

Faculty Senate Committee on Athletics and Recreation

Interim Report

The Committee met on November 7, 1:00- 2pm.

Attending:

Patrick McHugh (Committee Chair/GWSB Associate Professor of Management)

Hugh Agnew (Faculty Senate Executive Committee Liaison/Professor of History and International Affairs)

Robert Baker (Program Head of Music & Theatre and Dance/Associate Professor of Music/Advisor, Colonial Brass)

George Glass (Undergraduate Student/GW Student Association/President George's Army)

Mark Hyman (GWSB Assistant Teaching Professor of Management)

Kurt Johnson (Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology)

Tanya Vogel (Director, Intercollegiate Athletics)

Bev Westerman (Professor of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, NCAA Faculty Representative on Athletics Council)

Due to an error on the part of the Committee Chair, Beth D. Tuckwiller (GSEHD) and Ashley Darcy-Mahoney (SON) were available but unable to connect to the meeting via a conference call.

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Student athletes and study abroad participation; what can be done to enhance the ability to participate in study abroad while maintaining their athletic commitments
3. Access to athletics and recreation facilities; what can be done to enhance access to facilities on all campuses
4. Possible items for future meeting topics
5. Any new business

Tanya Vogel reported that the Division of Recreation no longer reports to her.

In order to address the issue of access to athletics and recreation facilities, best to hear from Andre Julien, Senior Associate AD for Health & Wellness, who is an as an ex-officio member of the committee. He reports to Cissy Petty VP of Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

Robert Baker asked about the impact of the university-wide strategic planning process on Intercollegiate Athletics.

Tanya Vogel noted that she has discussed this with President LeBlanc and is in agreement with him regarding the important role of intercollegiate athletics at GW. To quote Vogel, “We are part of the entire university. We have to be part of strategic planning process.”

Vogel noted the importance of aligning the Department of Athletics strategic plan with the overall university strategic plan. She noted that Athletics is an important part of enrollment management and can be a tool to hit enrollment targets. For example, it may be important to know which sports teams have the most STEM majors. Vogel is a member of the High Quality Undergrad Education Committee.

The last Athletics strategic plan was completed in 2012. As President LeBlanc took office, Athletics was encouraged to defer work on a plan until the university-wide plan was completed. Therefore, the Athletic Department plans to engage in a strategic planning process following the conclusion of the university’s overall strategic plan.

Kurt Johnson asked about the role, if any, for this committee in the Athletics strategic planning process.

Tanya Vogel noted that this is an interesting question. How does this committee fit and what role does it play? What do we do with the Athletics Council? Does this committee and the Athletics Council work together?

Discussion then focused on the first agenda item Study Abroad for Intercollegiate athletes.

Tanya Vogel noted an NCAA study indicating that 78 per cent of athletes wish they’d had greater access to Study Abroad. She described challenges for student-athletes seeking to study abroad including: competition and training conflicts during Fall and Spring semesters; in some sports, summer training on campus, general demands of balancing athletics and academics.

Vogel described actions taken by GW Athletics to attempt to accommodate athletes seeking study abroad. Last year, Athletics worked with the study abroad office and the department of sociology to create a one-credit study abroad course. Broad parameters: Home stays abroad, come back and do follow up work on campus. Approved late last school year. This program will run for the first time in Spring/Summer 2020 to Vietnam. Fifteen students have expressed interest. There is strong donor interest in supporting these study abroad experiences for student athletes, thus fundraising for these initiatives is promising.

She also noted that GW Athletics does not provide athletic scholarships (aid) during study-abroad semesters. This GW policy, is similar to many other Division 1 programs.

Members of the committee pointed out the deterrence effect of this kind of policy on facilitating study abroad for scholarship athletes in particular.

Patrick McHugh asked whether the Athletics Department has bench marked itself on study abroad policies at other schools – particularly those in the A-10? It would be valuable to get information on how other schools in the A-10 provide support to encourage student athletes and study abroad both in terms of policies and the percentages of student athletes that complete a study abroad experience.

Additional helpful information would include: How many student athletes are here at GW? How many study abroad? How many scholarship athletes at GW? How many scholarship athletes study abroad?

Tanya Vogel indicated that GW Athletics will follow up with data and additional info.

Patrick McHugh noted that this data would be helpful in terms of understanding the current status, and if initiatives are put in place, how effective they have been in terms of advancing student athlete participation in study abroad.

George Glass asked about the number of hours that student athletes commit to sports in and out of season. Vogel explained “countable hours” vs. “real commitment” which can be much more.

Mark Hyman noted that some GW sports teams travel abroad for competition and exhibition games. There’s precedent for building courses around such trips. A course on The Business of Sports – Japan was open to basketball players and general student population during the men’s basketball team trip in Summer of 2016. This is another model for creating study abroad opportunities for student athletes.

Members of the committee seemed to agree that a multi-faceted approach with different options is perhaps the best way to expand study abroad options for student athletes. The Vietnam program is one model that if successful, could be expanded to other time periods, other abroad locations, and other disciplinary areas to better accommodate different sport schedules.

Patrick McHugh suggested some possible future agenda items/topics for the committee:

- a) Access to athletics and recreation facilities; what can be done to enhance access to facilities on all campuses?
- b) College admissions scandal and GW athletics program responses and actions
- c) Name, image and likeness compensation for college athletes and implications for GW