



Athletics Committee Report 2019

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Charges

1. Continue to evaluate academic and job placement outcomes for student athletes.
2. Work with athletics to encourage student athletes to pursue majors and obtain internships that will lead to better educational and employment outcomes.
3. Work with Athletics and Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich to ensure that academic support services are equally available across the diverse sports and equally available to all athletes who need them.
4. Evaluate guidelines and processes for revocation of athletic scholarships to ensure that they are clear, fair, and consistent.

General Overview

Athletics is supervised by three layers of committees:

- Board of Trustees Sub-Committee on Athletics. Meets at least once a semester.
- University Athletics Council (UAC, Daniel Orlovsky chair), which reports to the President. Meets four times a year.
- Faculty Senate Athletics Policies Committee. This committee is separate from the UAC, but its members are also the faculty members nominated to the UAC. The chair of the Senate committee also is part of the Board of Trustee Subcommittee on Athletics
- Academic oversight of Athletics has improved over the past few years, although hard core decisions remain within the President's Office and the Board of Trustees.

Key players in administration:

- Athletic Director Rick Hart (joined SMU in 2012).
- Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich (responsible for academic advising for student athletes since 2018).

1. Continue to evaluate academic and job placement outcomes for student athletes

The Committee and Sheri Kunovich drafted a questionnaire that we sent to three departments where most athletes are concentrated to assess academic outcomes:

Applied Psychology & Sports Management-APSM (67 majors)

Finance (28 majors)

Psychology (13 majors)

Only APSM was able to provide comprehensive data on post-graduation outcomes. Most students in this major land jobs upon graduation, many in the Dallas area.

Only APSM has a close collaboration with the Athletics Department staff supervising students. The other two do not.

2. Work with athletics to encourage student athletes to pursue majors and obtain internships that will lead to better educational and employment outcomes

- We had some preliminary discussions with the Rick Hart and his staff at the latest Athletic Council's meeting.
- There is concern among some faculty that incoming student-athletes are not exposed to the many possible options for majors at SMU.
- Time commitments, travel and practice schedules, etc., may make it hard, if not impossible, for some students to take certain courses or choose certain majors.
- Expanded Cox Business Direct program will likely influence how options for majors are presented to recruits. But any forecasts about how this will play out are speculative.

3. Work with Athletics and Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich to ensure that academic support services are equally available across the diverse sports and equally available to all athletes who need them

- Kunovich reported to the committee in November 2018 and March 2019 on this matter
- In general it seems that things are moving forward and her office is gathering data to have a better understanding on how to address this issue in a systemic fashion

4. Evaluate guidelines and processes for revocation of athletic scholarships to ensure that they are clear, fair, and consistent

- Cases of this kind are rare and examined during the summer term
- AD Rick Hart appears to be very sensitive to this issue
- Professor Hamilton suggested that members of the Senate Athletics Committee be included in the panel that oversees such cases during the summer

FAAS

- Faculty Athletics Academic Subcommittee. Reviews admissions cases for students who fail to meet numerical standards (SAT/ACT, GPA).
- The Athletics Department is permitted to submit **no more than 35 cases per year** for FAAS consideration, across all sports. The idea was that the AD would propose FAAS candidates only for exceptional cases (transformative players with special circumstances).
- General trend: number of cases examined by FAAS has declined appreciably in the past few years (only 13 during 2017-18). Morris/Dykes and Jankovich recruit students who can come to SMU, which explains the drop. Situation worse under June Jones.
- The President may overrule a FAAS recommendation, but this has not happened during the last two years.
- One possibility is for the FAAS committee (wait for next slide) to also consider scholarship revocation cases.
- Currently, 82% of FAAS cases are enrolled in good standing, have graduated, or have left SMU in good standing (2.0 GPA or higher). This is important for NCAA Academic Progress Rate. However, if 18% of students in this group are not succeeding, it is not clear this is something to be proud of. More data is required for further analysis.

Budgetary issues

- Institutional support for athletics is roughly \$10-14 million per year, not including value of scholarships
- This amount varies considerably from year to year, but AD Hart believes this is the long-term trend

New American Athletic Conference TV Contract with ESPN

- New agreement is running from 2020-32 (12 years)
- Pays an average of \$83.3 million a year
- \$6.9 million a year per school (was \$2 million before)
- Big 12 schools get \$33 million
- The increase is unlikely to reduce SMU's institutional support of athletics

- <http://theamerican.org/news/2019/3/27/general-american-athletic-conference-and-espn-agree-to-12-year-media-rights-extension.aspx>

Conclusion

- Priority for next year: address charge # 2.
- Improve communication between the Athletics Department and the Faculty Senate committee specifically, and the SMU faculty more generally. The right people are in place to rebuild a culture of trust.
- If we want to better understand the needs/priorities of athletes we need to establish a working relationship with the AD and his staff so we can help each other.