

**Boston College**

**Athletics Advisory Board  
Annual Report, 2007-08**









Greene (Institutional Research), Mike Sacco (Intersections Project) and Ed Taylor (CSOM, Accounting). At the end of the academic year, Dick Tresch (Economics) completed an elected term, and Michael Moore (Psychology) was elected by the faculty to a three-year term, beginning June, 2008.

Please feel free to seek out any AAB member with questions and concerns you may have. One of the Board's primary functions is to serve as a channel for communication between the academic and athletic programs, and we are always open to your questions or other input.

The Athletics Advisory Board:

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting**

**October 12, 2007**

**12:30 AM-1:30 PM**

**Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Bob Taggart,

Members absent: Dick Tresch

**Current Developments**

Most of the meeting was devoted to a review and discussion of current developments in athletics:

1. BC is currently undergoing its second cycle of NCAA Athletics Certification. The first cycle was completed in 1999. The schedule for the current cycle calls for a self-study to be completed in May, 2008. This will be followed by a review and comments from the NCAA Committee on Athletics Certification (CAC) in the summer of 2008. In the fall of 2008, a peer-review team will conduct a campus visit, and the CAC will issue its final report in February, 2009, in which the athletics program will be either certified, certified with conditions or not certified. A Steering Committee has been appointed to conduct the self-study, chaired by Robert Newton of the President's Office. The Steering Committee includes faculty, students, and administrators from around the University as well as athletics department staff members. The AAB is represented on the Steering Committee





4. Bob Taggart called the group's attention to the recent Knight Commission survey study of "Faculty Perceptions of Intercollegiate Athletics." The survey instrument was sent to 13,604 faculty members at 23 Division I institutions, and 2,071 usable responses were received. A primary conclusion of the study was that a relatively large portion of faculty members surveyed seemed to have little knowledge of and also felt disconnected from the issues facing college sports. Further information on the report is available at [www.knightcommission.org](http://www.knightcommission.org).

### **Topics for Future Meetings**

5. The final issue was a discussion of future meeting topics. Some members of BC's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) are scheduled to attend the meeting of November 9 to discuss their experience at BC. Donald Hafner, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, who is assuming responsibility for the Learning Resources for Student-Athletes program, will attend the meeting of December 7. The group also expressed interest in analyzing fall practice and competition schedules, hearing more about Admissions practices for student-athletes, talking to a representative

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting  
November 9, 2007  
12:30 AM-1:45 PM  
Fulton Hall 524**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Guest: A member of the Boston College Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Since only one SAAC member was able to attend, and since Athletics Advisory Board members were interested in that student's candid impressions, it was decided not to identify the student by name in the meeting minutes and to alternate feminine and masculine pronouns in reporting the student's comments.

The meeting was devoted to a discussion with the SAAC member about her experience as a student-athlete at Boston College. She said that she had loved her overall BC experience, but she did feel that student-athlete life could be improved in some ways. The following topics were discussed:

**1. Solutions for Student-Athletes Experiencing Difficulty Enrolling in Needed Classes**

The SAAC member expressed the wish that either some sort of priority registration system for student-athletes or a clearer system for obtaining course overrides could be established at BC. He said that student-athletes in some degree programs or majors experienced considerable difficulty in balancing their practice and competition schedules with scheduling needed courses. She thought these problems were particularly acute for pre-medical students. He also thought that some student-athletes felt forced into taking courses they were not completely interested in because of limited choices in the time slots they had available. She said that it was not always clear to students whether they should approach deans or instructors with course override requests.

Some AAB members noted that student-athlete visitors to previous AAB meetings had expressed similar feelings. There seems to be a widespread desire among student-athletes for a better system to help them register for needed classes while trying to work around the constraints of practice and competition schedules. Since an important part of the problem seems to be how to locate the best information about getting help with registration, this led to a broader discussion of sources of course advice for student-athletes.

**2. Course, Instructor, Program and Career Advice**

AAB members inquired whether student-athletes were encouraged to get course advice from Learning Resources for Student-Athletes (LRSA) advisers more than from their



#### **4. Student-Athletes' Attitudes Toward Academics**

The SAAC member was asked her opinion of student-athlete attitudes toward academics at Boston College. He felt that most student-athletes here had chosen BC in the first place because they were serious about academics. In her opinion, there were isolated instances of teams where the attitude toward academics was more lackadaisical, but she did not feel that this was the norm. He felt that his own team had become stricter over time about monitoring team members' class attendance. She also repeated her feeling that upperclassmen student-athletes generally were doing a better job of emphasizing the importance of academics to underclassmen than when she first arrived. He did feel, however, that LRSA advisers sometimes placed too much emphasis on remaining eligible and graduating and not enough on getting maximum benefit from the available academic programs.

