

ANNUAL REPORT

University Standing Committee: Council on Athletics

Academic Year Covered by Report: 2023-24

Date Report Submitted: June 30, 2024

Report Submitted by: Joel J. Pawlak, Chair

Number of times committee met: Seven

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council on Athletics remains an engaged and active part of the university governance structure. The Council members engaged in many active discussions throughout the year, but the Council made no formal recommendations.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION ITEMS/ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEE

This year, the Council on Athletics included a theme related to the changing landscape of college athletics. Throughout the year, the Council heard about and discussed several topics relevant to the dynamic environment of college athletics. These topics included the transfer trends for NC State incoming and outgoing student-athletes, the legal challenges for the NCAA, new Name, Image and Likeness rules, and the vision of the NCAA President for college athletics. The Council also received reports on the department's budget, academic performance, and Title IX. Over the previous year, several athletics facilities and lockerrooms were upgraded. The Council had the opportunity to conduct a behind-the-scenes tour of these improvements, showing the commitment to many of our Olympic sports. The visiting student-athletes shared a firsthand perspective of what it is like to be a Division I student-athlete at this time. Their input and thoughts play a critical role in understanding the importance of college athletics to the students.

Council Charge: Dr. Randy Woodson, Chancellor, provided a pre-recorded video delivering the charge of the Council. The Chancellor highlighted the importance of the Council in providing advisement regarding Athletics. He thanked the group for their willingness to serve on the Council.

Head Coach Guests: During the academic year, the following coaches met with the Council and provided reports on their teams: Lindsay Leftwich (Women's Softball), Press McPhaul (Men's Golf), Simon Earnshaw (Women's Tennis), Emily Gaskin (Assistant Coach Gymnastics), Braden Holloway (Swimming and Diving), Dave Doeren (Football), Kevin Keatts (Men's Basketball)

Student Athlete Guests: During the academic year, the following student-athletes met with the Council and discussed their experiences as student-athletes: Noah Henderson (Men's Swimming and Diving), Will Sistruck (Men's Track and Field), Mary O'Neil (Women's Swimming and Diving), Josh Johnson (Wrestling), Caden Tolentino (Men's Soccer), Jordan Snell (Men's Basketball),

Athletics Director Updates: Athletics Director Boo Corrigan and his designees shared and discussed multiple topics with the Council throughout the year. Of note, in 2022-2023, NC State Finished 19th in

the Learfield Director's Cup Standing. This ranking is considered a measure of the overall athletics performance of an athletics department. Additional topics discussed throughout the year included: upgraded football scoreboard and sound system, conference re-alignment and the addition of SMU, Cal, and Stanford, the changing landscape of college athletics and One Pack Collective to support Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) opportunities for our student-athletes, additional investments in the mental health service provided by Athletics, the unveiling of the David Thompson statue, and the Dartmouth Student-Athletes voting to unionize. On the Athletics performance side, the Women's Cross Country team won its third straight National Championship and an ACC Championship, Wrestling won its sixth straight ACC Championship, Men's Basketball won an ACC Championship and made it to the NCAA Final Four, Women's Basketball made it to the NCAA Final Four, Women's Gymnastic won the ACC Championship, Men's Swimming and Diving won the ACC Championship, the numerous individual ACC Champions, and other academic and Athletic accomplishments..

Changing Landscape of College Athletics: The Council paid special attention to the changes in college athletics this year. A number of agenda items related to the unprecedented changes were covered throughout the year. This included a review of the trends for transfer students at NC State, looking at both incoming and outgoing transfers. A briefing on the legal cases facing college athletics from Shawn Troxler. Updates from Athletics Compliance related to the changes in the rules and how they will impact our student-athletes. We also heard from Ben Broussard, who discussed fundraising in the age of NIL and how it has not negatively impacted traditional giving. In fact, the Wolfpack Club has been doing very well in recent years. Carrie Doyle led a discussion on the letter from NCAA President Charlie Baker, which outlined his thoughts on the future of college athletics.

Financial Reporting Updates: Beverly Armwood, Senior Associate AD of Business Operations, reviewed Athletics' budget. The department continues to be in good financial health. Budgets have grown year over year, but there are challenges ahead with increasing costs for travel and other items. These changes have led to some cost-saving measures, such as searching for cheaper charters, busing to more games, and overall cost-saving measures. Negotiations continue with regard to a new apparel deal as the current Adidas contract is coming to an end. The budget is projected to be balanced again, or there may be a surplus at the end of the year.

