



ATHLETIC COUNCIL

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ATHLETIC COUNCIL Meeting Minutes September 8, 2005

PRESENT: Dennis Banks, John Breslin, Rique Campa, Connie Currier, George Eyster, Charles Gagliano, Eric Hinojosa, Fayyaz Hussain, Mike Kasavana, Robert Maleczka, Ron Mason, Mary Noel, Liz Shimek, Harold Sollenberger, Frederick Tims, Elizabeth Turpin, Keith Williams

ABSENT: Joan Garety

GUESTS: Joanne McCallie, Jim Pignataro

The meeting was convened at 7:30 a.m. The minutes of the May 5, 2005, meeting were approved as distributed.

The first guests of the morning were women's head basketball coach Joanne McCallie and scholar-athlete Liz Shimek. McCallie thanked council members for their support during the year for her program that is entering its sixth season. She mentioned having a terrific support staff. The program overall boasts a 3.0 GPA and the team is doing well in every area. Team members are involved in many community outreach activities. One such activity is collaboration with the College of Human Medicine where student-athletes assist in the Mid Michigan Children's Initiative. This program focuses on children with cancer and on cancer research. Many student-athletes come to Michigan State with no prior experience of community outreach or community service, and this program provides an excellent

introduction. Another program is the teddy bear picnic for kids, which allowed young cancer patients to bring their teddy bears and actually have them undergo mock cancer testing.

McCallie said that last year the team established 40 MSU women's basketball firsts and she is looking for another first this year, an NCAA championship. She acknowledged that there are many people to thank for the success of the program; Ron Mason in particular has been tremendously supportive of the program. McCallie introduced Liz Shimek, a senior captain and this past summer a gold medalist playing for USA basketball overseas. Shimek is a general business management major who had the privilege of participating in basketball games in Turkey. She and her teammates were delighted to wear the red, white and blue representing the United States and to ultimately win a gold medal. She feels privileged to be part of the MSU program, and enjoys watching the recruitment of other great players to the program each year. She hopes to translate the winning ways from her summer's experience to the Michigan State squad this season.

In response to a question regarding balancing attendance and the demands of practice, Shimek mentioned that the situation is especially challenging during the three weeks of NCAA tournament play. She added that for the most part, professors are very understanding and allowed team members to take make-up exams or to complete class work on alternate dates. Both Coach McCallie and Shimek complimented the support services provided by the tutors from the Smith Academic Center.

McCallie is looking for the program's first attendance sellout this year at Breslin Arena -- last year established a record of 14,500. The coach is pleased that the program provides the department both revenue and reputation support. She mentioned the challenge of having new student-athletes adjust to college life, which also brings personal challenges. She reminded the council that in addition to helping them perfect putting the ball in the basket, she has to help them deal with extracurricular life and meeting personal challenges.

The coach left the meeting following her presentation. Liz Shimek who also is an Athletic Council member stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

The next guest of the morning was Jim Pignataro, Associate Athletic Director and Director of Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS). Jim distributed handouts and reported the following:

The program has been successful in helping student-athletes maintain or raise their GPAs. The report indicated term-by-term comparisons, which provides significant information as different demands are made on different teams during various times of the year. Overall team grade point averages ranged from 2.6 to 3.5. Football, with the 2.6 GPA, has shown a marked overall increase over previous years. Four years ago the football team GPA was 1.98. The other notable factor regarding the football program is that no student-athlete was dismissed from the university last year for academic reasons. This statistic represents SASS staff attentiveness and collaboration with coaches in helping student-athletes to meet their academic requirements.

