

**University Athletics Committee**  
**January 21, 2021 – Meeting Highlights**  
**3:30 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom**

**Present:** Susan Short presiding, Danny White (for Whit Babcock), Allison Bowersock, Tom Burbey, Bob Denton, Patrick Finley, Ron Fricker, Heather Gumbert, Joseph Kozak, David Crotts (for Ken Miller), Bridget Ryan-Berman, Becki Smith, Kenneth Stiles, Ester Talamazzi, Anna Taylor, Joseph Tront, Brad Wurthman

**Absent with Notice:** Katie Boes, Tom Crow, Patrick Finley, Rachel Holloway, Art Keown, Mike Madigan, Joe Marcy, Michael Nappier, Jay Poole, Chris Wise (for Frank Shushok), Eric Wiseman

**Guests:** Sarah Armstrong, Kelsey DeShambo, Matt Goff, Mike Goforth, Brett Griesemer, Derek Gwinn, Mark Rogers, M.D., Danny White

Susan Short called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

**1. Adoption of Agenda**

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

**2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of December 17, 2020.**

Susan Short noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

**3. Old Business – N/A**

**4. New Business – N/A**

**5. Presentations**

A. Danny White, Senior Associate AD SA Services/University Affairs, provided the [Athletic Director Update](#) (attached). He shared topics discussed at the most recent senior administrator meeting (1-8-21). These included:

- Creative Solutions/Strategic Communication Update – Brian Cox
- Performance Center Update – Danny White

- Creativity & Innovation District Living – Chris Helms
- Inclement Weather Policy – Bridget Brugger-McSorley
- Opt Out Update - Bridget Brugger-McSorley
- SWA Update – Reyna Gilbert-Lowry
- Game Operations Communications Plan – All

Danny White shared February's student athletes' schedule which is color coded and full of events. All spring, winter, and fall sports (except for football) are competing now as a result of not being able to compete in the fall and winter.

Sarah Armstrong plans to send a memo to faculty members through Navigate explaining the increase in student athletes' participation this spring with all sports competing now except for football.

Joe Tront asked how many students opted out. There were a few in the fall and not very many for spring so far. We are not sure what our peers are experiencing because we don't have access to their numbers.

- B. Mike Goforth, Associate Athletics Director, Sports Medicine, gave a presentation on Sports Medicine – Athletics COVID Update (attached). Assisting with the presentation were: Dr. Mark Rogers, Chief Medical Officer; Kelsey DeShambo, Athletic Trainer; Brett Griesemer, Senior Director Sports Medicine. Highlights from this presentation included the following:

- Physicians have a holistic approach to student athletes' health (mind and body)
- "Stay positive, test negative"
- Knowledge is power, acknowledge the uncertainties
- Working close with campus partners, all have been incredibly helpful - especially Dean of Students Office, Student Life, and Student Health, Dr. Rogers, and Department of Health
- Following protocols to keep everyone as safe as possible
- Constant changing and passing information along to groups, stay within NCAA and NAAC guidelines
- With a footprint across nine states, some states have different recommendations. The conference came up with a general consensus.
- Weekly updates of COVID numbers of where students are being sent
- Direct contact with testing labs, test 6-7 days per week and getting results. Constant contact with the health department.

- Athletics is currently testing as many as 100 students per week. The Athletics staff take care of swabbing and transporting to labs.

Questions:

Joe Tront – *Is there a plan for student athletes to get vaccinated?* Dr. Rogers has been advocating to see how quickly students can be vaccinated.

Heather Gumbert – *How many student athletes have gotten COVID?* About 250 since the start. Not seeing any evidence of transmission through sports. It comes from all over, sharing spaces (homes), not really from sports, especially outdoor sports.

*Have there been any hospitalizations?* One third of the cases have been asymptomatic. Most experience mild symptoms for 3-5 days. A handful were very sick requiring IV. For anyone who tests positive, further testing of EKGs, bloodwork, and ultrasounds on hearts are conducted. No problems have been found yet.

Bob Denton – not a fan of NCAA, skeptical of the long-term effects of COVID, somewhat concerned.

Ken Stiles asked if they know what will be done in the fall. Some think that the governor will reinstate the emergency status at the end of June. Mike Goforth replied we are at week 45 and if we have to go back to week 6, at least we know we can do this. We just have to keep going and keep safe.

C. Derek Gwinn, Associate Athletics Director, Compliance, gave a presentation on Compliance – Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) (attached).

- NIL rights would permit college athletes to benefit from the use of their name, image, or likeness.
- After two years of discussion, the NCAA Division I Council voted on January 11 to delay enacting legislation on NIL rights. Future date will be determined.
- A third party that will help with this is important. We want to avoid a business reaching out to a student directly. Everything would need to go through a third-party process, determining an athlete's worth, and offers from businesses.
- Some are skeptical of how this will work out.

- NIL rights have gained so much momentum that what the schools want is a moot point.
- University presidents have input into the NCAA.

D. Joseph Tront, Faculty Representative to NCAA, gave an update on NCAA (letter attached)

- Regarding NIL, Department of Justice letter came through recently.
- Antitrust law boxes us in as a university.
- A lot of problems with NIL, a lot of difficulties.
- Upcoming clinic in March on gambling – a problem in athletes, especially for basketball.
- Old and new gambling rules.

## **6. Other Items**

Sarah Armstrong – 18 of our 20 sports ended fall 2020 with above 3.4 GPA. The overall average GPA was 3.23.

## **7. Announcements**

Meeting dates for 2021 (All meetings will be from 3:30-5:00 p.m. and will be conducted via Zoom):

- Thursday, February 11, 2021
- Thursday, March 11, 2021
- Thursday, April 8, 2021
- Tentative: Thursday, May 13, 2021

## **8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 p.m.