

## **University Athletics Committee**

**September 9, 2021**

3-3:30 p.m. Newcomers Session

3:30-5:00 p.m. Full Committee

**Newcomers Session** - UAC leadership conducted an orientation/overview for new members. Participants included: Sarah Armstrong, Travis Burns, Kevin Carlson, Jen Irish, Maria Kenner, Terry Rakes, Susan Short, Erick Stanley, Robin Queen, Anna Taylor, Joe Tront, Danny White, Brad Wurthman. Topics included: UAC charge, SAASS Overview, Faculty Athletics Representative Responsibilities, External Operations (including Hokie Club).

### **Full UAC Meeting**

**Present:** Whit Babcock, Tom Burbey, Travis Burns, Bob Denton, Rachel Holloway, Jennifer Irish, Joe Marcy, Ken Miller, Jay Poole, Robin Queen, Terry Rakes, Bridget Ryan-Berman, Susan Short, Chris Wise (for Frank Shushok), Becki Smith, Kevin Carlson (for Robert Sumichrast), Joseph Tront, Brad Wurthman

**Absent:** Allison Bowersock, Patrick Finley, Maria Kenner, Zach Speizer, Kenneth Stiles

**Guests:** Sarah Armstrong, 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 May 13, 2021.**

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 (PowerPoint provided) In addition to topics provided in the PowerPoint slide deck, Whit responded to: concerns related to the opening football game and shared corrective actions planned for the Middle Tennessee home game; the Big 10 and Pack 12 potential alliance; Name Image, and Likeness; and, an update to the current \$400M fundraising campaign. In addition, he responded to questions related to vaccinated

vs. nonvaccinated individuals attending sporting events and reminded the group that these decisions are made by Environmental Health and Safety officials and not the Athletics Department.

**4. Academic Update** – Sarah Armstrong, Director, Student Athlete Academic Support Services (PowerPoint provided) Highlights provided by Sarah included the following:

- Historically, fall 2020 was the best semester academically. Strong numbers for spring 2021 as well.
- Rebranded the Internship Program -- now the Volunteer, Intern, Practicum Program (VIP).
- Tutoring Program was recertified for a five-year renewal by CLRA.
- SAASS is conducting more in-person support for students vs. online support.
- Partnership with the Dean of Students Office providing advocacy training, also partnered with the Virginia Tech academic advising network to do an outreach event.
- Requested help with identifying tutors.

**5. Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) Reflections** – Jen Irish/Joe Tront

Susan Short provided an update regarding the search/review process conducted during the summer to replace Joe Tront as FAR. The review committee included Derek Gwinn, Eric Kaufman, Robin Queen, Susan Short, and Danny White. The committee reviewed all nominations and met with four finalists. The names of recommended candidates were forwarded to President Sands and Whit Babcock for interviews and further consideration. Jen Irish was selected and accepted a five-year appointment. Jen is working alongside of Joe to ensure a smooth transition. Some initial highlights provided by Jen included the following:

- NCAA is going through a constitution overhaul.
- ACC FARS learning how academic services, might have access through Canvas or other platforms, and whether that is something of interest and value that seems of interest to some of the other institutions. Jen has met with Sarah Armstrong to discuss.
- Some compliance waivers are being reviewed and processed. These are all top-notch academically student athletes.

Joe Tront provided some additional updates and insights. Another part of the job of the FAR is to interact with the NCAA on major issues (e.g., decision on whether or not to be part of the power five). FARs vote on similar issues that are discussed with the president or the AD. The FAR is also responsible for the nomination of student

athletes for awards.

Several questions were asked regarding the role of the university's FAR. These included:

1. Does the FAR sign off on waivers? Can you give us a description of what that is?

*Joe Tront Response: The NCAA has bylaws, but to satisfy one of the bylaws is to listen to the case. Example – student may have a medical problem and decide whether it is well documented and appropriate to give the student another season of competition. More common is a transfer, if the student is transferring within the conference, there has to be an agreement amongst the FARs that it is a reasonable transfer, that the student can be successful in the school they are transferring to and that they would not carry along the “playbook” of the other school.*

2. What are the discussions with the FARs around the challenges of the changes surrounding the increasing number of transfer students and the NCAA expectations and how we support our students' eligibility?

*Whit Babcock Response: Now young people can transfer once without caution in a five-year period which wraps in some of the graduate transfers. Once a student graduated in the past, he/she could transfer, without sitting out, to another institution. This is now once within five years and the FARs have been working on how this impacts the APR. There could be a lot of restructuring.*

*Joe Tront added . . . the reason the rule of sitting out was put in place was a caution that the student might not do well academically when transferring. VT does a great job of counseling potential transfer students. We try to let them know what they are up against.*

*Rachel Holloway added . . . transfer students often get delayed and that has impacts on the data. We are fortunate at Virginia Tech because most students do not get delayed. It depends on where they come from and what major degree they enter. It is a transition for any student and especially for a student athlete.*

*Danny White added . . . As the NCAA loosens those transfer bylaws, it stresses systems that weren't created to respond very quickly.*

## **6. Committee Member Comments/Updates**

Susan encouraged members to provide recommendations for future meeting topics and locations for meetings. A suggestion included a focus on Mental Health and the Student-Athlete experience during COVID.

Susan reminded the group that the next UAC meeting will be held Thursday, October 14, 2021 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

## **7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

### **MEETING DATES FOR 2021** (All meetings will be held from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.)

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Thursday, November 11, 2021

Thursday, December 9, 2021