

MINUTES OF THE
MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE
STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mountain West Conference Office
Colorado Springs, Colorado

November 13-14, 2004

Those participating:

Ryan Fitzgerald, Air Force Academy
Phillip Niu, Brigham Young University
Jennifer Gardner, Colorado State University
Kimilia Davis, University of New Mexico
Erica Lopez, San Diego State University
Willie Bowman, UNLV
Kristen Riffandcht, University of Utah
Matt Brunk, University of Wyoming
Katie Groke, University of Wyoming
Carolayne Henry, Mountain West Conference
Kelly Slater, Mountain West Conference

Those unable to participate: Christina Spence, University of New Mexico, Michelle Suszek, UNLV, Morgan Scalley, University of Utah, C.R. Davis, University of Wyoming, Breda Bova, University of New Mexico, Joint Council Representative.

[Note: These minutes reflect only actions (formal votes or “sense of meeting”). The only discussion included is that ordered by the chair or a member of the group; all salient discussion is included in the recording secretary’s notes on file in the Conference office.]

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Ms. Lopez. Ms. Lopez welcomed the members of the committee to Colorado Springs and made the necessary introductions. Members were present as noted above.

1. Review of May 8-9, 2004 and October 21, 2004 Minutes. The committee reviewed and approved the minutes of its May 8-9, 2004 in-person meeting and October 21, 2004 conference call as distributed.
2. Review of Mountain West Conference Structure. Ms. Lopez and Ms. Henry reviewed the MWC structure with specific attention paid to the roles of the Faculty Athletics Representatives, Senior Woman Administrators and Athletic Directors. The MWC SAAC reports to the Joint Council which is made up of Faculty Athletic Representatives, Senior Woman Administrators and Athletics Directors, thus getting to know these people at individual institutions can be helpful. The committee also reviewed the roles of the Joint

Council, the Joint Council Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. Ms. Henry reminded the committee to use those available at their institutions as each of them are helpful resources on a variety of issues and concerns.

The committee also noted the Conference will begin a new television contract with CSTV in 2006.

3. Review of Committee Goals. Ms. Lopez reviewed the 2004-05 committee goals. The committee divided into small groups to further discuss how to accomplish the 2004-05 goals. Below is a description of each goal and thoughts on how to best achieve each goal for 2004-05.

- a. **2004-05 Goal No. 1:** *To facilitate a positive student-athlete image by promoting good sportsmanship and publicizing the accomplishments of student-athletes. This may include athletic and academic accomplishments as well as community service activities.*

The committee had an in-depth discussion regarding sportsmanship. The committee felt strongly that sportsmanship needs to be a priority among teams. Ms. Riffanacht explained that something similar to the Leadership Committee that the University of Utah football team developed could be useful in promoting sportsmanship within a team.

- Work to develop a common bond between students on campus and student-athletes.
 - Promote student-athletes in the community as means to build a relationship between the student-athletes and the community.
 - Set high expectations with regard to the MWC Sportsmanship Policy. Consistently enforce the policy regardless of the sport. Student-athletes, coaches and administrators need to be held accountable for their actions.
 - Further publicize the MWC Sportsmanship Award in an effort to increase the prestige of the award.
 - Encourage coaches to recruit student-athletes of both high character and strong athletic skills.
- b. **2003-04 Goal No. 2:** *To bridge the trust gap between student-athletes and coaches/administrators.*

The committee identified several ways in which they can improve the trust gap between student-athletes and coaches/administrators

- Allow student-athletes to vote for their captains as opposed to coaches appointing captains.
- Encourage members of the athletic administration to get involved with the student-athletes, particularly the athletic director. Dinner with administrators or monthly meetings can greatly improve the relationship between administrators and student-athletes.
- Select SAAC committee members who are interested in representing their team. The more interested the student-athlete is in being on the committee, the more likely they will become involved.

c. **2003-04 Goal No. 3:** *To improve student-athlete lives by raising awareness of welfare issues.*

The committee agreed this still needs to be a goal but also agreed that awareness of student-athlete time demands needs to be considered. Student-athletes already have a great demand on their time and it is often difficult to find additional time to attend seminars and still maintain a healthy lifestyle. The committee felt the following issues need to continue to be stressed:

- Life Skills
- Alcohol Use
- Self-Defense
- Sexual Harassment
- Sports Psychology
- Availability of Resources (career center, resume help, etc)

d. **2003-04 Goal No. 4:** *To inspire and develop student-athletes into leaders of character beyond athletics. This will positively impact their professional environment and community.*

In order to inspire and develop student-athletes into leaders of character the committee suggested the following:

- Encourage student-athletes to be involved in service activities. Involvement in the community helps build character and maturity for the future.

- Organize activities for Student-Athlete Day.

The committee was requested to provide one thing they can do on their campuses to promote each goal. The committee was asked to report back on the December conference call.

4. Student-Athlete Time Demands. The committee reviewed and discussed the NCAA information regarding the 20/8 hour rule. The information was distributed as a result of concerns about which activities are included in the rule and its enforcement. The committee discussed the ways in which each institution asks its student-athletes to sign the 20-hour/week form. The majority of the committee reported they sign their sheets in front of their sport administrator or compliance coordinator instead of a coach.

