

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

FOR FY-09

## STANDING CHARGES

### **1. Help to ensure that KU promotes and maintains academic excellence, as it pertains to Athletics. Specifically, the committee should:**

- a. Identify potential barriers to student athlete integration into curricular and extra-curricular activities, and recommend mechanisms to overcome such barriers;
- b. Recommend campus initiatives targeting academic success of student athletes, to include consideration of programs, facilities and infrastructure requirements;
- c. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to increase community awareness of issues such as Academic Progress Rate (APR), progress towards degree and similar regulations;
- d. Review and advise on-going academic programs at the Hale Center for Academic Achievement;
- e. Review, summarize and disseminate KUAC reports identifying academic parameters including but not limited to spring and fall grades by sport, graduation rates by sport, academic progress, and academic honors and awards to student athletes.

Student Athlete Support Services, under the direction of Associate Athletics Director Paul Buskirk, has the responsibility for monitoring and supporting student athletes' academic progress. Mr. Buskirk met with the committee and supplied the following information regarding student athlete academic progress: NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) Institutional Reports (2006-2007, 2007-2008), Graduation Rates, and Spring 2008 and Fall 2008 overall and team grade point averages (See Appendix). The APR appears to be a contemporaneous measure that can help athletics stay attune to academics. The 2007-08 multiyear rate APR confirmed a trend of increased APR with no programs below the designated 925 compared with the 2006-07 data where football did not meet this threshold. The NCAA requires that improvement plans be developed for such programs. Areas where improvement plans were developed demonstrated significant positive change including meeting the 925 threshold. Although men's outdoor track and women's volleyball met the multiyear data threshold, they did not meet the 925 for 2007-08. This data has been reviewed by the recertification steering committee resulting in the recommendation for an improvement plan for men's outdoor track. The shift in rate for women's volleyball was judged to be an anomaly.

Student athlete graduation rates are similar to or exceed the rate for all KU students (2001-02 graduation rate – all students (60%), student-athletes (59%), 4-year class average – all students (59%), student athletes (61%). In Spring 2008 the all sports combined grade point average was 3.03 with 58% (282) of students on active rosters achieving at GPA of 3.0 or higher, both setting a new all time record. The Fall

2008 all sports combined GPA was 2.99 (a new record for Fall term) with 53% (283) students on active rosters achieving a 3.0 or higher. Consistent with last year's report, football maintains the lowest GPA at 2.60 for Spring and 2.62 for Fall. Women's volleyball attained the highest GPA for Spring and Fall, 3.45 and 3.35 respectively. From this evidence it appears that the strategies in place and monitoring are effectively supporting student athletes' academic progress.

Last year's committee raised concerns regarding a problem of excessive absences required by some sports. Mr. Buskirk provided the committee data identifying the actual number of class days missed due to team travel for the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 seasons. With the exception of baseball, all sports were within the University rule of no student-athlete missing more than 10 class days due to travel (See Appendix). Baseball missed 9.5 and 11 in 2006-07 and 2007-2008 respectively. The nature of scheduling and number of games compounds the issue for baseball compared to other sports. Improved communication from Athletics to involved faculty in as timely a manner as possible would also assist in correcting the more general perception of excessive absences.

The committee determined that it was not feasible to draft an alternative to the NCAA's APR; rather the committee reframed this charge to focus on identifying what if any unintended consequences have occurred for KU student-athletes as a result of the APR regulation's implementation. Mr. Buskirk provided the committee an overview of the NCAA's academic progress rate regulation including data from a study conducted by OIRP. The regulation requires student athletes to declare a major by the end of their second year (after three semesters) and begin meeting thresholds each succeeding year. It would appear that the APR regulation limits the student's flexibility to change majors or to engage in the type of intellectual exploration that other students may have. Review of the OIRP data for Fall 2007 comparing athletes and non-athletes by major revealed no significant clusters of major differentiating the groups. Majors for student-athletes tended to be across the spectrum including Health, Sports and Exercise Science (28), Business (22), Biological Sciences (21), Communication Studies (25), Economics (18), Psychology (17), African African-American Studies (11), Applied Behavioral Science (11), and Sociology (11). A higher percentage of student-athletes were undeclared during their freshmen and sophomore years than non-athletes (freshman – 66.7% non athletes, 79% athletes; sophomore – 51.4% non athletes, 62.2% athletes). The committee recommends monitoring of this data, specifically looking at trend data from 2006-2008, and continued exploration of potential challenges in changing majors.

***Recommendations:***

- 1. Recommend that Associate Athletics Director Paul Buskirk be appointed as an ex-officio member of the Athletics Committee.***

The committee feels that the addition of Mr. Buskirk would further strengthen communication between University Senate and Athletics. The current structure which includes the FAR has provided an excellent linkage for this communication. Having an individual with operational

responsibilities in Athletics that reflect academics and student athlete welfare extends this linkage and opens a continuing reciprocal dialog, understanding and education around issues and concerns. A significant number of the committee's standing and specific charges fall within his areas of responsibility; his membership on the committee will facilitate both continuity of information as well as increase our efficiency in crafting and responding to specific charges.

