

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS
UNIVERSITY SENATE COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 17, 2015

I. Call to Order

Kristen Varjas called to order the meeting of the University Senate Committee on Athletics at 11:42 a.m. in the GSU Sports Arena Media Room 274.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was presented to approve the minutes from April 20, 2015. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Attendees-

Adrian Carnegie, Charlie Cobb, Jacob English, Richard Fendler, Kerry Heyward, Brad Horton, Justin Jones, , Shelley Linens, Michael Murrary, Erik Paz, Joseph Peragine, Catherine Perkins, Chester Phillips, George Pierce, Kelcey Roegiers-Jensen, and Kristen Varjas.

III. Standing Reports

A. Chair Report

Kristen Varjas opened the meeting by discussing the purpose of the Senate Committee on Athletics as well as the bylaws.

Varjas and the committee discussed what the committee could do to promote student-athlete well-being and to gain campus support on this issue. Some of the topics discussed included pushing season ticket purchases for basketball and football, developing messaging to focus on developing interest and getting campus more involved, extending committee membership to representatives from each college, and pushing to get the Athletics Department more representation at University Senate meetings.

Other focuses for the committee are Title IV, team competition and practice schedules, attendance, and missed classes. Varjas announced that the Athletic Department reduced the amount of missed classes due to changes in team travel schedules. Charlie Cobb mentioned that there is legislation in the NCAA that states a travel day can no longer be considered an off day. Catherine Perkins asked if remote instruction was an option during travel. Brad Horton mentioned that athletic academic advisors travel with their assigned teams to conduct exams and online classes as there are not many professors that record lectures. Varjas added that accommodations are often made for student-athletes to take tests before, during, and following team travel.

Varjas mentioned that the committee would like to get ahead of the media releases for team competition schedules by having the schedules sent to the committee over the summer for review. This is to ensure that the committee has time to review and bring up questions regarding the data on class absences as it relates to team travel. Varjas mentioned that the committee will be a part of the development of reports and monitoring them for feedback and input.

The committee will also be more involved in advisement and academic support services issues for student-athletes as well as counselling services and drug-testing policies. The committee added annual oversight of Athletic Department drug-testing policies.

Varjas announced that she worked with Horton to get student-athletes into an academic program for certification that they were previously unable to participate in due to conflicts between practice schedules and class offerings. Cobb mentioned that this was a success as the Athletic Department is looking to help student-athletes succeed academically and provide them with the opportunity to pursue the careers they want. Joseph Peragine added that there needs to be more conversation and compromise on schedule flexibility. Varjas stated that she and Horton will pursue scheduling conflict and options in the Kinesiology and Health Department for football players with Physical Education majors.

B. Athletic Director's Report

Cobb shared the presentation he gave to the student-athletes and athletic staff with the committee. Cobb stressed promoting the #PantherFamily concept with student-athletes and staff. He announced that the department is pushing for 100% staff membership in the Panther Athletic Club. Cobb discussed the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee which is made up of leaders from each team to provide feedback on Athletic Department decisions and projects. Success is the major focus for the department and Cobb shared the five components which are academic achievement, competitive excellence, ethical behavior, social responsibility, and community engagement. The department established a rivalry series with Georgia Southern which will be announced soon. Cobb shared the five keys to success from his presentation to the student-athletes which are to go to class, trust your coaches, compete, respect, and have fun. Cobb announced that he will share the Athletic Department strategic plan at the next meeting once it is finalized.

Peragine asked how the department will evaluate equity and Title IV with the facilities upgrades. Cobb said that there are categories under Title IV to measure equity. These measurements are very quantitative in measurement and are not comparative sport-to-sport. Cobb mentioned that there are only four schools with perfect gender equity which are Airforce Academy, Naval Academy, Coast Guard Academy, and West Point. Varjas added that the committee is very involved in the Title IV process and adding a new women's sport. She mentioned that the addition of football caused balance changes with resource allocation and that the department is constantly working towards change. Kelcey Roegiers-Jensen mentioned that the women's sports survey is currently out and closes on October 16, 2015. This survey is to get female student opinions on which sport to add. The department will collect the data and re-evaluate. Peragine asked if there is a deadline on adding a women's sport. Kerry Heyward stated that we have to be constantly pursuing options. Peragine asked how the department will recruit for the new sport and where the players will come from. Roegiers-Jensen responded that the department will look at the competitive region and within Georgia State. Varjas added that the department will look at who is already interested, spend a year of recruiting, and another year to get the sport up and running. Roegiers-Jensen added that she will continue to share data and updates with the committee.

Roegiers-Jensen stated all student-athletes attended Sexual Misconduct training and any student-athletes that enrolled late will attend a make-up session. Athletic Department Staff and Coaches will attend training in January of 2016.

C. Academics

Horton announced that he re-evaluated his staff structure and department programs over the summer in order to best serve the student-athletes. He hopes to fill the Life Skills position by the end of fall. The advisors will create four-five year graduation plans and career plans for student-athletes. These plans will include internship opportunities during junior year, job placement during senior year, and a survey to assess the program.

Horton discussed APR (Academic Progress Rate) which tracks GPA, retention, and progress towards degree. The department goal is to never get below 2.2. The NCAA benchmark is 930. Horton added that GSR (Graduation Success Rate) covers a six year span and assess if student-athletes are graduating. He mentioned that our four-five year plan fits into GSR. Horton stated that his department will ensure better communication with student-athletes, parents, coaches, and sports administrators to understand the progress of each student-athlete and to discuss their futures.

Varjas added that the committee will look at how to help student-athletes with the best use of resources to support their academics and well-being. Varjas added that we will use data to help with the allocation of resources and will tailor services to fit the needs of the student-athletes.

Varjas stated that Erik Paz will present at the next meeting and there is tour of the Athletic Administrative Offices following the meeting.

IV. Future Meetings

- i. Wednesday, November 18, 2015 – Sports Arena Room 274
- ii. Thursday, February 18, 2016 – Sports Arena Room 274
- iii. Wednesday, April 20, 2016 – Sports Arena Room 274

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.