



## ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING February 7, 2024 – 2:00 pm

Present: Courtney Hughes (Chair), Ehsan Asoudegi, Vincent Becker, Aaron Fogleman, Sean Frazier, Kari Hickey, Jeanna Hunter, Rob Kerschke, Tom Libert, Brian McCormick, Jerri Reynolds, Glenn Roby, Emily Romancew, Laura Sala, John Siblik

Guests: Chris Baker, Sr. Assoc. AD/Development & Revenue Generation; John Cheney, Deputy AD/Executive Assoc. AD/Operations; Lisa DeRango, Sr. Assoc. AD/Human Resources & Finance Administration; Ryan McGinn, Associate AD/Assoc. Director SAASS; Randi Napientek, Sr. Assoc. AD/Director of SAASS; Courtney Vinson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Sports Administration

- I. **Call to Order** – C. Hughes called the meeting to order at 2:01pm.
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – B. McCormick moved to approve; G. Roby seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Introduction of Associate Athletic Director and Associate Director for SAASS, Ryan McGinn** – R. Napientek introduced Ryan McGinn, the new Associate AD/Associate Director of SAASS, who will be working specifically with the following programs: football, women’s basketball, and men’s tennis.
- IV. **Faculty Athletics Representative**
  - a. **NCAA Convention Brief Broad Overview** – C. Hughes gave a brief summary of the NCAA Convention (PowerPoint in Teams folder), highlighting several key points from the week. She noted that the NCAA President, Charlie Baker, gave an overview of college sports, with discussions on modernizing college athletics (i.e. pay for play/economic modeling, fairness and integrity in college athletics, etc.). The focus was on Division I, however the impact of changes at the top will eventually trickle down to all divisions. C. Hughes noted the three main areas of focus at the Convention: Sports Wagering; Mental Health, and Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). A. Fogleman asked how student-athletes are responding to sports betting. C. Vinson responded that sports betting has become so accessible with the ability to bet at your fingertips (i.e DraftKings, FanDuel, etc.). She noted that at this time, they continue to educate student-athletes on the rules, how the rules apply to them, and what the repercussions if they fail to comply (tiered consequences).

**Athletics Director Update** – S. Frazier provided an update on the current happenings in Athletics (document in Teams folder). Winter sports are well under way. There have been significant shortfalls in basketball with many injuries on both the men’s and women’s sides. Wrestling has had a banner season so far, competing at a high level. They will be hosting their annual Beauty and the Beast meet with gymnastics this Friday. Spring sports are starting up as well with several sports already in play and others gearing up for their seasons. NIU will also be host to the MAC Track & Field Championships this year (May 9<sup>th</sup> - May 11<sup>th</sup>). Other announcements: The new head coach of men’s tennis, René Vidal, was announced today. René was recruited from McKendree University, where he has had much success, and will officially start at NIU on Monday. S. Frazier also remarked on upgrades to the Recreation facilities, including new signage, locker room refresh, updated graphics/paint, etc. He noted the importance of Recreation as a retention tool for the student population. G. Roby added that he was recently over at the Recreation facilities with a group of students and heard a lot of positive feedback. S. Frazier wrapped up his report

with a note regarding the changes in the NCAA, echoing what C. Hughes was discussing earlier in the meeting. In his 26 years being around the NCAA Convention (21 of which as a sitting Athletic Director), he has seen more changes in the past 1.5 years, than in his entire career. He remarked that a lot of the change stems from congressional intervention/lack thereof and added that as these changes start to impact NIU, he will continue to update the board. He ended by saying that regardless of the changes, the student-athlete experience would always remain their number 1 job.

#### Upcoming Events:

- Huskie Royale will be hosted at Acquaviva in Maple Park on April 20<sup>th</sup>. C. Barker expanded on the reimaging of the Victor E. Bash, remarking that this will be the first-time hosting in-person since before the pandemic. The event will include traditional casino/card games but is not traditional gambling. As part of the ticket purchase, rather than winning money, people will win credits towards purchasing exclusive events like Notre Dame and NC State tickets.
- Summer Circuit dates will likely be the week of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a kickoff event in DeKalb/Sycamore, followed by visits to St. Charles, Rockford and Oakbrook Naperville. S. Frazier noted that the locations are chosen based on accessibility to the fan/alumni base.

