

PROVOST'S ATHLETICS OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Academic Integrity & NCAA Rules

Compliance Institutional Control

Student-Athlete Welfare

PAOC Meeting of Feb 8. 2024

12:30-1:45PM

Location: KHE1203

In attendance: Claire Rutte (meeting minutes), Patrick Vickers, Matthew Iwanski, Randy Kennedy, Milton Overton, Tricia Chastain, Daniel Niederjohn, Austin Brown (virtual/Teams), M.A. Karim (virtual/Teams), Selena Patterson, Anete Vasquez (virtual/Teams), Stacy Delacruz, Tamica Jones (virtual/Teams), AJ Johnson, Ronald Briggs, Megan Stoltzfus, Smith Pinson/Student Athlete (Baseball), Yesiah Clemons/Student Athlete (Football).

Dan Niederjohn, Faculty Athletics Representative opened the meeting at 12:30 pm by welcoming the group. At Dan's request, each attendee at the table introduced themselves to the group beginning with Dan Niederjohn, then Randy Kennedy, Matt Iwanski, AJ Johnson, Megan Stoltzfus, Smith, Yesiah, Stacey DeLacruz, Patrick Vickers, Milton Overton, Ronald Briggs, Tamica Jones, M.A. Karim, and lastly Austin Brown. A few other attendees arrived after the meeting started.

Dan moved to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2023 PAOC meeting. Motion was approved with no changes to the minutes.

Dan Niederjohn opened the meeting with this question to the two student athletes, "What ways we can help you as a Student Athlete." Smith Pinson shared that he was recruited out of high school by Coach Sansing, the former KSU Baseball coach. Once Coach Sansing retired, Smith played for current KSU baseball coach, Ryan Coe. Smith expressed that his experience in baseball was, "better than he could've imagined." He described a usual week as a baseball player. Practice was usually from 1:30-4:00pm, and about three times a week he trained on weights at the PF (Practice Facility). Smith said that his days were very structured before they hit the road. Smith explained how he enjoys working with the KSU Athletic trainers. He said it was difficult losing the former Athletic Trainer (Chris Archambeault). He explained how his team now works with Hillary Dreyfus.

He complimented the SASS department, saying they have been very helpful with staying on track with classes. Smith does have concerns though, about CUSA travel. He wonders how different that will be from the travel he does with ASUN. Smith explained how currently, under ASUN, they (his team) are looked after on the road and are well fed when travelling. Dan asked about how classes work on the road. Smith explained that he has been able to register for either morning or afternoon classes based on his baseball schedule. He was able to build his class schedule around the baseball schedule. This year he is taking online courses.

Yesiah Clemson is a walk-on transfer football player, transferring from West Point,

Georgia in 2020. Yesiah's first season was in the spring and there were six games. During Covid he was made inactive. Yesiah graduated in 2023 and is now in his first year of graduate school, in the MBA Program.

He has a concern about access to the locker rooms. As a football player, his day starts at 6am with practice and then he has some free time until 12:00pm. During that time, there is nowhere to "hang out." There is a delay in when the strength and conditioning staff get things ready in the weight room. Yesiah asked, "Do we wait on them (trainers) or go over to the dining hall until the trainers are ready for us?" Yesiah explained that it would help the players to be able to wait in the locker room while they waited for the strength and conditioning staff to get ready. Yesiah has one more year of eligibility and will be playing in the new conference, CUSA.

AJ Johnson had a follow up question for both student athletes. "Have you been contacted by anyone from Nutrition?" Smith acknowledged that although he has seen nutrition opportunities printed, no one has stopped by to visit the team and speak about nutrition. Yesiah advised that his team had someone speak with them via video chat, giving a brief insight on nutrition.

Dr Brooks asked, "Beyond the training facilities and classes, how is the rest of your experience at KSU?" Smith exclaimed that the housing is great. He lives in ARC, right next to the baseball field. Yesiah agreed that his experience was also good. He explained how SASS had been "super helpful" when he graduated in the spring of 2023. SASS helped him to decide what he would do after graduation, and they provided advice that helped him decide on the Masters MBA program in which he currently participates. He said he loves SASS, and that his advisor, Bailey is very responsive.

Randy asked Smith and Yesiah, "Have you been able to take part in KSU campus events outside of sports?" Both Smith and Yesiah agreed that they had. Yesiah works at the KSU Rec Center, where he helps set up events for fraternities and meetings. He said he often meets students that are not athletes. He enjoys "bonding with regular students." Yesiah said he still feels connected to the campus.

Megan advised the group that Yesiah did an internship and was very involved and that Smith helps out with family business. She explained how both student athletes are very active outside of their sports and that they have utilized resources available to them. Smith also said that he was able to attend career fairs and use the KSU Rec Center when the PF was not available.

