

2017 Report to the Faculty Senate by the Faculty Athletic Representative

The Athletic Council met on October 26, 2016.

I. Announcements:

a. Brad Edwards update on ICA

B. Edwards reported on academic progress of Student-Athletes (S-As) (GPA of 3.1) which is above Mason's general population. He indicated that as Mason's student body academic performance improves as a whole, it will be more and more difficult for S-As to have a higher GPA than Mason's student body. He commended Nena Rogers for taking over the leadership of the Academic Services and indicated that it is the best group he has worked with in his entire career.

He then reported on the Fall teams and the personal change in women VB and Men Soccer. He shared how excited he is with the Men Basketball team and encouraged the members of the committee to enroll in the program to follow the team and the coach for a day.

In terms of personal shift, he mentioned that the SWA who was hired in the Spring, Jackie Campbell, has accepted a position at the NCAA headquarters and that she was leaving Mason by the end of October. He explained how in her short time at Mason she managed to positively impact the Athletic Department by re-engineering the compliance and policy procedures. She was instrumental in bringing Kelly Webb and Karen Kelly who both have great experience at major institutions. Kelly Webb will assume Jackie's responsibilities by interim while some of Kelly's responsibilities will be shifted to Karen.

He then discussed budget and the need for the Athletic Department to generate their own money through fund raising to pursue any major projects. For example, the improvements of the baseball facilities were all covered through money (1.3 M) raised through fund raising activities. It was the first time a project was entirely self-financed. The basketball locker improvement plan in the Eagle Bank arena will be the next project. The men locker room will be accomplished first while the women locker room will be paid by departmental money. He indicated that basketball is the only sport that doesn't have their dedicated facility and for that reason, a second project in the work is the re-appropriation of the Cage Gym in the RAC for that purpose. Meetings with parties normally using that space (REC, RHT, ROTC) have already occurred to insure that all parties will be able to use different space (Lynn gym, Field House, etc.) to compensate for the loss of the Cage Gym.

Also related to budget, he talked about a new deal with Adidas to provide gear for all the teams and an academic bus "wrapped" with Mason colors. He specified that the bus is not only for sports teams but could also be used by academic units on campus. He also mentioned the hiring of Darrell Green to help with community outreach and fund raising.

Finally, related to possible student protest over racial issues, he indicated that he had had conversations with J. Williams and R. Pascarell. He encouraged dialogues and is supportive of students who want to express their opinion.

II. Committees – Charges, latest discussions, and Membership

The description of each sub-committee was shared based on the by-laws, and members of the Council to serve on these sub-committees were identified. B. Baker, J. Muir and P. Patterson were asked to initiate the first meeting of the sub-committees, at which time an official chair could be selected. A. Stoehr and P. Weiss will both serve on the Academic Integrity sub-committee, and M. Fyock will serve on the Gender-Diversity and Student Well-Being.

III. New Business

D. Banville shared that she had met the Men and Women VB teams to introduce herself and explain her role to the S-As. Meetings with the Men and Women BB, Men Soccer and Wrestling have also been scheduled. The other teams will be scheduled in the short term. She is also scheduled to meet with President Cabrera on Friday October 28, 2016 to inquire about his expectations for her in that role. Finally, she will be attending the Faculty Athletic Representative Association Annual Meeting held in Indianapolis

November 3-5.

The Athletic Council met on January 25, 2017

- I. Announcements:
 - a. Brad Edwards update on ICA
 - Very positive numbers related to cumulative GPA and A10 Honor Roll Student-Athletes (S-As). Coaches are recruiting more S-As that are academically ready and that the upgrade in the academic support have helped S-As be more successful.
 - The fund raising efforts continue to raise the money necessary to build the addition to the RAC for the basketball teams (practice facility). The baseball stadium renovations of the dugouts are almost complete. The First Pitch Dinner with Hall of Famer George Brett will be held on 2/10/17.
 - Overview of the results of the in-season teams.
 - b. Dominique Banville update on A-10 Conference

The conference was held in Pittsburgh and all the FARS were in attendance. Meetings were held either within groups (e.g. FARS, SWA, AD, SAAC) or jointly. Within the FAR group, discussions revolved around best practices within each of our institutions, Post-Graduate scholarship, missed class survey, and general news and initiatives from the A-10 leadership. Joint group discussions focused on Sexual Assault initiative, S-A experience, A-10 Affinity, Facebook Live (streaming experiment), and reports from each group about discussion held within each group.
 - c. Kelly Webb update on upcoming changes in NCAA Compliance Rules

Kelly provided an overview of the changes that would most impact our S-As in terms of academic eligibility, the intent of the changes and comments and questions for each change.

