

University Athletics Advisory Committee

1999-2000 Annual Report

June 16, 2000

Members of the 1999-2000 University Athletics Advisory Committee (AAC) were Marshall Angle (Graduate Student Representative), Arthur Bahnmuller (Board of Trustees), Barbara Blaney (University Registrar), Jaime Devey (Undergraduate Student Representative), Elaine Frank (Associate Professor - Speech/Language Pathology & Audiology), Peter Graham, Chair (Professor - Sport Management), Laurie Massa (Associate Athletics Director), Mike McGee (Athletics Director), Rodney Roenfeldt (Professor & Interim Dean - Darla Moore School of Business), Sandra Schneider (Associate Professor - Government and International Studies), Valerie Sheley (Compliance Officer, Athletics Department), Susie VanHuss (USC Foundations, NCAA Faculty Representative), Harold White (Associate Athletics Director), Amy Wolfe (undergraduate student) and Richard Zingmark (Professor – Biology). This diverse group focuses on issues affecting the intercollegiate athletic programs, especially academic performance and eligibility requirements.

The AAC met monthly during the academic year from September through April. The AAC will resume its regular meetings in September 2000. The following categories represent the most important issues the AAC discussed this past year.

NCAA Eligibility Requirements

The NCAA has proposed revising its eligibility standards in several ways. Many of these revision follow from the Cureton vs. NCAA case (March 8, 1999), in which the plaintiff successfully challenged the use of standardized tests for determining eligibility (as reported in the 1998-1999 Annual Report). There have been no changes to date. However, if the ruling stands, it could mean the emphasis on standardized test scores will be reduced considerably. The AAC is keeping a close watch on the repercussions of this case.

Academic Fraud

Alleged academic fraud and mismanagement associated with the athletic tutorial program at the University of Tennessee spurred a review of our Academic Enrichment Program with respect to its policies, procedures and administration. Members of the AAC visited the Academic Enrichment Center to personally become acquainted with its operation. Center director Harold White introduced his staff each of whom discussed their role in the academic support services provided student-athletes. In addition, Susie VanHuss conducted a thorough examination of the program including interviews with graduates and current student-athletes. The resulting conclusion was that the USC Academic Enrichment Program is sound in all respects and very well monitored.

Student-Athlete Academic Performance

The overall academic performance for student-athletes continues to be very encouraging. The annual Scholar-Athlete Reception hosted by the Athletics Department and the AAC (April 3, 2000) honored students who earned at least a 3.0 GPA in one or more semesters during 1999. This year, a record number of athletes (286) reached the 3.0 mark. Further, these scholar-athletes nominated 46 individuals for recognition as Faculty All-Stars.

Academic performance data for Fall 1999 provided the following:

- Overall graduation rate of 63% second only to Vanderbilt in the Southeastern Conference
- 183 scholarship athletes earned 3.0 or higher
- 79 student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.5 or higher)
- 21 student-athletes made the President's List (4.0)

One source of continuing concern has been the academic performance of the men's basketball team. Last year, the AAC suggested incentives be offered to the coaching staff to improve grades (just as high graduation rates are recognized and rewarded). The committee also urged earlier intervention by tutors and faculty when grade problems are anticipated. These recommendations have apparently worked as the men's basketball team posted a collective 2.312 GPA - a significant increase over that of Spring 1999.

Faculty Manual Changes

The Faculty Advisory Committee requested the AAC to review its description as presented in the Faculty Manual and to submit any desired changes. Following review and discussion, several changes were submitted and accepted by the Faculty Advisory Committee and subsequently by the Faculty Senate.

Changes in the 2000-2001 Committee Membership

Marshall Angle, Jaime Devey and Richard Zingmark have completed their respective appointments. The Committee is most appreciative of their dedication to our student-athletes. Harold Friedman (School of Medicine) and William Mathias (College of Criminal Justice) will join the Committee in September. Student members have yet to be appointed. Peter Graham (Sport Management) has been re-elected Chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter J. Graham
Chair
Athletics Advisory Committee