- In response to a question, Pignataro mentioned that it is difficult to answer questions that compare Michigan State's GPAs with other Big Ten institutions since schools do not share GPA information. He suspects that MSU grade-point averages are similar to those of other Big Ten institutions. He also mentioned that the graduation rates include only information on student-athletes on athletic scholarship. That is, of the 750 student-athletes at Michigan State University, only the graduation rates of some 400 are included in departmental graduation reporting. He feels that the athletic programs are recruiting students with better character, which translates into improved performance on the playfield as well as in the classroom and the community.
- SASS provides opportunities for student-athletes to complete community outreach through more than 80 projects per year. Last year, the program received national recognition for its successful efforts in Life Skills.
- Last year, SASS initiated a multicultural program with much success. It may be the only athletically-based program of its kind in the nation.
- Pignataro briefly discussed the study hall attendance policy and referred to one of his handout materials. The current university policy includes an athletic council recommendation relative to student-athletes being advised to present a formal letter to professors, early in the semester, announcing the days likely to be missed do to athletic competition during that semester. The letter doesn't obligate the professor in any way; it provides

both the professor and the student-athlete an opportunity to discuss whether or not absences could be accommodated in the course.

Pignataro left the meeting following his presentation.

Council Chair Kasavana distributed several items, including the 2005-06 meeting schedule, updated roster, and a final version of the recently adopted MSU prospective student-athlete (PSA) recruitment policy. Kasavana also distributed a sheet on which council members could indicate their preference for council subcommittee membership. In response to a question, there was a brief discussion of the 2005 NCAA Certification Report and outcome.

There were no subcommittee reports as the subcommittees conducted no business since the last spring council meeting.

ATHLETICS DIRECTOR REPORT

AD Mason reminded the council that there is no university department that is as closely scrutinized and surveyed, as the athletic department. As illustration, the department has to comply with extensive Big Ten, MSU, and NCAA rules. Every aspect of the program is under the microscope.

The department currently is faced with a few controversial issues that include:

- Serving alcohol in the new stadium addition. He supports a proposed change in the alcohol policy because it will allow fans the same opportunity that they would have if they were tailgating next to the stadium; which is to allow the use of alcohol beginning two hours before game time. The old policy resulted in incidences similar to the one that occurred last weekend where fans stayed outside tailgating and drinking until the last minute and then rushed to the stadium thereby creating a large entrance bottleneck.
- The prohibition of chair backs has also become a topic of controversy. The rental of department-sanctioned seat backs is intended to resolve the problems caused by fans bringing irregular seatbacks into the stadium. In the past, a number of fights occurred when fans felt their space was being infringed upon by neighboring oversized chair backs. The new chair backs

rent for \$5.00 per game (\$30 for the season) and are affixed within the space allotted to each fan.

- The department will more closely monitor the issuance of disability passes. Previously some 800 people would request disability passes per game. To control the number of false requests, a database of fans with disabilities has been established to effectively eliminate the number of false requests.

Regarding the overall performance and quality of the athletic program last year, Mason mentioned that five MSU teams won Big Ten championships, the most in a single year in the history of MSU athletics. In addition, both the men's and women's basketball teams made it to their Final Four tournaments. He further commented that success was attained doing things the right way -- there were no rules violations committed.

The department is financially self-sufficient and annually pays the university about \$8 million in athletic scholarship tuition. As tuition increases so does the level of scholarship funding of the department.

Scholarship seating, which was instituted three years ago, has been performing well financially for the department bringing in an excess of \$2 million per year.

FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Faculty Athletics Representative Kasavana handed out several documents including a report on approved 2005 varsity sports schedules, the AFCA Graduation Rate Survey, MSU NCAA Certification Status Report, and information on the availability of the Go Green cards, football tickets, and parking passes for council members. He invited council members to attend the jointly sponsored MSU/UM pre-game reception on October 1. He also acknowledged the UCAP appointment of liaison Dennis Banks to the council.

AROUND THE TABLE

Williams announced that the Alumni Association sponsors away-football game day tailgates and invited the council to participate. He announced also that the

MSU men's and women's swim teams would be hosted at the MSU/Purdue football tailgate thanks to the MSU Alumni Association and the Varsity Alumni S Club.

There were no other items from around the table.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith A. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal line that extends to the right.

Keith A. Williams