II. Committees – Charges, latest discussions, and Membership

- a. Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

The committee has not met yet but a meeting has been scheduled.
- b. Academic Integrity

Several items from the previous year were reviewed and new discussion started on areas of interest/concern. More specifically, an issue related to S-As having to miss labs held once a week and how to manage strict attendance policy. After much discussion, the committee agreed that S-As are in the same situation as other students who must miss class for university-related reasons. Rather than crafting policy the recommendation was to have better/stronger communication with faculty about the athletes' schedules. An assessment of what is currently provided to professors will be conducted along with considering ways to enhance a better communication flow. Other areas of discussion for the year will be the Concussion and Return to Athletics policy and ongoing communication with faculty.
- c. Gender-Diversity and Student Well Being

The committee is working at updating the S-A survey so that all S-As would answer the survey electronically. In the past, the survey was exclusively distributed to seniors on a paper/pencil format. The survey can be designed so that specific questions can be asked exclusively to seniors if we need to. Elysia Lash, Associate Director of Assessment, Research and Retention discussed with us the different options available and goals that such survey might have. She agreed to continue working with us and look at the revised version of the survey. Nena Rodgers will arrange a meeting of all the different key personal (e.g. Kelly Webb, Debi Corbato, Brad Edwards, etc.) to make sure that the information they need is present on the survey and submit a draft for the sub-committee to examine.

III. New Business

No new business

The Athletic Council met on April 12, 2017 (Draft – will be approved at the next meeting in Fall 17)

- I. Announcements:
 - a. Brad Edwards update on ICA
 - Asked N. Rogers to talk about academics. We have 160 Student-Athletes (S-As) on the dean's list for the fall semester. A learning specialist has been added to the support staff. Nena also provided an additional report after the meeting. It can be found in Appendix.

- Winter sports wrapped up. Highlights include improved men's basketball record, had two wrestlers qualify for NCAAs, had A10 diver of the year in men's. Spring sports are underway. Women's lacrosse is doing well and could win the conference.
 - We are transitioning our competitive cheer squad to a sideline squad. Twenty percent of our concussions this year are from competitive cheer. The NCAA does not allow stunts during games. We also do not receive title IX credit for it. Dance will no longer compete either, runs a \$25k deficit. Will continue to invest money in their equipment since they are vital part of game atmosphere. Students will still get some benefits like being able to pre-register.
 - Personnel-Debi Corbatto elevated to senior staff. She will be in charge of Risk Management, and Policies & Procedures.
 - Baseball stadium is open with new renovations.
 - Continue to work on basketball improvement for facilities to include phase one of renovation of cage gym and men's and women's basketball locker rooms in EagleBank arena. Will cost \$2.2 million. There was a small protest by a student and we held a town hall with university life and Rec. R. Pascarelle suggested conducting a broader town hall.
 - Also will upgrade arena lighting and looking at adding video panels to the scoreboard as part of Learfield contract.
- b. Dominique Banville recaps first year as FAR
- In my first year as the FAR, I felt it was important that coaches and student-athletes (S-As) get to know me and that I had a chance to immerse myself in the role and responsibilities. Therefore, this year was extremely busy! Here is an overview of my activities for this academic year:
- Attended a coach's meeting at the beginning of the academic year to introduce myself to the coaches;
 - Attended the Faculty Athletic Representative Association Conference in October where I had an opportunity to learn about the different roles and expectations of a FAR.
 - Visited all the teams (golf team upcoming) to introduce myself and inform S-As about my role and responsibilities;
 - Attended one SAAC executive meeting;
 - Attended one SAAC meeting and the Holiday Dinner following it;
 - Traveled with the following teams:
 - Women's basketball team (U of Towson, MD; overnight bus trip)
 - Men's basketball team (UMass Amherst, MA; 2-night plane trip)
 - Wrestling team (Franklin & Marshall College, PA; day trip)
 - Men's volleyball team (Penn State, PA; 2-night bus trip)
 - Attended a number of home games (Men and Women basketball; Women volleyball; Softball; Baseball; Women Soccer);
 - Attended all the sub-committee meetings associated with the Athletic Council;
 - Worked closely with the Athletic Department to update the exit survey and transform it to an online survey not only for graduating, transferring or student stopping participation, but for all S-As so we can have a better idea of their experience throughout their time at Mason. The survey will be used for the first time at the end of the semester.
 - Was in constant communication with Ms Nena Rodgers, Senior Associate AD, Academic Services, and Ms Kelly Webb, Senior Woman Administrator throughout the academic year to discuss and solve issues related to academic and well-being of S-As;
 - Will make myself available for exit interview with S-As graduating, transferring or student stopping participation;
 - Will attend the NCAA Regional Rule seminar in Indianapolis, in May 2017.
- c. Debi Corbatto presents the new Concussion and Return to Play protocol
- Was submitted to, and approved by the NCAA;
 - Only involves medical staff (no coaches, no parents);
 - Has to major parts: Return to learn and Return to Play.