#### **5. LRSA Facilities**

The SAAC member was asked about the adequacy of LRSA facilities for studying and advising. While she said that she does not personally use LRSA study space, her impression was that overcrowding was not a major problem except for course registration periods when many student-athletes are trying to meet with advisers at the same time.

Referring to an informal discussion that had taken place via email and prior to the start of the October 12, 2007 AAB meeting, some AAB members said that they had heard complaints from other student-athletes about noise and overcrowding in the LRSA study space. They also felt that the policy of mandatory study halls in LRSA, as determined by

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting  
December 7, 2007**





athletics financial aid to Ursula DellaPorta and Jenna Brown, respectively, of the Office of Student Services.

Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being Subcommittee Chair Amy LaCombe (Assistant Dean, CSOM) described her committee's charge as providing specific information on relative budgets, facilities and practice times for men's and women's sports as well as on minority representation among Athletics staff members and on admissions profile and the racial or ethnic compositions of teams in different sports. She also noted that the committee is charged with documenting student-athlete well-being programs in place around the University. The description of the gender-equity portion of the Subcommittee's work sparked a discussion of men's and women's teams alternating practice times from one year or one semester to another in cases where they share practice facilities. Such alternation does currently take place in basketball and soccer but not in ice hockey.

Academic Integrity Subcommittee Chair Joe Burns (Associate Academic Vice President for Undergraduate Programs) said that his group is gathering information to show whether or not student-athletes receive the same academic treatment and opportunities that other BC students receive. This includes examination of SA admissions profiles relative to other BC students and of support systems in place for SAs.

Jessica Greene, Director of Institutional Research, then described the data-gathering efforts she is undertaking to support the work of the different subcommittees. For example, she is preparing to examine Senior Survey data for both SAs and non-athlete BC students to see if there are any systematic differences in student satisfaction between the two groups. In addition, she is gathering information on admissions profiles and graduation success for both student groups.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of possible data-sharing 2 Td( differencdata fo)TJ potC Tc f





system. Another suggestion has been to give people points toward qualification in proportion to their duration as season ticket holders. It is unfortunate, in this view, to make special financial demands on those who have stuck with football or basketball through good years and bad.

In response, Jim insisted, first, that no one lost the right to purchase *some* season tickets under DBS. Athletics made a careful, personal effort to provide alternative seats for anyone unwilling or unable to make the necessary contribution to the Flynn Fund. In the second place, the goal was to create a DBS system which would be simple and clear,

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting  
February 15, 2008  
12:30 AM-1:45 PM  
Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: None

Guest: Brent Ericson, Associate Dean, Community Standards, Office of Student Development

Almost the entire meeting was devoted to a discussion with Associate Dean Brent Ericson. The focus was on disciplinary issues among Boston College student-athletes, as well as BC students more generally, and the procedures in place for dealing with these.

Brent explained, by way of background, that he had assumed his current position as Associate Dean for Community Standards four months ago, succeeding Mike Ryan, who recently retired. Prior to that, Brent served in the BC Office of Residential Life, where he also dealt with disciplinary issues. Through several positions he has held, Brent now has more than seven years' experience in the areas of student affairs and student conduct. Brent is also currently working on his Ph.D. in the Lynch School of Education.

Brent felt that there is a perception among BC students generally that there is one system in place for dealing with disciplinary issues among BC student-athletes and a different system for dealing with other students. However, he argued that it is the philosophy of the Office of Student Development to have one system and set of procedures for dealing with all students. The goal of the system in all cases is to promote a safe and healthy community where students can get an education. Actions taken are aimed at helping students develop and learn from situations in which they may have made poor decisions.

**A. Types of Behavioral Issues Dealt With by the Office of Student Development**

Brent said his perception is that BC student-athletes as a group do not tend to get into disciplinary trouble more often than the general student body. When they do, however, the situations are often more publicly visible than with the student body as a whole. Brent was asked if student-athletes in the higher-profile revenue sports (e.g., football, men's ice hockey, men's and women's basketball) tended to get in trouble more often than student-athletes from other sports. He thought that they probably did to some degree. However, he also pointed out that football, in particular, is the largest team and, as such, it offers more possibilities for student-athletes to engage in group activities, such as off-campus parties, that may lead to trouble.

