



## ATHLETIC BOARD MEETING November 8, 2023 – 2:00 pm

Present: Courtney Hughes (Chair), Gabriel Amegatcher, Ehsan Asoudegi, Vincent Becker, Aaron Fogleman, Michele Hunt, Rob Kerschke, Tom Libert, Brian McCormick, Glenn Roby, Emily Romancew, Laura Sala

Guests: John Cheney, Deputy AD/Executive Assoc. AD/Operations; Lisa DeRango, Sr. Assoc. AD/Human Resources & Finance Administration; Randi Napientek, Sr. Assoc. AD/Director of SAASS; Nate Olson, Associate AD/Development; Courtney Vinson, Sr. Assoc. AD/Sports Administration

- I. **Call to Order** – C. Hughes called the meeting to order at 2:00pm.
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes** – B. McCormick moved to approve; T. Libert seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- III. **Faculty Athletics Representative – C. Hughes**
  - a. **APR/GSR Report Update** – C. Hughes went over NIU’s Academic Progress Rate (PowerPoint in Teams folder), which is an NCAA metric used to assess academic progress. This rate considers eligibility and retention of each student-athlete, per academic term, for each team. Every student-athlete who receives athletic financial aid is counted and receives one point for being in school and one point for being academically eligible. The team’s total points are divided by points possible and then multiplied by 1,000 to equal their academic progress rate. Institutions are required to have a minimum APR of 930. The PowerPoint showed NIU’s current APR (*rates have not yet been made public and are confidential*), all surpassing the 930 NCAA benchmark. C. Hughes noted that things like SAASS support, data-informed planning and advising, life skills assistance beyond college (i.e. financial literacy and mental health) all play a role in retention and eligibility. A. Fogleman asked if there were any trends that could be seen with these numbers. C. Hughes responded that the size of the team can sometimes skew the numbers (i.e. smaller team’s scores can be drastically impacted if even one person leaves the institution), but that there is no apparent concern for NIU’s teams at this time.
- IV. **Athletics Director Update** – J. Cheney provided the Athletics update on behalf of S. Frazier (document in Teams folder). The football team suffered a tough loss last night, however with 2 more games to go, the team is still bowl eligible (need 6 wins). Volleyball’s last home match is coming up on November 15<sup>th</sup>, and the team is still in the running for the MAC tournament. Cross Country finished 11<sup>th</sup> in the MAC championships under first year coach, Juan Carrillo. Men’s Soccer is currently in Mountain Valley Conference tournament play now, and the Women’s Soccer team made it to the first round of the MAC tournament for the first time since 2017. While fall sports are starting to wrap up, winter sports are starting. Men’s Basketball played well against a top 5 ranked team on Monday. Despite the loss, the results showed promise.
- V. **Liaison Reports:**
  - a. **Diversity Integration Group (D.I.G.)** – G. Roby/C. Vinson – C. Vinson noted that the last meeting had been cancelled, but the DEIB SAAC group has been working on several different initiatives, including social media postings for Native American Heritage History Month, and recognition of international student-athletes by hanging flags of all represented countries around the Yordon Center. E. Romancew added that all teams are going through C.O.D.E. training prior to each

sports team season (conducted by Athletics DEIB Graduate Assistant, Madison Mathews, and a campus facilitator).

- b. **Finance and Facilities** – K. Hickey/J. Cheney/L. DeRango – L. DeRango gave a brief overview of the most recent Finance and Facilities Working Group meeting (minutes available on Teams folder). The highlights of their meeting included year-end wrap up, staffing transitions, road improvements and ongoing transportation/bus issues. They will meet again on December 4<sup>th</sup>.
- c. **External Affairs** – B. McCormick/ R. Sedevie/ TJ Feuerbach – n/a

VI. **Athletic Department Reports:**

- a. **SAAC Initiatives** – R. Napientek went over Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) initiatives for 2023-2024 (document available in Teams). SAAC is run by student-athletes, who sit on a variety of leadership groups for different areas of the department. R. Napientek provided a quick overview of some of the SAAC initiatives, including community service goals (last year 4,700 community service hours logged, goal of 5,000 hours this year), mental health (“Mindful Mondays”), financial literacy, career prep, DEIB, sexual violence prevention (all student-athletes met with Dr. Bennett in the fall), etc. E. Romancew highlighted a few initiatives the DEIB unit of SAAC initiated: hanging of flags around the Yordon Center for all international student-athletes with a map with information and fun facts about the different countries; Charles “Peanut” Tillman event; Mentorship program with schools; etc. T. Libert asked if all student-athletes are required to do community service, to which E. Romancew responded that while not necessarily mandatory, it is highly encouraged (especially certain sport teams). G. Amegatcher added that many teams do community service together, but that all student-athletes have the opportunity to volunteer individually as well through Helper Helper, an app that showcases available volunteer opportunities that students can choose from.
- b. **Huskies Invest Recap** – N. Olson, Associate AD for Development, provided a recap of the Huskies Invest Week of Giving. This year marked the 7<sup>th</sup> Week of Giving, and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row, the campaign raised over \$1 million in a seven-day span. N. Olson included several statistics: total donations \$1,162,000 (Huskies Invest record); 10% increase in total dollars raised from last year; 46 individual gifts of over \$1,000 (Huskies Invest record); 455 total gifts of which 323 were individual donors (Huskies Invest record); 7 of 17 teams saw an increase in amount of funds raised this year from last year. N. Olson also noted that new to Huskies Invest this year was a gift matching challenge. Several donors (recognized and anonymous) gave a 1-1 gift match, bringing in \$54,000 of the total donation dollars. A. Fogleman asked where the donations go. N. Olson answered that the donations landing page offers several options/initiatives for donors to choose where they wish to designate their funds (i.e. general fund, cost of attendance, sport-specific, project-specific, etc.).
- c. **Bowl Scenario** – J. Cheney quickly noted that the Football team is still in the hunt to be bowl eligible (must have 6 wins). The MAC Conference has 5 guaranteed tie-ins, with a potential for 2 more. J. Cheney added that it is a little different than it used to be as bowl selections are more about TV pairings now (ESPN owns 28 of the 34 bowls). December 4<sup>th</sup> is when all bowl pairings will be announced.

VII. **Announcements/Adjournment** – Upcoming meetings: February 7, 2024 and April 17, 2024.

G. Roby made a motion to adjourn; B. McCormick seconded; meeting closed at 2:31 pm.