- 2. Review the following standard reports as a part of this charge: *Spring and Fall Student-Athlete Grade Summary, NCAA Academic Progress Rate Institutional Report, and Freshman Cohort Graduation Rates.***
- 3. Monitor the pattern of athlete and non-athlete majors for 2006, 2007 and 2008 (OIRP report)**
- 4. Monitor the pattern of student-athlete class absences due to travel on an annual basis.**

**2. Help to ensure that KU provides a premiere student athlete experience. Specifically, the committee should:**

- a. Recommend mechanisms to enable broader discussions of opportunities to improve the student athlete experience
- b. Provide peer review of programs designed to ensure the academic success, personal development, and personal welfare of student athletes
- c. Review, summarize and disseminate KUAC reports identifying student wellness parameters including but not limited to drug testing practices and policies, nutrition and physical health, psychological and emotional well being, and social integration

Two members of the USAC served on the Student Athlete Wellness subcommittee of the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Athletics. The committee commends athletic dept for being proactive in considering development of programs on pregnancy prevention, child care and parenting education.

Dr. Larry Magee, the head team physician, met with the committee to describe the various levels and types of athletic drug testing programs – NCAA, Big XII, and institution. The Big XII and NCAA test approximately 30 KU student-athletes each year as a part of their campus drug programs in addition to tournament and post season testing. While the emphasis in the NCAA and Big XII programs is on performance enhancing drugs, the Athletic Department's policy and program has taken a more inclusive approach including testing for recreational/street drugs. The orientation of the program is education based with the primary concern for student-athlete welfare. Under the policy, no penalty occurs for voluntary disclosure with treatment and counseling required for such disclosure as well as any positive results from the drug testing programs. Conditions for testing include all freshmen, randomized tests, prior to post-season competition, and any student-athlete who has not been tested through these measures by their third year. Thus, all student-athletes are tested at least once. Dr. Magee shared with the committee 10 year trend data on positive test results. No positive tests were indicated for performance enhancing drugs across this testing period. Two trends emerged for other drugs – 1) an

increased presence of drugs used to treat ADHD, and 2) a consistent pattern of marijuana use. The latter pattern tends to mirror or be less than what would be anticipated for the general non-athlete student population. The committee concluded that the policy and process is adequate and the Athletic Department is to be commended for its concern for the health and welfare of their student-athletes. The increased attention and staffing, including a sports nutritionist, certified strength and conditioning trainers, and a sports psychologist, are further evidence of this commitment.

A second issue addressed by the Committee was social integration of student-athletes within the broader campus community. Last year's report noted that advising and tutoring is done among student-athletes only and raised concerns regarding the potential clustering of student-athletes in certain majors or living arrangements -- all factors contributing to potential social isolation. The student members of the Committee interviewed Mike Harriety, Assistant Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Development and Community Relations. From this interview, a range of events were identified in which student-athletes assume leadership roles and participate in university-wide activities including Rock Chalk Responsible CHOICES, a university-wide program funded by a NCAA alcohol education grant to KU Athletics, student and the cross sport Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). A strong relationship exists with Student Senate including a senate seat for a SAAC representative, an elected senator who is a student-athlete, and support and funding for the new boathouse used by Athletic and Crew, a club sport. Associate Athletics Director Debbie Van Saun provided the Committee the following data regarding housing arrangements for scholarship student-athletes: of 261 student-athletes for whom Athletics provides housing, 37% (97) live in Jayhawk Towers (approximately 50% of the total capacity of the Towers), 2% (4) live in KU dorms, 5% (12) live in Naismith, and 57% (148) live off campus. As noted in Standing Charge 1., the Committee found no pattern of clustering of majors among student athletes in comparison to non-athletes. While the Committee concluded that student-athletes appear to be socially integrated into the broader campus community, the increased demands of training and competition will continue to limit the time available for broad participation. Thus, the Committee feels that this is an area requiring continued monitoring. Athletics collects student-athlete data on integration into the broader campus community primarily through its exit interview processes. All student-athletes whose eligibility has expired complete a Survey Monkey questionnaire. In addition, a random selection of student-athletes completes a semi-structured interview with the sports supervisor for their team. The Committee recommends that the results of items addressing integration with the greater campus community in these processes be reviewed to determine trends relative to the social integration of student-athletes. A review of the questions should be conducted to more clearly identify the degree to which the data takes into consideration the opportunity for participation in the context of the student-athlete's individual interests.