Brent listed some types of disciplinary issues that tend to arise among student-athletes. He said that the most common of these are related to drugs, or, more frequently, alcohol. He felt that many of the alcohol-related problems arose from parties involving teams or groups from a team. Of drug-related problems, he felt that most were related to marijuana, and among BC students generally, his sense was that marijuana issues had been more prevalent this year than in previous years. Brent said he had heard concerns expressed by the BC athletics administration about cocaine use on campus, but he said that cocaine-related issues represented a relatively small proportion of disciplinary cases coming to the attention of the Office of Student Development.

Department, (3) event staff at athletic contests, and (4) other members of the BC community (e.g., students, faculty, administrators). Of these, Residence Advisors and the BC police generate the great majority of incident reports.

The Office of Student Development typically informs at least one other administrative unit, such as an appropriate dean in the student's school, of these reports. Academic integrity issues are referred directly to the appropriate dean and are not dealt with by Student Development. In the case of student-athletes, the team coach is informed and sometimes the athletics administrator who has oversight for that team.

About 90% of cases are handled administratively by the Office of Student Development. The student is asked to come in and discuss the facts of the case, and a judgment is rendered as to whether the student is responsible or not.

If the student is deemed responsible, the offense may carry a mandatory sanction, as prescribed in the *BC Student Guide*. These may include drug or alcohol education and treatment, housing probation (under which a second offense results in loss of University housing), University probation (under which a second offense results in suspension), community restitution in cases involving damage in the surrounding neighborhood, and immediate suspension in the case of more serious offenses such as selling drugs or assault. University suspension usually entails imposing conditions on the student's eventual return.

Many cases do not fall into clear categories, however, and are dealt with individually. In such instances Student Development may exercise some discretion over what sanctions to apply. For example, in the case of student-athletes, Brent said that he had occasionally reduced a normal University sanction when a team coach had already imposed sanctions of his or her own. Whether sanctions are mandatory or under the discretion of Student Development, student learning and avoidance of similar behavior in the future are emphasized. Frequently, students are referred to someone in the University with student formation responsibility as a final step in the judicial and disciplinary process.

Students do have the right to deny allegations that they are responsible for a particular incident, and they may ask that their case go to a hearing board. In the case of less serious offenses, a panel of 5 students, drawn from a judicial board of 15 students hears the case. In the case of more serious offenses, an Administrative Board, consisting of three administrators, hears the case. The Administrative Board may also be brought in immediately in the case of serious offenses, such as assault or offensive behavior motivated by some form of bias, and it has the right to impose immediate suspension, subject to a University hearing. Students who dispute a finding of responsibility and have their cases brought to a hearing board have the right to call on witnesses and can also choose a faculty member or administrator to serve as their advisor.

There was considerable discussion among Board members of how often student-athlete disciplinary issues might be handled within a team and never brought to the attention of the Office of Student Development. Some members expressed concern that, to the extent

this happens regularly, it may feed the perception that there are two disciplinary systems in place, one for student-athletes and one for all other students.

Brent responded that any incidents brought to the attention of Student Development are handled by Student Development under the usual procedures. While such incidents are reported to team coaches and relevant athletics administrators, and while coaches may impose their own sanctions on student-athletes, the incidents are never simply handed over to the coaches to deal with. Brent did acknowledge the possibility that certain incidents might be known only to a team and coach and might never be reported to

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting  
March 28, 2008  
12:30 AM-1:45 PM  
Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Ed Taylor, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Bob Bloom

Guests: John Mahoney, Director of Undergraduate Admission and Danielle Wells, Sr. Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admission.

Almost the entire meeting was devoted to a discussion with guests John Mahoney and Danielle Wells of the student-athlete admission process at BC. John began by giving an overview of the process, and then Danielle filled in the mechanics of how the process works.

John began by arguing that the combination of an academic institution with a competitive, Division I athletics program really is an odd fit that can generate conflicting goals. He pointed out, for example, that in basketball and football, especially, college sports are really the “minor leagues” for the professional leagues in those sports. Nevertheless, he argued that BC had long ago made a commitment to sponsor a broad-based athletics program that would be not only competitive but successful. As a result, John felt that the Admissions office faces a delicate balancing act in accommodating not only students with outstanding intellectual ability but also student-athletes who will contribute to the success of their teams.