Milton Overton, Director of Athletics, presented the state of the department. He said to Smith and Yesiah how great it was to hear their about concerns and listen to their stories of full integration in campus life. Milton advised all that AJ is currently doing a project for Milton with data analytics. Milton reiterated and acknowledged the student athlete's concerns. He advised all that Tricia and her team are working diligently on a sports complex and that he and his team are working on raising money for that complex. Milton said the goal is to consolidate football activities at the stadium, which would also include a weight room. He shared an update on the baseball facility. Architects and engineers will soon be hired, and we can expect shovels in the ground during the summer. Milton shared that we need to step up in competition during this move to CUSA. KSU Athletics needs to be competitive and make investments.

Milton shared that he and President Schwaig attended the CUSA Spring Meeting last week. The reset of college sports was discussed. NCAA President (Charlie Baker) was there in person. Legislation needs to be passed so that additional academic progress is made to transfer (enter the transfer portal). The central focus must be on graduation.

Milton asked Matt Iwanski, Associate Athletic Director, Athletics Compliance and Risk Management to give a legislative update. The NCAA Proposal/Financial model changed policies in Oct 2023. It detailed scholarship supported funding for each student. There is no attendance requirement. The new model has changed to the commitment of overall wellbeing of the student athlete. The goal is to improve the student athlete experience, to ensure that there are more resources and that the schools put the student athletes first.

Milton agreed with Matt, explaining that the focus is providing more resources to student athletes for their overall welfare. Some examples are providing counseling services and determining how can we add additional resources, better nutrition, and generating more resources for the student athletes. Matt posed a question, "can the NCAA continue to provide the structure that College Sports needs?" He explained that Congress needs to change laws so they can legislate. In the past, court cases have gone against the student athlete. Congress wants assurances regarding a revenue share with the student athletes, for example, NIL via collectives. The goal is to stay focused and keep supporting and graduating students. Milton's final update was that the CUSA football schedule has been released and next month will come the other sports. He said they are preparing to travel differently this year (more flights and less being on the road, helping them to "travel well").

Megan Stoltzfus, Director, Student-Athlete Development, provided Student-Athlete Welfare and SAAC Updates. She shared that about a recent development session for first year athletes; the students learned about different backgrounds and different experiences and how it can create a better culture. The students shared real life examples and the takeaway was impactful. This month, 2nd year athletes are receiving nutrition education. Wellstar (*Exercise Science and Nutrition*) will teach the student athletes about better ways to fuel their bodies. This training will help them to better utilize the resources already available to them. International Night (Women's Basketball) gave a shout out to international student athletes. On Jan 14, the SAAC Owls Choice Awards was for all athletes who are responsible to vote and nominate the awards. Next SAAC meeting is Feb 18 and Matt Iwanski will be speaking on compliance and answering questions.

Megan explained that she is working on more campus engagements this semester and in the spring. She wants to encourage athletes to support other athletes at their events. They will participate in April 16 KSU Day of Service, and maybe will do a similar 404 Day. Milton said that he is proud of the student athletes and that they did over 800 hours of community service.

Megan shared that KSU Baseball has adopted a young man who will be an honorary teammate/little brother. This is through an organization called Teen Impact. It is similar to organizations like Make a Wish. Bibby has a physical disability, loves baseball, and loves KSU. Baseball will have a team dinner with him and his parents soon.

AJ Johnson, SAAC student athlete, provided an update about the Owls Choice Awards, saying they went great. AJ said he is working on a communication plan with Tamica to discuss issues as they arise. AJ was happy to report that parking at the PF has improved, and parking tickets are fewer. Milton thanked Tricia and her group for that. AJ has also seen changes in nutrition education and nutrition resources posted at the PF. He shared that there is a new person for social media in SAAC and that they are working with CUSA SAAC to see if they need to do anything different moving forward.

AJ shared that he has not heard much about NIL, but that mental health resources have gotten better. Like Smith and Yesiah, AJ is concerned about travel moving into CUSA. AJ mentioned Lacrosse not moving to CUSA and asked what happens to them? AJ and Megan agreed that they need to understand if there are two different SAAC groups (CUSA vs ASUN)?

Milton shared that there is a plan over the next couple of years for CUSA to bring on Lacrosse. More detail will be provided once available. Matt Iwanski reiterated Milton's earlier information about litigation. He shared information on litigation and mentioned some current cases. "We should be aware of this as there is going to be a time when we are collectively bargaining with them as opposed to scholarships." Milton advised that we need to position ourselves to operate effectively in a new marketplace.