***Recommendations:***

- 1. Review questions and resulting data regarding participation in the broader campus community from the exit interviews and the questionnaires sent to all student-athletes.***

2. ***Review NCAA third cycle recertification report in the areas of academic progress and student welfare.***

**3. Help to ensure that KU maintains athletic compliance excellence. Specifically, the committee should:**

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to ensure the KU community better understands our combined responsibility for compliance
- b. Review, summarize and disseminate KUAC reports identifying athletic compliance parameters including but not limited to ten day absence policies, academic screening practices and recruiting practices

Seven members of the USAC serve on the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics with two members serving on the subcommittee on compliance. There were no current compliance issues. The compliance staff continues to be open to suggestions for strategies to enhance communication with faculty and staff regarding compliance issues.

***Recommendations:***

1. ***Recognize Teresa Becker and her staff for continuing to create and sustain a culture in Athletics that is committed to compliance. The compliance staff's commitment to continual improvement and communication with various constituencies is particularly to be commended.***
2. ***Work collaboratively with the Compliance staff to develop effective strategies for disseminating information to faculty and appropriate staff regarding compliance issues and regulations that are impacted by academic actions, decisions, etc.***

**4. Help to ensure that KU strategic goals pertaining to athletics are accomplished with attention to Title IX goals. Specifically, the committee should:**

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to ensure the KU community better understands our combined responsibility for Title IX compliance
- b. Review and summarize the use of student fee generated funds for NCAA and club sports
- c. Recommend priorities for campus program investments to ensure future success of broad Title IX initiatives
- d. Review, summarize and disseminate KUAC reports identifying Title IX compliance parameters

Four members of the USAC serve on the Title IX subcommittee for the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. This subcommittee met with Title IX Compliance legal consultant, Lamar Daniel and Helen Grant, to discuss compliance issues. Participation rates, coaching, and salaries are in full compliance. There is an outstanding issue with the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of

Education concerning facilities which Athletics is addressing in its capital improvement plans. The Committee commends the Athletic Director's leadership in bring the University into compliance with Title IX. Club sports are open to all students with an open process for establishing the clubs based on interest. The Committee agreed that there are no concerns regarding the spirit of Title IX in this area.

***Recommendation:***

***Review NCAA third cycle recertification report in the area of Title IX.***

**5. Help to ensure that KU maintains a premier community experience, balancing physical and intellectual pursuits. Specifically, the committee should:**

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to enhance the balance between academics and athletics, as well as to promulgate broad understanding of the goals and priorities of each
- b. Recommend advertising and outreach strategies to ensure broad KU goals and ideals are well represented
- c. Recommend mechanisms to promote and respect KU tradition
- d. Recommend mechanisms for improved communication between KUAC and faculty, staff and students.
- e. Work with KUAC to avoid potentially divisive issues of personal interest to many faculty, staff and students, to include ticket distribution and pricing policies, ticket transfer policies, and the communication thereof.
- f. Recommend strategies for building community and alumni relations

The Committee reviewed the question of whether to join COIA, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics. Following conversations with a current COIA member, previous USAC members, and the FAR, the Committee concluded that there was no advantage to KU formally joining this group. The lines of communication between governance, the Chancellor and Athletics have been formalized structurally through this committee and overlapping representation on the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. This structure provides opportunity for significant input and several forums for raising concerns and addressing issues. The FAR and Chancellor's participation in Big XII Conference and NCAA governance structures provide a stronger platform than COIA for KU's voice on athletic/academic issues of interest.

***Recommendation:***

***Continue to monitor its position papers as well as relevant national reports on intercollegiate athletics but not formally join COIA.***

**6. Work with the University Senate Calendar Committee to avoid conflicts in long-term academic and athletic calendars.**

The Committee did not address this charge this year.

**7. Maintain regular communications with the NCAA/Big XII Faculty Representative, the Chancellor's advisory committee on athletics, KUAC and University Governance to ensure the needs of each are being served.**

The FAR is an ex-officio member of the Committee and attended all its meetings. The structure of the USAC seems to be working well to improve communication between University Senate and Athletics. The addition of the Associate Athletics Director for Student Support as an ex-officio member (*refer to the recommendation under Standing Charge 1.*) will strengthen this communication at an operational level as well. Eight members of the USAC serve on the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics as well as the FAR who chairs the CACIA. Dual committee and key subcommittee membership increased the efficiency and depth of USAC's response to its charges. Similar membership patterns are seen on the committees involved with the self study process for the Athletics Department's third cycle NCAA recertification review. Structures are in place that facilitate regular communication as well as a broader understanding of the issues and involvement from multiple perspectives.

**Recommendation:** Refer to recommendation under Standing Charge 1.

**APPENDICES**

NCAA Division I 2006-2007 Academic Progress Rate Institutional Report  
NCAA Division I 2007-2008 Academic Progress Rate Institutional Report  
Athletes and Non-athletes by Major (2-digit CIP and Department) Fall 2007 (OIRP Special Report)  
Student-Athlete Grade Summaries Spring and Fall 2008  
Freshman-Cohort Graduation Rates 2001-2002 Cohort  
Team Travel – Class Days Missed  
Substance Abuse Policy and Drug Testing Program  
Trend Data for Drug Testing Program -2000-2008