



# **ATHLETIC COUNCIL**

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## ATHLETIC COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes  
September 5, 2002

PRESENT: Rick Audas, Gary Ferenchick, Chuck Gagliano, Joan Garety, Mike Kasavana, Ann Marie Kersten, Marvel Lang, John Lloyd, Ron Mason, Edmund Outslay, Tom Schmidt, Elizabeth Turpin, Francisco Villarruel, Keith Williams, Mel Yokoyama, June Youatt

ABSENT: Tom Morse, Robin Poston

GUESTS: Rich Comley, Troy Ferguson, Jim Pignataro

The meeting was convened at 7:30 a.m. The minutes of the May 9 meeting were approved as distributed.

Today's guests were head hockey coach Rich Comley, student-athlete Troy Ferguson, and Jim Pignataro, director of the Student-Athlete Support Services.

Coach Comley expressed appreciation for the invitation to appear before the Athletic Council. His acquaintance with AD Ron Mason goes back many years beginning at Lake Superior when he played for Mason as a student-athlete. He brings 30 years of coaching experience with him to Michigan State. He is enjoying learning the strengths of Michigan State University, one of which is its tremendous diversity. He is impressed with the variety of majors available to MSU student-athletes. He gave high praise to the Smith Center, saying that it is key to the overall success of MSU athletics. As an illustration of one aspect of the Center's importance, he noted that the parents of recruits, concerned about MSU'S size, are less concerned when they learn about the Smith Center.

Comley describes himself as a no nonsense coach who expects no less than hard work from his student-athletes. He expects them to keep out of trouble and understand that they represent the University at all times. He advised that one should not anticipate great changes in the hockey program. His greatest challenge has been making the adjustment going from a small school to a large school. He's becoming acquainted with the players, and has had an opportunity to meet many of them during the summer hockey school. Troy Ferguson is a good representative of the quality of student-athlete in the program. Coach Comley feels that we won't win in the short term or long term with student-athletes who are not decent people.

Troy Ferguson is a kinesiology senior in pre-med. He selected Michigan State because of Coach Mason and the beauty of the campus. He enjoys all aspects of being an MSU student-athlete. He has had the opportunity to represent Michigan State at the Big Ten and NCAA levels and thereby learn about and compare athletic programs at other schools. He mentioned that at both the Big Ten and the NCAA levels he has been impressed with the status of MSU's name. The representatives of many schools are amazed by the Smith Center and cannot boast of a student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC) like MSU. In many ways, MSU is ahead of other schools. Lastly, he anticipates great things from the team this year.

Both Coach Comley and Troy Ferguson departed the meeting following their presentations.

The next guest of the morning was Jim Pignataro. He begin his presentation by providing brief information about his background, stating he had worked with Roger Grooters at Florida State then followed him here to Michigan State.

He reported that MSU's graduation rate is fairly good, 87% of the student-athletes who have completed their eligibility graduate. Two percent of athletes have GPAs below 2.0 GPA, and he feels that a 3.0 GPA for all teams is a realistic goal. He complimented his staff, in particular Angela Howard, former gymnast, who now serves as associate director responsible for the Center's life skills program. He feels Angela is a good ambassador to the community and to date has established many valuable campus partnerships.

The major theme of his administration will be accountability. He suggested that Athletic Council could be of great help by drafting a class absence policy yet this year. He is seeking to implement programs that get student-athletes excited about improving their grade point averages. He also reported that all 32-football players

who were ineligible going into the summer had become eligible by the end of the summer. He has a good working relationship with all head coaches and their staff.

Lastly, Pignataro distributed and discussed an academic summary sheet with the Council.

### Drug Education and Testing Committee

The report was given by Gary Ferenchick. The committee will focus on ensuring that university policies are followed. On the education side, the athletic department has once again planned five consulting sessions to provide consultations with student-athletes and coaches. The Committee is seeking to create relationships with community drug education groups as well as those in other schools in order to make comparisons with and improvements to MSU's athletic Drug Education and Testing program.

There were no other committee reports.

### **ATHLETICS DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ron Mason gave the department report. He mentioned a few areas of concern that will be driving his administration. The first is improvement of facilities. In this regard, he reports that great strides have been made in the Jenison renovations and the construction of the outdoor track. The track construction has necessitated finding locations for 290 displaced football parking spaces as well as for sponsor and college program tents. He also reported that the football locker room renovation project has been completed and the planning of new golf course facilities is being pursued. The work in Jenison has not been completed, clean up remains to be done.

The second area is maintaining strength in the department's personnel ranks. Mason feels that the department is blessed with a good group of people in support and leadership roles. He complimented Clarence Underwood on his efforts to calm the waters, making it easier for Mason's entry as athletic director. The following are recent departmental personnel changes: Colleen Etheridge, event management coordinator, has taken a job with the NCAA. John Lewandowski has been assigned director of communications. He will be the department's spokesperson and will provide media interviewing assistance and guidance for the coaches and staff.

The third area of concern is the department's budget. Mason announced that the department is heading for a huge deficit and he will be challenged with minimizing its effects.

Another area of concern is graduation and retention rates. He is aware that the more programs are successful, the more there will be departures and transfers that will affect the program.

Mason also briefly discussed the anticipated stadium seating plan, reporting that to date there has already been much discussion of the plan. He provided the following statistic that will factor in the discussions: currently 47% of the people seated in prime seating do not donate to the University. Another factor of the discussions will be the "rule of 85," which will take the total number of years of continuous season ticket purchase together with one's age to determine an exemption in seat licensing. Faculty and staff will continue to be offered a 20% discount in seating and premium costs. He expects the new plan to generate \$2.5 million for the department. He anticipates that the distribution of complimentary tickets and the expansion of Spartan stadium will also be included in the seating plan discussions.

Mason asserted that his administration would be driven by a few simple principles. All department program changes and facilities development must reflect revenue generation. Everyone in the department will be expected to be productive, no one will be excused for shoddy performance.

## **FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Chair Kasavana distributed the 2002-03 Athletic Council roster and committee assignments, as well as the athletic planner for the academic year 2002-03. He asked that council members indicate their committee preference on the circulated roster sheet. He reviewed the role of the Council's committees, then discussed two reports: the Student-Athlete Population Survey Instrument from associate athletic director Shelley Applebaum, and a gender equity survey of progress by the National Women's Law Center. He mentioned that the general feeling in the department was that it was unfortunate that Michigan State has been listed in the report based on old data that does not accurately reflect progress made in achieving gender equity. Athletic Director Mason has written a letter of protest to

the Women's Law Center drawing attention to the oversight and enlightening the group about the progress Michigan State has made to date.

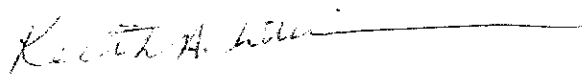
Also, Kasavana discussed the following: the University of Michigan pre-game reception, the Athletic Council annual report, the Coaches Guide to NCAA Academic Performance, the team schedule approval summary, and the academic advising services reporting lines.

## **AROUND THE TABLE**

There were no items from around the table.

The meeting concluded at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Keith A. Williams", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith A. Williams  
Secretary