II. Committees – Charges, latest discussions, and Membership

a. Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance

- B. Baker was elected chair of the committee
 - The committee recommended to have D. Corbatta present the S-A Concussion Protocol
 - With the upcoming revision of the policy and procedures for the entire athletic department, this sub-committee will help review the suggested changes.
- b. Academic Integrity
- An issue was brought out by the COS regarding S-As missing labs. It was determined that the best way to minimize problems is to ensure that good communication is established from the beginning of the semester between the S-As and their instructors.
 - The committee looked into academic misconduct and honor code policy and determined that the Mason policy would be the one applied to all S-As and shared in the handbook. This handbook, once finalized, will be on the Mason Athletic website accessible for all.
- c. Gender-Diversity and Student Well Being
- Time spent looking at the survey. An expert reviewed it and provided great feedback. One of the recommendations was to focus on questions that the Athletic Department can do something about, and share with S-As what has been done in response to their comments.
 - D. Banville will distribute student survey soon and meet with exiting student-athletes.

III. New Business

No new business

Appendix

Academic Services highlights for our 2016-17 year:

The Spring 2017 term has seen significant improvements to Academic Services within Intercollegiate Athletics both in terms of services rendered and the infrastructure of the facility. By the start of Spring classes in January, the newly rebranded Athletic Academic Resource Center (AARC) went paperless with study hall bookkeeping by using the login system SSC, for tracking student-athlete traffic in and out of the facility. This new system provides a significantly more accurate record of study hall hours logged by student-athletes and generates reports for academic support staff. Additionally, the SSC system also greatly streamlines the process of creating progress reports between the Academic Services staff and Mason faculty to obtain individual progress for each student-athlete's respective course including current grade, attendance, and conduct in class.

Reinforcing the new SSC system has led to increasing the size of the support staff towards tracking student-athlete traffic. We have also hired a learning specialist offering individualized academic coaching and skill development to student-athletes; this in addition to the full tutoring staff during regular office hours.

In line with Director Edwards' vision for Mason Athletics, the Academic Services staff have also expanded the career component for student-athletes from offering additional networking opportunities and career resources to holding a professional dining etiquette workshop in the Spring. Finally, the staff has been coordinating with University Career Services to create a section of UNIV-420 specifically for student-athletes looking to make the transition from college to their professional career.

Finally, the entire facility has seen extensive improvements since the conclusion of the Fall 2016 term from new carpeting, new furniture, upgraded equipment in the computer lab, and rearranged the furniture in the main study room.

In conclusion, I would like to thank each Athletic Council member for their commitment and guidance, particularly the student member, Michelle Wallerstedt, student-athlete for their valuable participation. It has been an honor to serve.

Dominique Banville
Faculty Athletic Representative
April 20, 2017

Cc: President Angel Cabrera
Chief of Staff Frank Neville
Assistant Vice President/Director of Athletics Brad Edwards