

Athletic Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 26, 2010  
11:00 am

Cage Center Room 328

Members Present: Todd Brooks, Lorenzo Canalis, Holly Compton, Paula Englis, Janna Johnson, Stan Pethel, Reid Popple, Mika Robinson and Christy Snider.

Members Absent: Stephen Briggs (ex-officio) and Debbie Heida (ex-officio)

**I. Athletic Committee Mission and Charge:**

Being the first meeting of the year, Todd Brooks provided an overview of the mission and charge of the Athletic Committee. The mission of the committee is to advise the president and vice president for student affairs in all matters concerning intercollegiate athletics and campus recreation. The committee's composition and charge has changed from previous years in response to the institution's transition to NCAA Division III. Todd Brooks also shared that members of the Athletic Committee will be utilized along with other college constituents in serving as a compliance committee. The compliance committee will assist the administration in documenting and evaluating compliance policies and procedures, communicate the importance of rules compliance to the campus community, assist in rules violations investigations and complete monitoring tasks.

**II. NCAA Division III Transition & Departmental Update:**

Todd Brooks provided an update on the progress which has been made relative to achieving NCAA Division III active membership and on the athletic department as a whole. The institution was approved for second year NCAA Division III provisional membership. The athletic administration is complying with all applicable requirements as mandated by the provisional membership process. The school will be participating in its required, second year videoconference session with NCAA national office representatives on Monday, November 1, 2010. Dr. Briggs, Dean Debbie Heida and Todd Brooks are required and will be attending the NCAA National Convention this coming January. Todd Brooks, Janna Johnson and Mika Robinson will be attend a Regional Rules Seminar this coming May. Dr. Paula Englis will be attending a Faculty Athletic Representative seminar next semester as well in compliance with provisional membership requirements. The institution will once again be required to submit an Annual Report and Institutional Self-Study by June 1.

It was also reported that the institution is no longer holding dual affiliation with the NCAA and the NAIA. The institution is no longer associated with the NAIA or the Southern States Athletics Conference. We are currently considered an independent as far as an athletic conference affiliation goes. We continue to politically push for membership in the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference. The SCAC just recently added the University of Dallas to replace DePauw University who withdrew from the conference this past summer. It was

reported that the SCAC continues to consider Berry College as a possible member within its discussion of possible expansion and/or reorganization.

Todd Brooks also shared that he was proud of the approach the coaches and current student-athletes have taken towards the NCAA transition. All of the fall teams have had tremendous success and have been able to recruit quality student-athletes academically and athletically to their teams. He then shared a breakdown of each team's 2010 spring cumulative GPAs. The cumulative GPA for the entire student-athletes during the term was a 3.13 as opposed to the cumulative GPA for all students which was a 3.11. It was reported that the student-athlete retention rate among student-athletes for this past spring will soon be calculated now that all of the eligibility requirements were completed. It is expected to be similar to the 91% rate that we had for the previous fall. It was mentioned that this would be the last year to really watch for fluctuations in the retention rates since next year is the year that the rising seniors (approximately 33 student-athletes) would be relinquishing their athletically related financial aid in order to remain eligible to participate on their respective teams.

Todd Brooks then concluded his report by mentioned that men's and women's lacrosse was ready to begin competition this coming spring. The men's lacrosse team has a roster of 20 young men and the women's lacrosse team has a roster of 18 young ladies (6 of which are current women's soccer participants). He also share that there were no changes among the coaching staff and that the only employee development involved the rehiring of Mr. Mickey Seward as our Director of Sports Information and Promotions to replace Mr. Scott Dunford who left for Oakwood University in Michigan.

### **III. Eligibility Consideration - "Good Academic Standing":**

There was one items of old business which was discussed. Dean Heida was scheduled to attend the meeting but was unable to attend. The policy of "Good Academic Standing" which was presented to the Academic Council last year was not approved and needs to be revised for further consideration. Todd Brooks handed out the revised policy draft Dean Heida had intended to share with the committee in order to gain its feedback. In light of Dean Heida's absence, a discussion followed but no action was taken.

