Faculty Athletics Committee Meeting  
November 4, 2015 (3:00 PM)

Attending: Paul Caster (chair), Sila Alan (recorder), Giovanni Ruffini, Shannon Gerry, Iman Naderi, Brianna Tancredi (FUSA representative), Nick Cannone (Student Athletes Advisory Committee), John Paladino (Director of Club Sports and Intramurals and Associate Director of Recreation)

Agenda
1. Minutes of October meeting
2. Report by John Paladino on club sports policies and procedures
3. Volunteer to serve on the Athletics Strategic Planning Committee
4. Volunteer to plan and conduct the triennial survey to assess the experiences of student/athletes
5. New Business: Brief discussion of Rutgers coach incident and Monmouth University’s reaction
6. Meeting tentatively planned for Wednesday, December 2 is cancelled
7. New business

1) Paul Caster called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. The committee approved the minutes of the October 7th meeting (moved by Brianna Tancredi and seconded by Iman Naderi).

2) John Paladino was invited to discuss club sports policies and procedures. He indicated that all club sports at Fairfield fall under Recreation and currently we have 23 clubs with over 500 students. He distributed a hand-out of the Release Time Policy for the students participating in a University-sponsored event. The current policy was reviewed and edited by Tom Pellegrino a couple of years ago. He mentioned that club sports’ struggles are different from the varsity program in terms of handling the release time due to last minute changes and difficulties in scheduling. He emphasized that their goal is to handle these issues for club sports athletes as close to the varsity situation as possible. He also stressed that being released from a course for a club sport is at the faculty’s discretion. It was also implied in the policy that the student should have a good academic standing. Most club teams schedule games on weekends. Practice time is not an excused absence from class. Issues arise when a club team makes regional or national playoffs. Often, schedules are not known until one week before a match. The committee thanked John for his comprehensive report and for his time.

3) Paul said he had talked to Gene Doris and reached out to Zack Dayton regarding the Strategic Planning Committee. He asked for volunteers to serve on that committee and report back to the FAC. Brianna Tancredi and Shannon Gerry volunteered, subject to hearing from Zack about the frequency and timing of that committee’s meetings.
4) Paul inquired about volunteers to plan and conduct the Committee’s triennial survey to assess the experiences of student/athletes. He also indicated that Chris Huntley wants this survey to be conducted in the Fall before the final exams. Giovanni Ruffini and Iman Naderi volunteered.

5) Paul summarized the Rutgers coach incident and Monmouth University’s reaction as follows: A Rutgers football coach contacted a faculty member to change a student’s grade, which was against Rutgers policy. The coach was fined $50,000 by Rutgers. This incident became a big issue in NJ. A faculty NCAA representative from Monmouth University contacted Chris Huntley to ask whether Fairfield had a policy about coaches’ communications with faculty or if Fairfield was planning to institute a policy and/or penalty. The committee discussed whether we would like to have a policy. It was mentioned that the University already has a policy for not releasing grades. Paul will add this as an agenda item for the next meeting of the committee in order to discuss it further.

6) The meeting that was tentatively planned for Wednesday, December 2nd is cancelled.

7) Paul introduced three additional new items to be discussed in future meetings. (1) At the Stags Council meeting earlier in the day, a question came up from a coach about release time for Fairfield student/athletes when Fairfield is the host team of a tournament during final exams. Fairfield students are at a disadvantage since they have to take final exams on the travel day, whereas the visiting teams are excused from their final exams and can focus on the playoffs. The committee can address this issue at a future meeting. (2) An issue arose last year regarding scheduling athletic events during final exams. The line of communications goes from the Athletics Office to Chris Huntley and Lynn Babington. It should then go to the Academic Council. Paul will follow up with Lynn to ensure the process is followed as prescribed. (3) A faculty member sent an e-mail to Paul about a coach telling a student that she cannot study abroad in the off-season semester. Shannon read from the minutes of a meeting last year when this same issue arose. According to those minutes, Gene Doris reported that student-athletes’ athletic scholarships do not travel with them when they study abroad and also that coaches can refuse to allow an athlete to study abroad during the off semester if they feel it will hurt the team practices, but that student/athletes are encouraged to study abroad in the summer session. Paul will follow up with the faculty member and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 PM (moved by Giovanni Ruffini and seconded by Iman Naderi).

Respectfully submitted,
Sila Alan
Department of Finance