Senate Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics
Penn State University Faculty Senate
502 Keller Building
October 21, 2014
Minutes


Absent: Sandy Barbour, Durga Ghosh, Daniel Perkins, Tramble Turner

Guests: Amanda Lehotak (Women’s Softball Coach), Jeff Zinn (Men’s Tennis Coach)

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair Chet Ray at 8:00 AM.
2. Approval of minutes for the September 9, 2014 meeting: Minutes were approved as written.
3. Charmelle Green – Comments on current state of Penn State Athletics
   a. Approval for greater autonomy for the Power 5 approved by NCAA. Five statements being drafted by the conferences in the Power 5, to reflect each of the following areas.
      i. Insurance and career transition funds for student-athletes (funding for athletes who could be earning money as a pro; insurance in the case of a career-ending injury)
      ii. Financial aid (statement being drafted by ACC, Big Ten, SEC)
      iii. Health and wellness (statement being drafted by SEC)
      iv. Meals and nutrition (ACC)
      v. Vision statement: Charmelle provided the committee with a draft (statement being drafted by Big Ten, PAC12.)
   b. New governing structure for Power 5 to include three student representatives with voting rights from each conference (total 15 student votes). PSU will provide two nominees for these positions, as will all the other Big Ten institutions. A total of three will be chosen from all the Big Ten nominees. Each institution in the Power 5 will also have one vote. (65 institutional votes + 15 student votes = 80 total votes)
      i. Time-commitments for student-athletes to serve as representatives is a concern, as student representatives will be required to attend three meetings or conferences per year.
         1. Student-athletes no longer competing, and even recent graduates, will be considered.
         2. Student-athletes within 3 years of athletic eligibility will be considered. Two students from PSU have been discussed.
         3. Student representatives will serve 2-year terms
      ii. Guaranteed scholarships within the Big Ten
         1. Scholarships will be honored until bachelor’s degree completion for all recruited student-athletes as long as they are in good standing with the team, University, and community.
         2. Student-athletes will be allowed to resume scholarships if they leave the University and want to return later to complete their degree.
4. John Nichols spoke briefly regarding COIA’s opposition to the increased autonomy of the Power 5.
   a. Letter to the Department of Education by Chancellor of University of Maryland and McMillian, suggesting the formation of a committee to explore alternatives to the NCAA recommendations.
   b. COIA’s position is that recent NCAA reforms decrease focus on academics and diminish the role of FARs. Also, COIA foresees reforms pushing more emphasis on financial gains, forcing a “financial arms race” and enabling fewer and fewer student-athletes and athletic programs to receive more and more financial gains.

5. Russ Mushinsky – Discussion of upcoming APR and GSR scores
   b. GSR will be released to the public next Tuesday.
   c. Rates only include students on scholarship.
   d. The GSR is an average over a 4-year period, so one very good or very bad year will stay with us for 4 years.
   e. Overall GSRs are up slightly from last year (88% to 89%); Football GSRs also up slightly.
   f. Federal rates have data for single years and overall. In general, PSU numbers are healthy, but small numbers in basketball cause disproportionate skewing of results.
   g. APRs for AY 2013-14 will be released in Spring 2015. Current numbers meet or exceed standards; no teams will be penalized. Numbers from 2011-12 (football) are not as strong, but they are still within acceptable limits. PSU lost points during that year because of a drop in retention due to sanctions. Russ reported that if PSU had not lost these students because of sanctions, PSU would probably rank 3rd or 4th in the conference, instead of 13th.
   h. PSU is undergoing an audit by the NCAA, where APR and GSR will be reviewed. This is an expected audit that occurs once during each 9-year cycle.

6. Linda Caldwell – Discussion of the Big Ten FAR meeting
   a. FARs are starting to meet with Academic Directors on campus. Some items being discussed include:
      i. Best practices
      ii. Managerial practices
      iii. Interacting with on-campus advisors
      iv. On-line coursework
   b. Linda is meeting with students regarding post-graduate scholarship opportunities from NCAA and Big Ten. She will be asking for assistance from IAC committee members with scholarship awards.
   c. The Wayne Duke Post-Graduate Award is awarded to one male and one female athlete from the Big Ten. PSU will nominate one male and one female. We have had 2 winners since 2008.

7. Approval of schedules - Discussion of 2 requested exceptions
   a. Softball: Coach Amanda Lehotak discussed the early start of softball season (Feb. 6) and the number of games (i.e., 56) that must be played in order to be considered for post-season play. Travel for games requires bus trips to large airports and flight times for the large number of players and personnel are often difficult to schedule. Big Ten games require 4-5 days of out-of-class time (4 weekends, including Friday plus one midweek every other year). Coach Lehotak requested one extra day for players to miss class (9 instead of 8 as allowed by Policy 67-00). Russ and Linda verified that average GPAs on the softball team are good.
b. Men’s Tennis: Coach Jeff Zinn reported that tennis matches are played on Fridays and Sundays and that the Big Ten sets the schedule. He also reported that previous playing success has led to the team being invited to play in more tournaments, which adds competition days to the schedule. He requested one extra ½-day for players to miss class (8 ½ instead of 8). Russ and Linda verified that average GPAs on the tennis team are good.

c. After coaches were dismissed, the IAC discussed at length the requests. Some issues that were identified included:
   i. Big Ten is scheduling many competitions that require students to miss class. Perhaps the conference is not placing as high a priority on student health and welfare as the IAC would like.
   ii. The number of games in softball seems especially high, but this is set at the national level and there is little we can do about it.
   iii. Travel is an issue for both teams, and for many teams at PSU. If we could fund chartered flights for all teams, fewer class days would be missed.

d. The 8-day rule offers no explicit language regarding waivers.

8. Motion made by John Boehmer and seconded by Rob Pangborn: Move to make one-time exceptions to the 8-day rule for Women’s Softball and Men’s Tennis, with the understanding that the coaches will provide an acceptable plan for study-time to compensate for missed class time.

9. Motion made by John Boehmer and seconded by Rob Pangborn: Move to make modifications to Policy 67-00, Item 2, to allow for waivers to the policy. Waivers will be considered only in the event of exceptional circumstances and must be brought forward by the coach. The IAC will consider past and present academic performance by student-athletes on the team. The coach must present a plan for study time to compensate for missed class or study time.

10. The last three items on the agenda (Discussion of Division III and PSUAC missed class proposal, Proposed recommendation for changes to the IAC committee, and New Business) were tabled until the next meeting of the IAC, as there was not time to discuss these items.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Renee Borromeo and Benjamin Hickerson