At the conclusion of the meeting agenda, it was suggested that the committee go ahead and discuss the revised eligibility draft once again. Upon comparing the revised draft to that which was presented and denied by Academic Council last year, the committee felt like a combination of some of the original aspects of the proposal and the revised draft may be the best approach in establishing a workable policy. A discussion then followed pertaining to the hardship any eligibility review process could possibly present to winter and spring sports athletes as they enter their second semester each year.

### **IV. Strategic Planning and the Consideration of Intercollegiate Football:**

Todd Brooks shared that the strategic study of possibly adding football was continuing and that the institution intended to begin the process of conducting focus groups (brown bag lunches) with campus constituents in order to accumulate feedback about the possibility of adding football. The faculty members were asked to assist in conducting such meetings with their colleagues which they agreed to do. Todd made it clear that he would help in the scheduling of



the focus group sessions and along with other administrators would be available at each of the meetings to serve as a resource. It was pointed out that having administrators present at the meetings would be important in order to have questions answered that may come up as part of the discussion (cost, academic changes on campus, etc.).

The committee was provided with a list of proposed questions that could possibly frame the focus group discussions. The committee was asked for feedback pertaining to the questions and whether or not there were any other questions that needed to be added.

Relative to focus groups, the committee discussed that the following groups should be considered for such meetings; Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (all student-athletes), Student Government Association, faculty, staff, alumni and community leaders. It was also recommended that once the focus groups are concluded and information obtained, an electronic survey (surveymonkey) should be conducted as a follow-up to the faculty, staff and students.

The committee then conducted its own discussion pertaining to the idea of actually adding intercollegiate football. The question was asked on whether or not the addition of football was necessary or expected of the institution in wanting to join the SCAC. The question was asked on whether or not it is wise to begin considering football when the institution just added five new sports over the past two years and there are still related commitments that need to be fulfilled in establishing those sports. One faculty member suggested that we should consider attending a Shorter University game as part of our research to see what kind of support they are receiving. It was a couple of committee members understanding that the community's support of Shorter's football program had dropped significantly since their first two years. A discussion followed pertaining to whether or not additional administrative staffing would need to be added if football was added and in response to the already significant growth in athletics. The question was asked to whether or not there were any professional organizations that had established standards relative to the relationship between administrative positions and the number of student-athletes in a specific program. Although there are such standards in Athletic Training, no one knew of such a professional organization or administrative staffing standards.

The students on the committee expressed that they felt like the addition of football would receive mixed reaction from the student body. They felt like the student body, and especially the female students, would appreciate more males on campus. They also shared the concern that our current student-athletes may question whether or not those participating on the football team would take the academic standards and their academic performances as seriously as they do. They went on to share their concern on whether or not the institution is really ready to take on that many new students so quickly. One student representative actual stated that the whole consideration of adding football was "overwhelming" to him. He even mentioned that he felt the addition of football would affect the fulfillment of other items, mostly facility needs, for the other athletic teams that have just recently been added. The student representatives concluded by mentioning that they felt like football would "overwhelm" the rest of the athletic program. Other committee members shared this concern. Some had shared their previous experiences in other athletic programs that offered football and they indicated that this was the case in their situation. It was stated that one thing that is nice about our current athletic department is the feeling that all of our athletic offerings are treated "equally" and that this may be jeopardized by the addition of football.

In discussing the predicted reaction of the faculty on this issue, it was stated that there would probably be two reactions; negative and indifferent. It is believed that the question of "why" would have to be answered. It may make more sense to the faculty if it is a necessary element in getting us into the stronger academic SCAC. It would have made more sense when we were struggling for students but is that the case now? It would need to be justified in that it would affect the faculty's ability to accommodate students especially at a time when they have already lost positions. Does it make sense to spend a significant amount of money on such a program when we have sustained staffing freezes? Can we have football without a Greek society? All of these questions and thoughts were shared. It was reiterated that although they may be some interest among the faculty, the question of "why" would definitely need to be answered.

The meeting adjourned at 12:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Todd Brooks  
Athletic Committee Chair

October 26, 2010