Based on meetings with his counterparts at other schools, John’s assessment is that there may be fewer than 10 schools in the country with large, Division I athletics programs, where the office of Admission has as much control over student-athlete admissions as here at BC. Examples of such schools included Duke, Northwestern, Notre Dame and Stanford.

Danielle Wells, who serves as the chief athletics liaison in the office of Admission, then explained more of the mechanical details of student-athlete admissions. She emphasized the importance of good communication with coaches, and especially early communication in the case of high risk candidates. She said that most coaches at BC understand the processes that have been established and are quite cooperative. To foster better understanding, the office of Admission updates a written policy on student-athlete admissions each year and sends it to all coaches.

There are seven members of the admissions staff who serve as athletics liaisons, and each is assigned to at least one sport. These liaisons serve as the focal points for communication between Admissions and those particular sports.

Since student-athlete recruitment usually begins prior to the normal college admissions process, coaches often ask for “early reads” on their prospects during the summer prior to their senior year in high school. An early read requires freshman, sophomore and junior grades plus some kind of standardized test score (possibly a PSAT if the SAT has not been taken yet). An early read can give a coach a sense of where a particular prospective student-athlete might fall in the applicant pool and whether or not such a candidate could be potentially admissible. Regardless of the results of an early read, however, all prospective student-athletes must ultimately undergo the normal BC application process.



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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting**

**April 10, 2008**

**1:30 PM-3:00 PM**

**Fulton Hall 412**

A special meeting of the Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) was called to give AAB members an opportunity to comment on a draft of the Self-Study Report that has been prepared as part of the NCAA Athletics Certification process. Several representatives of the Certification Steering Committee attended to hear and discuss these comments.

AAB members present: Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Mike Malec, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Representing the Steering Committee: Steering Committee Chair Bob Newton, Steering Committee staff member Anne Black, Governance and Commitment to Rules Compliance Subcommittee Chair Louise Lona



Concern was also expressed about the number of contests in some sports each year. It was pointed out that limits on contests in each sport come from the NCAA and that competition among schools for student-athlete recruits would tend to keep any one school from scheduling fewer than the maximum allowable contests.

### **3. Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being**

It was noted that BC had made significant effort over the last decade to comply with Title IX guidelines by hiring more women coaches and increasing funding for women's sports.

Some concern was expressed that, while men's and women's basketball and soccer swap practice schedules from one semester to another to provide greater class scheduling flexibility for team members, men's and women's ice hockey do not. One member of the Steering Committee argued that women's ice hockey has the option to practice in the early evening but chooses not to do so. An AAB member argued in response that televised events in Conte Forum force both men's and women's ice hockey teams to practice off campus approximately 20 times per year and that off-campus ice time in the evening is extremely difficult to secure.

One AAB member raised a student-athlete welfare issue that had come up in an earlier meeting this year with a representative of the BC SAAC. The SAAC member had said that student-athletes coming to BC without health insurance were sometimes forced to use funds from the NCAA's Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund to purchase health insurance instead of using it to meet other needs, such as clothing. The AAB member expressed the hope that some other means could be found to provide health insurance for student-athletes who could not afford it on their own.

A comment was made that BC needs to find better ways to assess student-athletes' experience throughout their time here in order to identify issues and seek improvements. Currently, the Athletics Department conducts exit interviews with graduating student-athletes, but these are used in part in the personnel evaluations of coaches and are thus confidential. There is also information the Senior Surveys, and this can be broken down by student-athletes and non-athletes, as in the document handed out by Jessica Greene at the preceding AAB meeting. However, there is currently no systematic effort in place to gather information on student-athlete well-being throughout their BC careers.

### **4. The Certification Process**

The meeting concluded with some questions about the NCAA Certification process from this point on. Bob Newton explained that the Self-Study would be reviewed for completeness by NCAA staff and then by the committee that will visit BC next fall. In response to a question about the consequences of not being certified, he pointed out that certification does not necessarily rely on an institution's complete conformity with all NCAA operating principles. However, if there are areas of less than full conformity, the institution must present a plan for improvement. Progress toward implementing such plans would then be assessed in the subsequent NCAA certification.

