

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2020
11:00-noon via Zoom

Members Present: TH Reynolds (chair), Jason Breeves, Megan Buchanan, Gail Cummings-Danson, Karen Kellogg, Sean Lang (student rep from SAAC)

- I. Introductions – Lily Feldman (student rep selected by SGA) and Flagg Taylor (Skidmore’s NCAA Faculty Athletics Rep) were not able to attend the meeting. Cerri Banks and Michael Orr were also unable to attend, and TH agreed to reach out to both of them with future meeting dates and ask them to please select a designee if they are unable to attend future meetings. Given the foci of the year (e.g., the NCAA self-study), we believe it is important to have designees from Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.
- II. We reviewed the AC Operating Code.
- III. April 16, 2020 minutes were approved (via email following the meeting).
- IV. Physical Activity Instructor Evaluations for Fall 2020

The three Physical Activity instructors who were originally slated for evaluation this year aren’t teaching because of COVID-related issues. After some discussion, we agreed that we should not suspend evaluation for the year, as is the case in other academic programs/departments, and, given there isn’t a strict cycle of evaluation, we decided to focus on our Riding instructors who are teaching in-person courses. Gail, TH, Jason, and Karen will coordinate on observations for Amanda Wadsworth, Belinda Colgan, and Sasha LaRosa.

- V. Athletics Department Self-Study

Every 5 years, the NCAA requires the Athletics Department to do a self-study. They provide a set of questions that need to be addressed, although we’d also like to include some additional Skidmore-specific items that we noted last year, including evaluating the role of the FAR, the number of faculty on AC and whether AC should be part of the mandated service cycle, the accuracy of our operating code and Physical Activity evaluation guidelines, and other practices of the AC (e.g., availability of meeting minutes, etc). As we’ve done in the past, we’ll form subgroups to address different aspects of the study, and the report is due to the NCAA at the end of this academic year. Gail will forward the institutional self-study guide and the last self-study (2015-16) to help us begin this work.

- VI. Upcoming fall semester meeting dates (October, November, December) and agenda items

We decided future meetings will be 10:00 on Fridays. In addition to the self-study, agenda items will include updates from Admissions (Cathy DeLorenzo; this will be in the fall semester to help us communicate more effectively about the Admissions process and review final numbers from last year), Student Academic Services (Jamin Totino), and Advancement (Ian Farrell; this should be in the spring semester so we get a more comprehensive view of fundraising efforts).

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2020
10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Jason Breves, Megan Buchanan, Pat Fehling, Karen Kellogg, Lily Feldman (Student/SGA), Sean Lang (Student/SAAC)

I. September 18, 2020 minutes were approved.

II. Physical Activity Instructor Evaluations for Fall 2020

T.H., Jason, and Karen are currently coordinating/completing observations for Amanda Wadsworth, Belinda Colgan, and Sasha LaRosa at the Van Lennep Riding Center. Observations and written reports will be conducted and provided to Gail ahead of the conclusion of the fall semester.

III. Megan provided an update on discussions currently underway among members of the Liberty League regarding the scheduling of winter sports. Megan also reported that fall teams are currently practicing under COVID-19 precautions that entail reduced densities and small “pods” of participants. Multiple fall teams are expected to transition to “full team” formats very soon. Megan provided an opportunity for all members of the council to ask questions regarding the application of COVID-19 precautions (including the use of the CoVerified app). There were no concerns voiced by members of the council.

IV. Athletics Department Self-Study

Megan provided key organizational information about the path forward for efficiently completing interviews and documents associated with the 5-year NCAA Self-Study. Key details included, 1) all working documents have been uploaded to a “Sharepoint” folder that can be accessed by council members, 2) six sessions (meetings between council members and Athletic Department/College personnel) will be scheduled to complete the 11 categories contained within the Self-Study report, and 3) these sessions are currently being scheduled with the aim of holding them between Thanksgiving and the start of the Spring 2021 semester.

