

Annual Report of the Athletic Council for 2015-2016 June 8, 2016

Committee Membership, 2015-2016:

2016	Mark Huibregtse, Mathematics and Computer Science, Chair
2017	Amon Emeka, Sociology
2018	T.H. Reynolds, Health & Exercise Sciences (on leave S'16, repl. by Fabian Lopez, Art)
	Beau Breslin, Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs
	Flagg Taylor, Government, NCAA Faculty Athletics Rep. - ex-officio (voting)
	Gail Cummings-Danson, Interim Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs
	Megan Buchanan, Senior Woman Administrator, Athletics (non-voting)
2016	Tori Eldridge, Class of 2016
2017	Derrick Yam, Class of 2017

The Athletic Council met eight times during the academic year 2015-2016.

Regular Business:

Review of Physical Activity Instructors: One of the committee's regular items of business is the peer evaluation of the Physical Activity instructors. Assignments of instructors being reviewed to faculty members on the committee were made at our first meeting in the fall; the reviews have all been completed and the results forwarded to the Athletic Director.

Annual Reports from the Director of Academic Advising (Kim Marsella), the Director of Student Academic Services (Jamin Totino), the Fundraising Coordinator for FOSA (Zach Schwan), and the Director of Admissions (Catherine DeLorenzo): Pursuant to our operating code, we received (the annual) reports from these officers regarding their perspectives on Skidmore's athletic program.

Tim Brown Scholar Athlete Award: The committee is responsible for reviewing the nominees for this award and selecting the winner; this year's distinguished recipient was Isaac Carp.

Reports from the Athletic Director: Each meeting of the committee included a report from Gail Cummings-Danson/Megan Buchanan regarding the status of the athletic program and highlighting particular successes and/or problems.

Review of NCAA Rule Changes: Skidmore, as a member of the NCAA, has the right to vote on proposed rule changes. The committee discussed this year's proposals and made recommendations as to which we should support or oppose.

Other business:

NCAA Self-Study: The NCAA requires that member institutions conduct a self-study of their athletic programs every five years. The self-study consists of a long series of questions for the institution to consider, in consultation with various offices (e.g., admissions, financial aid, academic advising, health services, etc.) with connections to athletics. This year Skidmore completed its self-study under the aegis of a broadly representative steering committee chaired by Megan Buchanan and including representatives of the Athletic Council. At its last meeting of the year, the Athletic Council endorsed the self-study and forwarded it to President Glotzbach for his signature. Interestingly, the NCAA doesn't actually look at the self-study; it only requires presidential certification that it was rigorously and honestly completed. As one might expect, this year's study highlighted both things we can be proud of and areas in which we need to improve. Those interested can request to see the report on-file in the Office of the Athletic Director.

Physical Activity (PA) class grading issue: Corey Freeman-Galant recommended that PA courses be changed from letter-graded to "all S/U" as one means of moderating the college-wide trend of grade inflation. (High grades predominate in one-credit courses; in PA courses, "A's" currently constitute 93% of all grades.) The committee considered this recommendation in parallel with consideration by the PA instructors. As of this writing, no final decision has been made. This issue is connected to the possible awarding of academic credit for varsity athletics participation (see the next item); such credit would almost certainly be on an "S/U only" basis, making it likely that a consistent policy would be adopted for PA classes.

Academic Credit for Intercollegiate Athletic Participation: The student members of the committee had raised this issue during the academic year 2014-15, and the committee had given it preliminary consideration at that time. This year, the students researched the practices of other colleges, met with the varsity coaches to hear their concerns, and worked toward a formal proposal that could command broad support. The students will continue to work on the proposal during the next academic year, so this issue will be on the committee's agenda for 2016-2017 as well.

Faculty Liaison Program: Flagg Taylor, the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative, has been exploring the creation of a Faculty Liaison program for the athletic teams. Currently some faculty members have unofficial "advisory" connections to certain teams; a more formal liaison program would endeavor to provide liaisons for all teams and increase recognition of the liaisons' contributions. This project was "on the back burner" this year, but will likely be on the committee's agenda in 2016-17.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Huibregtse