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**Minutes of the Athletics Advisory Board Meeting**

**April 25, 2008**

**12:30 AM-1:45 PM**

**Fulton Hall 412**

Members present: Bob Bloom, Mary Ellen Fulton, Jessica Greene, Judy Shindul-Rothschild, Paul Spagnoli, Mike Sacco, Bob Taggart, Dick Tresch

Members absent: Mike Malec, Ed Taylor

Guest: Aaron Aaker, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance and Eligibility

The meeting was devoted to questions and discussion concerning practice and competition schedules for the different BC teams for both fall and spring. Sr. Associate Athletics Director Jody Mooradian had been originally scheduled to attend but was unable to because of a last-minute schedule change, and Aaron Aaker was kind enough to attend in her place.

Prior to the start of the schedule discussion, one Athletics Advisory Board (AAB) member expressed the wish to go on record as commending the University and the team coach for taking swift and decisive action in a recent case involving sexual assault allegations against a BC student-athlete.

In the schedule analyses conducted by AAB members for fall and spring, a few questions came up that were common to several sports. For example, AAB members had asked if there was any flexibility in scheduled strength and conditioning sessions in case a team member wanted to take a class during those times. Aaron answered that it was common practice to afford flexibility in strength and conditioning times. Students taking a class during their team's scheduled time could do their strength and conditioning at other times. He said that it was also quite common for coaches to ask their team members to attend, say, two strength and conditioning sessions per week, even though more than two sessions might be built into the team's overall schedule.

Another common question concerned the actual amount of time needed to attend a scheduled practice. For example, could a student-athlete with a scheduled practice at 3 PM take a MWF 2 PM class? Aaron answered that this varied somewhat by sport and especially by whether or not a particular team needed to use off-campus practice facilities. For example, he said that when the golf team had a scheduled practice at 1 PM, team members needed to be finished with class by 12PM in order to get over to the golf course in time for 1 PM practice. Aaron added that coaches generally tried to give student-athletes some flexibility on practice times when these conflicted with needed classes. For example, if a particular team member needed to take a science lab one afternoon per week, that team member might be allowed to skip or shorten practice for that day. However, he added that this varied by sport as well. In individual sports, like



practice and competition in a week. Aaron stated that any competition day counted as 3 hours of activity, even if the actual time spent on pre-game practice and the competition itself might exceed 3 hours.

Some AAB members felt that BC should voluntarily decide to play fewer than the maximum allowable games. Aaron thought that the response from Athletics would be that it is difficult to be competitive in student-athlete recruiting if you don't play a full schedule. There was then some discussion of whether the ACC could collectively agree to limit the number of games below the NCAA maximum. Aaron said that this was feasible in principle and thought that the Ivy League had adopted such a measure. However, in view of the prominence of baseball in the ACC and the conference's aspirations to field national championship-caliber teams, he didn't believe the ACC schools were likely to agree to this.

There was then some discussion of whether BC could elect not to compete in the ACC in baseball and then voluntarily reduce the scheduled number of games. Aaron responded that a practical difficulty for this suggestion is the fact that most teams compete in a conference and conference games are typically scheduled over weekends. This might make it difficult to schedule opponents on weekend days. The possibility was also raised that the sports in which BC would compete in the ACC may have been part of the negotiations when BC joined the ACC. While not all ACC schools sponsor every sport in which the ACC competes, no one present could think of an example of an ACC school that sponsored a sport but did not participate in ACC competition in that sport.

In response to a question about the likelihood of reducing the allowable season through new NCAA legislation, Aaron gave a brief rundown of the NCAA legislative process. He pointed out that, as a result of concerns over the low Academic Progress Rates (APR) in baseball generally, a working group had recommended several pieces of baseball legislation that had been enacted. These included, for example, a stipulation that if a baseball student-athlete were not academically eligible for competition in the fall semester (even if his team had no scheduled fall competitions), he could not then be eligible for competition the following spring. This measure was designed to preclude baseball student-athletes from neglecting their studies during the spring season and then making up any deficiencies the following fall. However, the package of baseball legislation that was enacted did not include any reduction in the number of games per season.

Some AAB members recommended that BC drop baseball altogether and suggested that Bob Taggart, as Faculty Athletics Representative, make this recommendation to Director of Athletics Gene DeFilippo. There was also a suggestion that the AAB might invite some baseball and softball players to a meeting next fall to hear more about problems that their sports' schedules may impose on them. However, some thought that this might put these individual students unfairly on the spot. This in turn led to reiteration of a suggestion made at the last AAB meeting that all student-athletes be surveyed anonymously each year, in a manner similar to course evaluations, to assess their experience in their sport as well as any problems they might face.

Finally, there was discussion of the possibility of designating a staff member in Athletics as an ombudsman to advocate for student-athletes on welfare issues. As an example, one