3/2/2015

TO: Faculty Senate Executive Board
FROM: Betty Sindelar

RE: COIA conference

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for sending me to the COIA (Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics) conference on February 20-22, 2015.

Background

COIA was developed to be the faculty senate’s voice when looking at the place and function of intercollegiate athletics at FBS universities. COIA views itself as a different voice from the FARs (faculty athletic representatives) in that COIA representation should be appointed or voted on by the faculty senate as opposed to the Presidential appointment of the FARs. COIA has been in existence for 15 years and has about 65 active member universities (out of a possible 122). The MAC membership in COIA besides OU is Akron, Eastern Michigan, Massachusetts (Amherst). The AAC and the Big Ten Conferences have the highest percentage member participation.

Summary of Conference

During the conference, it was clear that the current interests of COIA focus on academic integrity, the welfare of the student/athlete, NCAA restructuring, and fiscal responsibility of ICA programs.

Presentations included:

1. Representative from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill regarding the academic fraud issues facing that university. Summary: over 3000 “paper classes” attended by over 1300 student/athletes over a 20 year period of time. Student/athletes were disproportionally represented in this group compared to the rest of the student body (47% of students taking classes were athletes even though athletes only comprised 4% of entire student body). GPAs in AFAM courses were 3.55 compared to 2.84 for all other courses. As a result, much tighter controls were instituted by the faculty and administration regarding on-line courses, independent study courses, and grade reporting. Institutional leadership (Provost and deans) was identified as center of new changes to academic mission of the university.

2. Update on NCAA governance restructuring from a NCAA staff member. It is clear that the NCAA will only consider FARs as the academic representation on any NCAA committees. Higher governing structures are still heavily loaded with university presidents.

3. Discussion on academic misconduct policies being created by the NCAA. Presentation given by NCAA staff member. Committee on Academic
Performance proposed core values in October, 2014. NCAA misconduct regulations were established in 1983 and have not been revised since. Currently information is fragmented and hard to find in the NCAA handbook. Current regulatory structure occurs because of interpretation rather than legislation. There is concern that some institutes do not have student code of honor documents and written policies to handle academic misconduct. The Committee is looking to have new legislation ready for adoption by the NCAA DI in January, 2016. I have the presentation if anyone is interested.

4. Results of survey conducted by COIA regarding faculty oversight of athletics on university campuses. Bottom-line of the survey is that there is huge variance in faculty interest in ICA, faculty oversight of ICA, and selection and function of the FARs. Again I have a powerpoint presentation if anyone is interested.

5. Current activities of the Drake Group specifically HR 5743 – creation of a Presidential Commission to investigate ICA on a national scale and to propose legislation to deal with issues that come up. There appears to be bipartisan and White House support for the bill. However, no formal lobbying efforts have been created. If passed, the bill will create funding for the commission and set a year time-line for the process.

Current leadership discussed options of restructuring COIA to provide better focus to the topics of most importance/interest to the group. Over the course of the conference, a new organizational structure was defined and refined which includes more opportunities for member involvement in the activities of COIA. This new organizational plan will be sent out to the membership for vote.

There has been little consistency with membership and representation over the years at the COIA conferences so work is fragmented. Discussion seem to repeat themselves from year to year in order to re-orient a large percentage of the attendees. Therefore, membership requested that each representative discuss 5 year appointments with their faculty senates.

Final recommendation was to improve relationships between the COIA representatives and the FAR(s) for the institute.

2016 meeting: Mike Bowen is in charge of organizing the meeting with directives to look into Indianapolis as the meeting site in order to enhance interaction with the NCAA during the meeting.

My thoughts

OU seems to be performing better in the integration of athletics and academics than a large percentage of other universities. Our admissions policies apply equally to all students. Our student/athletes are held accountable for their academics and are not funneled into one or two majors on campus. We have written policies and procedures for dealing with academic misconduct as well as an active and helpful Office of
Community Standards and Student Responsibility. We have a faculty that is interested in the activities of the university and in having a voice in the direction and governance of the university. We have an athletic department that welcomes open discussion and is concerned about not only the athletic aspects but also the academic and personal welfare of our student/athletes.

If anyone has additional questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at sindelar@ohio.edu or at 7-1883.