Matt continued to share that many attorneys general sued the NCAA for transfer status that violated Antitrust law. This case has not yet been settled. A roster can change, you will have to re-recruit athletes, and if there are offers from other institutions, after a team has a great season, you can lose that player to an institution with a "better offer." We need a retention package to offer the student athlete the chance to stay and not enter the transfer portal. We need to work with other departments (like the School of Business) to have a retention package. Transfer policies will be unenforceable for 2024-2025. We are in a time where the ability to govern ourselves is very limited. Point of contention, summer school, and being a full term of enrollment for students. Difficulty keeping them on campus and getting them financial aid. KSU is 12 hours of enrollment during the summer. Financial Aid is limited during the summer. Moving to 6 hours would be less of a burden. This 12-hour policy also affects international students and transfers, at risk students and students changing degrees. Discussion followed regarding working with the Financial Aid office.

Matt discussed with Tricia how summer scholarships have been a challenge. Milton suggested looking to see what the other USG institutions are doing. Making this change (12 hours to 6 hours) would be helpful to coaches during recruitment and decrease the burden for Compliance to help fund through scholarships. It's complicated to get the students into all 12 hours. Dan inquired about the next steps. Matt replied that the Dean of Students and President and other Deans need to be on board. Maybe PAOC can get the parties together and start the conversation. This is not just an Athletics problem. Tricia said she can report back on what the challenges are and what options might be.

Randy Kennedy, Associate Athletic Director, Academic Services gave Student-Athlete Academic Update. There was an overall 3.15 GPA (second highest in department history), 15 graduates with 7 cum laude graduates, 181 student athletes on the deans list (record high) and 67% with a 3.0 or higher (Top Flight Owls at MBB game).

Most of the teams are travelling this Spring. Registration is a month away and the university is transitioning to Banner 9. Blocked scheduling is being implemented (placed into blocks of classes). Randy reiterated the legislative cases as it relates to transfer students. "For every transfer student, we would need to develop a graduation plan before coming to the institution." Milton replied, "we will have to staff up with these changes and additional resources to SASS and compliance."

Dan Niederjohn, Faculty Athletics Representative and Associate Professor of Psychology discussed the PAOC Policy Updates first. He reiterated the Policy 4.3 change from the November PAOC meeting and advised the change had been made on the website. Dan advised the group that there are a lot of changes that need to be made on the website. Dan and Randy Kennedy are going to work together to update the outdated and/or unnecessary information on the website. At the April 2024 meeting, the group will look at the website and see where they are.

Dan continued to advise the group of a request he received from KSU football staff. Dan had met with Tamica Jones and Randy Kennedy regarding a football staff request about home competition policy. Football is asking for a full day to be excused from classes and 6pm the day before a home game. Dan learned that on the day of competition, the players were not going to class. Dan reached out to CUSA FAR's and they confirmed this. In their schools, student athletes are excused from class the day of a home competition. Dan noted that in 2024 there are only two football games to which this would apply.

Instead of agreeing to the proposal, Dan suggested not changing the policies because it would impact all sports. He suggested that an exception be granted on a case-by-case basis and discussed with the PAOC group. He said it was reasonable to make an exception for the day of competition, but we did not support the request for the day before.

Randy explained that most games are on Saturday and that preparations start the day before. A midweek game tries to keep this process the same, hence their request for the day before. Per Dan, "Practice block is in the morning and most classes are not until 1pm. This means that, at the most, one class would be missed if they are not online."

Dan brought up another policy, the 20% rule (can't miss 20% of class). None of our squads are getting close. 10 days could be missed out of 165 days (16%). Dan continues to monitor these numbers.

This decision (regarding the football proposal) must be an institutional decision according to Randy. The logistics of football is different from other sports. It's about the nature of the competition and when the events occur. Milton to Megan, "let's not discuss with SAAC yet. Let's see what a full schedule looks like in the first year of CUSA."

Dan commented that there is precedent for this exception and these exceptions could be extended to any of the athletics teams. Requests of this nature should be brought to the PAOC committee.

Tamica advised that we should consider what it would look like for all student athletes. We can visit case by case. She suggested that we get into CUSA first and look at schedules to try to prevent challenges/conflicts.

Per Dan, there is nothing to do now. He just wanted to bring this proposal to the group's attention. Per Dan, "We will need to make a vote on this before the April meeting." Dan will reach out soon to discuss the two football exceptions.

Next meeting is April 11, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:47pm

Submitted by Claire Rutte.

The minutes from the February 8, 2024 meeting were approved via Qualtrix survey on May 3, 2024.

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Lisa Bauer

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Lisa Bauer

Date: May 3, 2024

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Dan Niederjohn

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Daniel Niederjohn

Date: May 5, 2024

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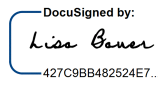
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