

Minutes of the BOAC Meeting, March 11, 2008

Members Present: Ellis, Schreck, Mazurana, Stephens, Doerner, Johnson, Flager, Clinefelter

Ex-Officio Members Present: Adams, Lambden, Henderson, Mills, Hinrichs, Oltjenbtuns, Christman, Stotlar

Guests: Kevin Smallcomb

The meeting was held at the Multipurpose Room at Jackson Stadium and called to order at 7:02 a.m. Donuts and refreshments were distributed.

AD Jay Hinrichs began the meeting by addressing the BOAC bylaw requirement “policies governing athletic conference affiliation, post-season competition... sponsored sports, and eligibility requirements,” Baseball and softball are still without a conference, even though both are working toward that end. Softball should be a Big Sky sport in the near future as conference rules require that at least 6 schools within the conference offer the sport before it can be a “core” sport; a number of schools within the conference are looking to add softball within the next few years. Baseball is working on a number of scenarios for forming a nationwide conference. Coach Smallcomb spoke about the difficulties faced by UNC baseball as an independent program in terms of scheduling, travel, and costs. 14 of 19 of UNC’s sports compete in the Big Sky Conference. Hinrichs went on to note that women’s basketball competed in its first Big Sky Conference tournament.

AAD Jimmy Henderson then reported on the Academic Success efforts for student-athletes. Midterm grades were being received, even though reports were lagging and only about 30% of professors had entered grades for student-athletes. Deadline for midterm grades was March 15th. Student-athletes identified as struggling at midterm are called in for meetings and where available tutoring and individual counseling are provided. Henderson is set to meet with each squad to discuss academic matters. Summer and fall 2008 advisement will be held after Spring Break with student-athlete priority registration on April 7th.

Katie Falger and Ryan Johnson, SAAC Representatives, delivered a report on activities having to do with the Student Athlete Advisory Council. Falger noted a number of upcoming activities for SAAC including an ice cream social, tailgate at an upcoming baseball game, participation in Relay for Life, and a “Pros vs. Joes” event involving students and student-athletes. Falger and Johnson outlined the service requirement of UNC student-athletes in fund raising for charity and service hours required by each squad. The team portion of this requirement works toward the Life Skills Program as teams earn points in competition for the end of the year award. Events included in this program include a blood drive and clothing drive. Ryan Johnson then reported on his experience at the Western Conference post-season wrestling meet, and Falger discussed the PC Conference/Conference USA post-season swimming event. The Chair noted that Falger was in her last season of competition as she is slated to graduate this spring.

AD Jay Hinrichs then outlined how discipline is handled at UNC in regards to student-athletes and noted that while it is understood that students make mistakes, student-athletes are held to a higher standard of behavior than the mainstream population of the university. Expectations are set for the athletes in meetings with coaches, in the SA handbook, and during orientations where disciplinary procedures are discussed. UNC Athletics uses a three step procedure for disciplinary cases; student-athletes have 24 hours to report a violation of the law or other possible violations of the conduct code to the head coach or athletic director. The first step of the process is designed to be educational in nature as the student-athlete is called in to discuss the matter and if necessary is assigned to visit with a counselor or professional. The second step involves possible suspension from team activities and more education involving campus resources. The third step can involve dismissal from a team and forfeit of scholarship. The system is designed to allow the Department to be proactive rather than reactive with disciplinary cases, as efforts are being made to address behavior in residence halls and educational programs are offered to head off possible illegal alcohol and drug behavior.

A discussion then ensued of the possible effects that the upcoming plus/minus grading system, which will be implemented fall 2008, will have on UNC Athletics. Clinefelter informed the Board that this issue was first discussed in 2005, but tabled until 2007 as provisions of the policy were worked out. Generally, the plus/minus system will have potential implications for eligibility of SAs for intercollegiate competition and entrance into some degree programs. Pros and cons of the policy were discussed as it was noted that the policy would be elective for faculty, no universal grading scale will be determined, and class syllabuses will need to reflect the particulars of each professor's plus/minus policy.

Chair Mills reported to the Board on conversations about how the university might better provide support and socialization for the unique circumstances of international student-athletes and underrepresented groups (as well as by region). It was noted that the Department would, as a matter of course, be recruiting more international, potentially at-risk student-athletes in the future, and such students will provide significant challenges in addressing their often unique needs. A discussion then ensued about how the Department and University are handling these students, especially the difficulty of some students adjusting to a foreign environment. Suggestions were made to possibly pair these students with faculty who have been to their home countries or are frequent travelers, as well as provide better support for ESL learners and provide socialization.

UNC Baseball Coach Kevin Smallcomb then was asked to address his team's efforts to offset the rigorous travel schedule in terms of academic issues. On the road, study hall hours are enforced and coaches seek to "stay in front" of potential problems with individual athletes. The baseball team saw its GPA go from a 2.7 to a 2.9 this past fall, even though spring semester GPAs tend to fall. Efforts are made to partner at-risk students with experienced senior players, and access to technology is provided on the road to keep the student athletes in touch with professors. Communication is stressed to keep faculty informed and to head off potential problems. But this situation of missed

classes will continue to plague the baseball team until a conference can be found and the need to travel to so many away games is lessened.

Announcements of upcoming events: Baseball's opening day will be March 28th. Local high school teams from the Northern and Patriot conferences will be holding basketball play-offs at Butler-Hancock. The Teachers' Fair will also be held at BH. A track meet will be held at Nottingham Field on April 5th.

The next meeting of the BOAC during spring 2008 will be held at 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday April 8th in the Multipurpose Room at Jackson Stadium.

There being no further announcements or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted by
Michael Mills, Chair