance and Facilities** – L. DeRango indicated that their group talked about the Bus RFP, which is still in progress, as well as catching up with campus partners on areas such as staffing. The Controller's office is ahead of the game from last year as far as tax information goes, which is good for the student-athletes. From Procurement, certifications are no longer needed for transactions of \$15,000 or less as of January. The Budget office is still struggling staffing-wise, but have named a new CFO, so moving in the right direction. G. Roby asked if things have improved in HR, to which L. DeRango responded that Bill Hodson formally resigned and an interim VP has been named. She noted that she has seen a marked improvement just based on there being more people working in the HR department currently.
- c. **External Affairs** – R. Sedevie indicated that their working group would be meeting next Wednesday at 11AM.

VII. **Athletic Department Reports:**

- a. **FY22 NCAA Financial Report** – L. DeRango went over the FY22 NCAA Financial Report (PowerPoint in Teams folder). This report, cataloguing revenue and expense categories, is due annually by January 15th by all Division I institutions. Some of the revenue categories included ticket sales, student fees, institutional support, and game guarantees. Expenses included student aid, salaries, recruiting/team travel, etc. L. DeRango pointed out that the effects/impact of COVID-19 can still be seen in the numbers for FY22, where Athletics’ overall expenses exceeded the overall revenue by approximately \$1.9 million. Areas in which the biggest deficits were seen included ticket sale decreases, drops in endowments (between \$350-\$400,000 loss), and increased expenses (salaries, student-athlete travel, etc.). To mitigate some of these deficits, the department made across the board cost center reductions of 15% to all units in Athletics, focused/prioritized wants versus needs, and increased fundraising efforts and contract negotiations with 3rd part vendors. K. Hickey asked if Athletics was able to receive any State assisted funding to which L. DeRango replied that the University received support, however the Athletics department was not subject to additional institutional support through these emergency funds. L. DeRango wrapped up discussion on the Financial Report with a quick note that the institutional support to the overall department budget was approximately 21%, which is mostly used for administrative salaries (excludes benefits funded at the State level), and the athletic fee supported 32% of the budget. K. Hickey asked if online students pay the athletic fee to which J. Cheney answered that fully online students do not, however they are looking into the option to add an “opt in” for students in this category. K. Hickey also mentioned providing additional services, like virtual content, that could be used as an additional revenue stream. A. Goff noted that they did something like this during the pandemic, but moved away from the payment model once things opened back up. S. Frazier thought it was a great idea. G. Roby asked if the student fees that support a majority of the revenue fluctuate based on enrollment, to which L. DeRango replied that they do (i.e. lower enrollment equals lower revenue).
- b. **Title IX Overview & Prior Year Report on Title IX Compliance** – C. Vinson provided a presentation on Title IX (PowerPoint in Teams folder). Title IX is a law that prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity receiving financial assistance. Title IX generally requires institutions to provide male and female students equal opportunities to compete in intercollegiate sports. There are multiple ways to test if an institution is meeting Title IX requirements. One way is through accommodations and interests, which can be tested in one of three ways:
- Proportionality, which is met when the male and female student-athletes are proportionate to the undergraduate enrollment at the institution. Historically, NIU has had a larger male population and met proportionality as there were more male student-athletes than female, however the female population at NIU is now higher, so we no longer meet this measure.
 - The second test for accommodation is continued program expansion for the underrepresented sex.
 - Lastly, the institution fully and effectively accommodates the underrepresented sex.
- Another test for compliance with Title IX looks at financial aid, which must be awarded proportionately within 1%. There are currently 59.57% male and 40.43% female student-athletes with scholarship percentages distributed at 59.24% male, and 40.76% female, meeting the 1% requirement. Financial aid must fully fund all sports programs (235.5 scholarships), offer everyone full grant in aid to include COA at 50% for all sports, cannot discriminate domestic vs. international scholarships, anyone is able to apply for summer school funding, and there are non-discriminatory practices of awarding fifth-year (exhausted eligibility) and medically disqualified financial aid. The last measure of compliance for Title IX looks at the “laundry list” of

offerings. This list includes items like financial aid, travel, equipment, facilities, services, etc.; essentially ensuring that the underrepresented sex is receiving similar experiences.

C. Vinson finished discussion with additional Title IX rules: no sport is excluded from Title IX, equal dollars/identical programs are not required, tiering is allowed if the resources are equitable and proportional, source of money (i.e. fundraising, donation, etc.) is not considered or deemed separate – once provided to the team it is considered in the institution’s evaluation of gender equity (i.e. if the men’s soccer team raised \$1 million, we would have to figure out a way to get the women’s team equitability).

- c. **Volleyball and Football Ticket Prices (Fall 2023)** – J. Cheney noted that the pricing is the exact same from last fall to this fall for Volleyball and Football ticket prices, and they do not anticipate any changes (document in Teams folder). He indicated that they will bring basketball pricing to the next meeting.

VIII. **Announcements/Adjournment** – G. Roby made a motion to adjourn; K. Hickey seconded; meeting closed at 3:09 pm.