

**University Athletics Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 11, 2021**  
**3:30 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom**

**Present:** Susan Short presiding, Whit Babcock, Tom Burbey, Bob Denton, Patrick Finley, Trish Hammer (for Ron Fricker), Heather Gumbert, Rachel Holloway, Joseph Kozak, Ken Miller, Michael Nappier, Jay Poole, Bridget Ryan-Berman, Becki Smith, Kenneth Stiles, Ester Talamazzi, Anna Taylor

**Absent:** Katie Boes, Allison Bowersock, Tom Crow, Art Keown, Mike Madigan, Joe Marcy, Chris Wise (for Frank Shushok), Joseph Tront, Brad Wurthman

**Guests:** Sarah Armstrong, Marci Byers, Danny White

Susan Short called the meeting to order at 3:38 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. Athletic Director Update - Whit Babcock, Director of Athletics**

- ACC Network - Virginia Tech Athletics hope to exceed the dollar amount expected for the first year with the ACC network deal.
- Student Athletes and Code of Conduct
  - Felony charge – The student-athlete is suspended automatically from practice and playing privileges until the charges are resolved.
  - Misdemeanor charge – The student-athlete is subject to a review process and may get a warning, probation, restricted use of athletic services/facilities, or suspended from play or practice for a stated period of time.

## **Questions & Answers for Director of Athletics**

When asked how he was holding up, Mr. Babcock replied that this has been the hardest personal and professional year, a lot of anxiety; but feels very blessed to have the job he has at Virginia Tech.

In response to a question recording baseball attendance, Mr. Babcock indicated the attendance protocol will be the same as now - 250 people not counting the athletic staff and athletes.

Mr. Babcock responded to a question related to football season ticket sales – is unsure how the promotions for football season tickets will go.

When asked what student athletes are sharing with coaches and staff, Danny White spoke as someone who works with Dr. Bennett. Dr. Bennett is a clinical and sport psychologist for the Virginia Tech Athletics Department. What they are hearing from student-athletes include the following: mental exhaustion, anxiety, and coping with pressure; they are tired of being in class in their apartments in sweatpants; tired of not seeing their peers. Socially, people miss being around people.

### **4. Presentations**

#### **Coaches Corner - Marci Byers, Head Coach, Volleyball**

Coach Byers has been at Virginia Tech for one year. Prior to this, Coach served as head coach at Radford University. Once arriving at Virginia Tech, one of her first goals was to get a good foundation and make sure academics were on point. She has worked with the staff to restructure what they are doing at Virginia Tech. Coaches are conducting regularly meetings with players. Regarding recent academic performance, the team was second as far as women's teams go. Almost all the volleyball players had a GPA of 3.7 for the fall semester and the team had a 3.5 GPA overall. They are working hard and beat Duke on Duke's floor. As the season progresses, they will be playing better teams in the ACC. Coach and the players are excited to get on the court and demonstrate continued success.

When asked what was one of her greatest surprises and if there were any barriers, she answered that the biggest thing was having the players get on-board with a new coach. They listened and tried to be better. There was good rapport with the team and it's only been a year. Not really a barrier, but it has been a hard year with COVID and the racial injustices in the country. She offered videos and readings, did not

force it on the players, but they were interested. COVID has been the biggest hurdle. They meet with students and are as supportive as they can be.

**SAASS Staff Update - Sarah Armstrong, Director, Student Athlete Academic Support Services** (attached)

Sarah Armstrong provided an overview of various SAASS staff changes which have resulted in reducing the student ratio to counselors. The office is working with three practicum students who are working with student athletes in study hall and a wide variety of projects. This provides experiences and exposure to potential new employees in the industry. When asked what is she looking for if undergraduates might be interested in this field, Ms. Armstrong said they need people skills, not a particular field of study. About her leadership style, Ms. Armstrong said she meets the students where they are and pushes them a little. She won't ask her team to do anything that she wouldn't do herself. Taking the time to do the small details and being present are important characteristics.

**5. Other Items**

Discussion topic for an upcoming meeting – *VT relationship with Nike.*

**6. Announcements**

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

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

**7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m.