V. Athletic Council Membership and the Faculty Governance System

A brief discussion occurred around the notion of reducing the number of faculty members serving on the Athletic Council from three to two. There was no support voiced for this potential modification by current Athletic Council members. It was subsequently decided that no actions should be taken unless the Faculty Executive Committee wishes to begin a dialogue on this matter with the Athletic Council.

VI. Community Service and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

Megan provided a brief update on the challenges associated with COVID-19 precautions and the engagement of student-athletes with service to the local community. The athletics community is currently working to find ways to support the local community in fashions consistent with COVID-19 precautions.

VII. Upcoming Meetings

The next meetings of the Athletic Council are scheduled for November 6th and December 4th. On November 6th, Cathy DeLorenzo (Admissions) is scheduled to provide an update on policies and practices linked with admissions decisions.

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2020
10:00-11:00 via Zoom

Members Present: TH Reynolds (chair), Jason Breeves, Megan Buchanan, Gail Cummings-Danson, Karen Kellogg, Flagg Taylor, Sean Lang (student rep from SAAC), and Lily Feldman (student rep selected by SGA)

- I. October 9, 2020 meeting minutes were approved.
- II. Admissions Update from Catherine DeLorenzo, Director of Admissions

Rationale for holding this conversation with Admissions in the fall as opposed to the spring is to help field conversations and dispel myths about admissions processes for rated athletes.

In spring 2020 Admissions had a goal of 711 incoming students and built in a slightly higher number for summer melt because of Covid and other factors. In May we were significantly over this number and had a record summer melt. We ended with 718 incoming student, and we had 80 defer and are expecting 60 of these to come in fall 2021. 711 students is the target for this coming year as well.

Updated numbers from last spring: We had approximately 400 rated athletes, 80 enrolled, 52 applied early decision 1, 9 early decision 2, and 19 regular decision (these are fairly typical numbers but enrolled might be a little lower).

Slotting process: All applications are read by two admissions counselors. Early decision applicants have between 3–4 reads. Some are admitted and some are denied. Some are admissible, but need further discussion in terms of class numbers, financial aid, etc. Cathy and Gail meet with each coach who have students in rated categories. Athletics has 50 slots. Athletes who need financial aid must be similar in terms of those in the overall class receiving aid, and this limits the number of athletes who can receive aide.

The changes in National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) admissions procedures were implemented for this year. While we expected this to have an impact on recruitment and admissions processes, we do not have a good sense of whether or not this did have an impact given all of the factors (e.g., Covid) influencing admissions this year.

Immediately after letters for the class of 2024 were sent, Admissions started communicating with prospective students for the class of 2025 and had to pivot in so many ways – online interviews, no in person tours until mid-summer and then all tours were strictly outside and followed all state and local guidelines, virtual info sessions multiple times during the day and night, all of open houses were moved to virtual, including specific transfer student open houses and international student open houses. Coaches have been able to meet with prospective students, outside and following guidelines. This year to date, Cathy has seen over 400 rated athletes, and early decision 1 meetings are coming up. Cathy noted that the community has really pulled together on virtual admissions events.

- III. Athletics Update from Gail

There was an off-campus party involving the men's lacrosse team last Friday, which is going through the conduct process right now and was incredibly disappointing to many student-athletes and Athletics overall. A positive Covid test compounded the issues associated with the party.

There was an on-campus party involving the men's hockey team on Saturday. There was an altercation at this party, and a student was injured. There are multiple narratives around the altercation, and this is going through the conduct right now. The AC discussed how difficult these situations are not only for those directly involved but also the campus community as a whole given the confidentiality of the conduct process and the way social media influences discussions and opinions.

On Monday the presidents of the Liberty League schools will vote on winter competition and championships, and then Gail will schedule a meeting with the winter athletes to share those decisions directly.

IV. Other

Athletics Department NCAA Self-Study: Megan is circulating a Doodle Poll for a series of meetings beginning at the end of November.

All instructor evaluations for the year have now been completed.