#### V. **Liaison Reports:**

- a. **Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.)** – G. Roby/C. Vinson – The Diversity Integration Group has not had any meetings recently, mainly due to issues in finding dates that work for the group. C. Vinson indicated that they are currently working through Black History Month with social media campaigns, and there are plans for a trivia night in the next week or two.
- b. **Finance and Facilities** – K. Hickey/J. Cheney/L. DeRango – The Finance and Facilities Working Group met just after the first of the year. As people were still coming back from break/getting back up to speed, J. Cheney added that there were not a lot of updates other than campus facilities projects (mainly infrastructure based – boilers, electrical, etc.).
- c. **External Affairs** – B. McCormick/R. Sedevie/C. Barker – C. Barker provided an overview of upcoming events/initiatives. 2/14 is Education Day with Women’s Basketball, and there are already over 1,000 students in DeKalb County signed up. Plans for a retail store are in the works, with a dry run at the Girls and Women in Sports Day event later this evening. S. Frazier expanded that the retail store is much needed, particularly after the loss of the VCB. They have been working towards launching event-driven apparel sales for a long time. J. Cheney added that the University has a contract with Follett Bookstore, who has the first right of refusal for gear sales at events but does not currently have any desire to come sell at events. J. Cheney noted that they are working on getting a meeting together to start discussing the logistics with all involved (Procurement, legal, etc.). G. Roby wondered at the cost, remarking that current prices at the bookstore are not necessarily appealing to students. He suggested some items be priced lower for the student population, and noted market research that has already been done. S. Frazier asked G. Roby to pass the market research information along to Paige Shinberg, who is overseeing the retail initiative. The External Affairs Working Group will meet again on 2/21.

#### VI. **Athletic Department Reports:**

- a. **FY23 NCAA Financial Report** – L. DeRango provided an overview of the NCAA financial report, which is a report of all expense and revenue categories set by the NCAA surrounding

intercollegiate athletics, submitted annually by January 15<sup>th</sup> (PowerPoint in Teams folder). NIU uses an outside auditing firm to ensure accuracy of numbers prior to submission. L. DeRango noted that in FY23, we ended up in a deficit of about \$2.2 million. Some of the areas that revenue did not meet the mark was ticket sales, endowments, concessions, and NCAA distributions. Revenue was not as bad as predicted; there were just bigger hits in the expense categories (i.e. increases due to inflation post-pandemic; salary adjustments due to reclassification by HR; university increments to employee pay; unplanned facility improvements required for student safety; etc.). NIU Athletics also reimplemented Cost of Attendance (COA) at 50% for the first time since the pandemic, which also impacted the expense category. With the continuing of 8% cost center reductions, increases in fundraising efforts, etc., they are tracking better for FY24. To wrap up, L. DeRango noted that other big impacts on the numbers include reduction of University support (now 29%) and the deficits caused due to lower enrollment numbers, impacting the athletic fee, which is athletics' greatest revenue stream (approximately 36%). L. DeRango also added that this report does not include Recreation or Convocation Center revenues, just strictly athletics. A. Fogelman asked about bowl game expenses. L. DeRango responded that those numbers are not on this report as this report was for FY23 (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023). She did note that the numbers will be on FY24's report, and that she was happy to report that they were under their bowl budget.

- b. **Title IX Update** – C. Hughes prefaced the discussion by noting that NIU has undergone a **voluntary** Title IX review with field expert, Janet Judge, who has taken the time to review NIU's current practices and offered recommendations (confidential at this time). S. Frazier expanded that former NIU staff member, Deb Boughton, held the institutional knowledge for the department on Title IX, so her departure was a great time to do a reset. C. Vinson continued with her presentation on Title IX (PowerPoint in Teams folder), first describing the law itself and what Title IX means. Title IX applies to all elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and programs and activities affiliated with those institutions, protecting students, faculty, and staff. C. Vinson pointed out misconceptions regarding Title IX: it does not only apply to athletics and is not specifically designated for girls/women. There are no quotas, and no requirements to drop male sport programs. The way we measure Title IX compliance is through three prongs. The first prong looks at participation numbers. NIU used to meet compliance using this prong, however we no longer meet participation requirements as there are more females than males at the University. Prong 2 looks at opportunities provided to the underrepresented sex. At this time, NIU Athletics is not in a position to add any sports, however C. Vinson noted that they will be charting club sports to see about the possibility of elevating varsity programs. The final prong looks at abilities and interests of the underrepresented sex (women for NIU), which is the prong the NIU is looking to meet compliance with Title IX. C. Vinson discussed who counts as a participant, and the equitable distribution of financial aid (must be distributed within 1% of the student-athlete populations – 61% men (aid distributed 58.27%) vs. 38% women (aid distributed 41.72%)). Other ways to achieve compliance with distribution of aid is the equitable distribution of scholarships (235.5 scholarships – number set by NCAA), Cost of Attendance, non-discriminatory practices of awarding domestic versus international scholarships, summer school funding applications being open to all, and non-discriminatory practices of awarding 5<sup>th</sup> year (exhausted eligibility) and medically disqualified aid. C. Vinson wrapped up the presentation by briefly going through the "laundry list" of items that are used to look at prong 3. She noted that many institutions, including NIU, are now using this prong to meet compliance as women are trending up in higher education.

- c. **Volleyball and Football Ticket Prices (Fall 2024)** – J. Cheney discussed fall ticket pricing for volleyball and football (document in Teams folder). For the most part, prices will remain the same. Football season tickets will see an addition of \$8 per ticket for parking (rather than charging a flat \$25/account). There will also be an additional fee assessed for credit card purchases for both volleyball and football.

VII. **Announcements/Adjournment** – B. McCormick made a motion to adjourn; K. Hickey seconded; meeting closed at 3:18 pm.