Academic Updates: Katie Graham, Assistant Vice Chancellor & Senior Associate Athletic Director for Academics, delivered an update on the academic performance of our student-athletes. The overall cumulative GPA for the Athletics Department was 3.18. There were 46 student-athletes who had a 4.0 GPA for the Fall 2023 term, and 20 of the 22 teams at NC State had a team GPA over 3.0. The College of Natural Resources, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Poole College of Management have the greatest number of student-athletes enrolled. These three colleges represent >60 % of the student-athletes. However, student-athletes are spread across many majors in nearly every college, showing the student's ability to choose their course of study. The NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) was at an all-time high of 92 %, and the APR was also at an all-time high of 996.

Compliance and Legislation: Senior Associate Athletics Director Carrie Doyle briefed the group on various topics throughout the year. These briefings included NCAA bylaw changes, potential future changes for the NCAA, and legislation. Many updates discussed the ever-changing regulatory environment of college athletics.

Title IX Review: Raymond Harrison, Senior Associate AD of Student Development and Performance, gave an update on the department's Title IX progress. He described the work being done across the department to create an inclusive place for all student-athletes. He discussed the NCAA requirement for DEI training on an annual basis and the changes facing these activities. The department is aware that the general student body is trending toward a higher percentage of female students. With the rapid changes happening in college athletics, strategies for addressing Title IX will be important.

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee: Jaiden Thomas (Women's Soccer) and Bayne Bennett (Men's Swimming and Diving) served as the SACC co-President for NC State this academic year. During the Council meetings, they reported on the various activities that our student-athletes are undertaking outside of their sport or academic obligations. This year, the NC State SAAC group worked closely with the ACC SAAC representatives to create a mental health and wellness proposal. The mental health and wellness of the student-athletes remains at the forefront for our students. The students supported green warm-up tee-shirts with the saying, "More than a ____" to promote mental health awareness. The SAAC group acts as the student-athletes' voice and main student group.

Committee Reports:

Faculty Academic Committee: Chair, Laura Bottomley

The Faculty Academic Committee met numerous times throughout the year to conduct a review of student-athletes' continuing academic eligibility. These meetings occurred four times during the course of the year. These reviews examine the key academic metrics for both the NCAA and the institution. Elements of the review include making progress toward degree, grade point average (GPA), good academic standing, enrollment status, and passing the proper number of credit hours. The committee also had one meeting where a number of issues were discussed. Of particular note, was the Health and Exercise Studies general education requirement for student-athletes. NC State is the only school in the ACC that has such a requirement for student-athletes. Discussion points regarding this topic included the additional training load it can add to student-athletes, the chance of injury during these classes, and the potential to interfere with training plans developed by professionals in the Athletics Department. The committee expressed a need to seek a way for student-athletes to complete these requirements in a way that works with their athletics obligations.

Committee on Student-Athlete Health and Wellness: Chair, Keith Edmisten

The sub-committee met several times during the year. We decided to focus on providing athletes with opportunities for stress relief through some casual arts-related activities. We met with Katie Graham, who was very supportive of this approach. She set us up to meet with Tonya Washington and Dr. Rachel Conway, and they were very supportive. We had one event in the spring semester where student-athletes got to learn a line dance and then add their own choreography.

We talked to Bayne Bennett, the co-president of SAAC at NC State. He said the student-athletes are busy with many activities and that the best time to do more activities like this would be in the fall after the first couple weeks of class. Committee member Tara Mullins is reaching out to the art community to find faculty and staff willing to help with events this fall.

We are looking forward to providing opportunities for the student-athletes in the fall.

Committee on Legislation: Chair, Kanton Reynolds

The changing landscape around NCAA legislation has required the committee to look at multiple facets of the student-athlete experience. Most notable is the language describing the relationships between the institution and the athlete. In particular, the committee focused on the student-athlete handbook and relevant materials that describe:

- 1) Requirements/protocol that athletes follow.
- 2) Minimize restrictions on student-athletes.
- 3) Benefits student-athletes receive.
- 4) Review of sanctions that student-athletes may be subjected to.

In addition, the committee examined the language of the handbook and other guiding documents to ensure that the language was consistent with what is used across the institution. Changes were suggested to the handbook to make it more encompassing to a wider array of student-athletes.

Lastly, the committee discussed several modifications to the guidelines that ensure conflicts between academics and athletic obligations will be resolved in favor of academics while preserving the long-term best interests of the student-athlete.