V. The next AC meeting is scheduled for December 4th at 10:00 am

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2021
12:00 – 1:00 pm via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Jason Breves, Megan Buchanan, Gail Cummings-Danson, Flagg Taylor, Pat Fehling, Karen Kellogg, Sean Lang (Student/SAAC)

I. November 6, 2020 minutes were approved.

II. General Updates

The Liberty League is open for Spring competition. Institutions that choose to compete are now collectively refining team schedules. Gail expressed her confidence in current safety protocols and confirmed that Athletics Staff are committed to making any necessary refinements. Now that the campus has transitioned back to COVID-19 Alert Level 2, winter sports can be opened for limited competition. Athletics Staff are now working to revise winter team schedules. Megan added that while competition was suspended, AD staff served (and still do) as quarantine captains, contact tracers, and provided additional support to the general College community.

III. Athletics Department Self-Study

Gail confirmed that all necessary meetings with individuals across campus are complete. The preparation of narratives that comprise the actual written document is ongoing. The Self-Study is due by the end of May and there is no interest among AC members to seek an extension from the NCAA. Megan indicated that the 'Mission Statement' of the Athletics Department is emerging as a specific item that warrants AC's attention. Members of AC proposed that we revise the statement by the end of the Spring semester.

IV. SAAC updates

Sean provided updates on the following SAAC activities, 1) the Student-Athlete Concerns Committee survey of all athletes on campus, 2) the "Show Your Sport" campaign, 3) progress towards having the nutritional information for all meals posted in the Dining Hall and The Spa, 4) mitigating weight-room access issues, 5) a unity pledge of commitment to DEI goals, and 5) participation in a new podcast with the leadership of other student organizations on campus.

V. Upcoming Meetings

The next meeting of the Athletic Council is scheduled for Monday, March 15th from 10-11 am. The primary focus of this meeting will be to review narratives linked with the Self-Study documents. AC expects to meet 3-4 times before the end of semester to finalize the Self-Study, review/revise the Mission Statement, and to review/revise the AC Operating Code.

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021
10:00-11:00 via Zoom

Members Present: TH Reynolds (chair), Jason Breeves, Megan Buchanan, Gail Cummings-Danson, Pat Fehling, Karen Kellogg, and Flagg Taylor

- I. March 5, 2021 meeting minutes were approved
- II. Reviewed draft of our NCAA Self Study
- III. The next AC meeting is scheduled for April 5th at 10:00 am

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2021
10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Jason Breves, Karen Kellogg, Flagg Taylor, Megan Buchanan, Sean Lang (Student/SAAC)

- I. March 15, 2021 minutes were approved.
- II. Review of Athletic Council Operating Code

The Athletic Council Operating Code has not been revised/updated since 2007. Members in attendance reviewed the current document and provided revisions for the group to consider. Megan Buchanan communicated comments provided by Gail Cummings-Danson. All raised comments were incorporated into an annotated document for further consideration. The Chair made the annotated document available to all Athletic Council members immediately following the meeting. At the next meeting, all revisions made to the Operating Code following these annotations will be grounds for further discussion (if necessary).

- III. Coursework Obligations Outside the Designated Meeting Times

A discussion occurred surrounding a growing concern among student-athletes and head coaches. In particular, it was discussed whether it is consistent with College academic policies for instructors to require students to attend exams/field trips/etc. outside the scheduled course meeting time. Several Athletic Council members were disappointed to learn that in some instances these expectations were not described in course syllabi. It was further expressed that such practices are highly problematic to students with a range of activities/obligations and do not solely impact student-athletes.

- IV. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Athletic Council is scheduled for April 19th at 10:00 AM via Zoom.

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2021
10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Jason Breves, Karen Kellogg, Pat Fehling, Gail Cummings-Danson, Megan Buchanan, Sean Lang (Student/SAAC)

I. April 5, 2021 minutes were approved.

II. Update on Academic Support Policies and Services

Jamin Totino (Director of Student Academic Services) and Alice Buesing (Associate Director of Office of Academic Advising) provided a brief update on the academic support services available for student-athletes. Prior to the meeting, Jamin provided quantitative reports for 2018, 2019, and 2020 that included metrics such as GPA and the number of academic alerts broken down by sport (and other categories) for all student athletes ($n=254$). Jamin and Alice provided opportunities for Athletic Council members to ask questions. Jamin concluded by providing an overview of practices/policies surrounding the receipt of academic alerts, the development of a new platform for academic alerts that will commence in the Fall 2021 named "Slate", and the peer-academic coaching program at-large.

III. Tim Brown Award

Gail Cummings-Danson reported that the process for determining the 2021 Tim Brown Award winner is complete. The awardee will be recognized at both the Honors Convocation and through an Athletics Department recognition event.

IV. Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Athletic Council is scheduled for May 3rd at 10:00 AM via Zoom. The Athletic Council expects to meet one more time during the 2020-21 academic year to finalize revisions to the Athletic Council Operating Code and the NCAA Self-Study documents.

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2021
10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Gail Cummings-Danson, Megan Buchanan, Jason Breves, Karen Kellogg, Sean Lang (Student/SAAC)

- I. April 19, 2021 minutes were approved.
- II. Report from Advancement - Brian DeMichele, Associate Director of Major Gifts, and Ian Farrell, Assistant Vice President for Development

If you make a gift to Athletics you are part of the Friends of Skidmore Athletics (FOSA), and FOSA recently created a Leadership Council that brings together Advancement, Alumni, Athletics, College Events, and representatives from every team except for one. Members of the Leadership Council serve for three years, and Gail drives the goals of the Council. The Council has proven to be a very effective organizational structure, which includes a fundraising arm and an engagement arm.

We completed our 4th annual All In To Win campaign this year. For the first time, every team met their fundraising goal, and we had 802 total participants and raised \$245,000. It is impressive to note that the fundraising goal was \$100,000 going into the campaign, and we want to acknowledge all the student-athletes, coaches, and others who made this such a success.

Our overall fundraising also surpassed previous years, with \$1,275,326 raised to date including capital gifts and \$332,246 excluding capital gifts.

In terms of facilities, there is a fair amount of frustration related to the lack of progress. We expect the Campus Master Planning process to provide more focus on athletic facilities planning, and once we have clarity from that process, we will have a fundraising campaign for athletic facilities. Advancement believes there will be people who will respond to that campaign.

Through various meetings, tours, and athletic events, Marc Connor is aware of the inadequacies of our athletic facilities and the \$150,000 annual fundraising mandate that is such a burden for Athletics. A proposal is currently being developed to address the challenges of this fundraising mandate.

- III. Update on NCAA Self-Study

Megan forwarded the latest version of the Self-Study for the AC to review. Comments should be sent to Megan, and June 1 is the target for submission.

- IV. Revisions to the AC Operating Code

T.H. forwarded the revised versions of the AC Operating Code and Procedures for the Review of Physical Activity Instructors, and we will finalize these revised documents during our final meeting of the year.

- V. Our final AC meeting for the year is Tuesday, May 18th at 10:00 am via Zoom.

Athletic Council Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2021
10:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Members Present: T.H. Reynolds (Chair), Gail Cummings-Danson, Megan Buchanan, Jason Breves, Karen Kellogg, Flagg Taylor (FAR)

- I. May 3, 2021 minutes were approved.
- II. NCAA Self-Study: The Committee approved the Self-Study (with the proviso that both the revised Athletic Council operating code and the revised review procedures for physical activity instructors be included).
- III. The Committee approved final revisions to the AC operating code. The final document will be sent to the committee members in the coming weeks.
- IV. The Committee approved final revisions to the review procedures for the physical activity instructors. The final document will be sent to the committee members in the coming weeks.
- V. The chair will communicate with FEC about the replacement for Karen Kellogg who completed her 3 year term of service to AC.