Ms. Groke noted the legislation that would not count travel days as days off did not pass.

The committee will continue to discuss student-athlete time demands as it continues to be a focal point for the Division I SAAC and the NCAA.

5. NCAA Official Campus Visits. The committee reviewed the new NCAA policies on official campus visits. The legislation was adopted by the Division I Board of Directors in August 2004. The committee felt this was a positive step toward curbing potential problems on official campus visits but felt that problems often arise as a result of the chosen host or even the recruit. Additional coach involvement can help limit problems on official campus visits.

The meeting recessed at 11:30 a.m.

6. Community Service Activity. The committee participated in a community service activity at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. The committee put on a sports clinic for approximately 25 Special Olympic athletes.

Sunday, November 14, 2004.

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m., by Ms. Lopez. Members were present as noted above.

7. Division I SAAC Update. Ms. Groke updated the committee on the recent activities of the Division I SAAC. She noted the committee has primarily focused on specific issues this academic year. Three of the highlighted issues have been student-athlete pregnancy, travel safety and substance abuse.
 - a. Pregnancy Issues. The Division I SAAC has focused on student-athlete pregnancy in effort to ensure pregnant student-athletes are treated fairly and are provided with adequate information regarding their athletics aid and eligibility.

- b. Travel Safety. Ms. Groke shared a story regarding a recent car accident involving student-athletes. As a result of recent accidents involving 15-passenger vans and student-athlete drivers, the Division I SAAC has proposed a travel policy that includes requirements on timing and weather. The Division I SAAC hopes the legislation will at least pass as recommended policy.
- c. Substance Abuse. Alcohol abuse on college campuses has recently captured headlines across the country. As a result, the Division I SAAC discussed this issue and whether or not the NCAA should get involved. The MWC SAAC felt alcohol abuse is more of an institutional problem as it is a personal choice. Teammates often have the most influence and can deter student-athletes from alcohol.

Ms. Groke will continue to update the committee as these issues continue to be discussed.

- d. Legislation. Ms. Groke also addressed legislative matters that the Division I SAAC is discussing:
 - 20/8 hour rule. The MWC SAAC as well as the Division I SAAC are currently undertaking an effort to further educate student-athletes regarding countable and non-countable activities. The MWC SAAC will report back on their progress on a future conference call.
 - Recruiting. The MWC SAAC agrees with the concept of recruiting policies. However, the consensus of the committee was the policies were a step in the right direction but some of the new policies seem excessive.
 - Incentives/Disincentives. Ms. Groke reported the incentive/disincentive proposal is an effort to hold institutions accountable for the academic performance of their student-athletes. It was noted that institutions can lose scholarships as well as bowl eligibility if the student-athletes are not performing academically. Some feel the way in which the NCAA calculates the APRs (Annual Progress Reports) needs to be more accurate. The committee expressed concern that the program may result in coaches and advisors pushing student-athletes toward the easiest majors and classes.
 - Financial Aid. Ms. Groke discussed the NCAA legislation that would allow institutions to provide financial aid to student-athletes the summer prior to freshman year. This would allow student-athletes to workout during the summer and be provided with financial aid to attend school. Ms. Groke reported there is mixed support from student-athletes on the legislation. She agreed to update the committee on further discussion regarding this legislation.
8. Review of NCAA legislation. The committee reviewed various NCAA legislation that is currently in the legislative cycle. The committee supports proposal No. 2004 – 99C related to the permissible number of official visits. The committee felt that 2004 – 99C gave the

student-athlete more flexibility. The committee also noted they were in support of 2004 – 48 regarding the one –time transfer exception. The consensus was that all student-athletes should have equal opportunity to transfer to another institution, regardless of the sport in which they participate. The committee did not voice opposition to proposal No. 2004 – 72 regarding the maximum number of football contests.

9. NCAA Nutrition and Performance. Ms. Henry distributed NCAA Nutrition and Performance cards to each committee member to distribute to their institutional SAACs.
10. Outside Competition Policies. The committee discussed the NCAA outside competition policies for student-athletes. This has been a recent topic of discussion as 2004 was an Olympic year. Ms. Groke commented that the Division I SAAC will be discussing this at their next in-person meeting. Ms. Groke agreed to update the committee on the discussion as soon as possible.
11. Mountain West Conference Issues.
 - a. Sportsmanship Initiative. The committee again touched on the Mountain West Conference Sportsmanship Initiative. The committee agreed the initiative needs to continue to be a priority. The committee suggested the focus be placed on the coaches as they are able to lead their team by example.
 - b. Division I SAAC Representative. Ms. Groke thanked the committee for allowing her represent the Mountain West Conference and noted that she appreciated the continuous support of the committee. Ms. Groke's term on the Division I SAAC will end after the January 2005 meeting. Nomination forms for a new representative will be distributed to each institution in early January.
 - c. Joint Council Update. Ms. Henry provided an update about the MWC Fall Joint Council Meeting. Mr. Davis attended the meeting on behalf of the MWC SAAC and was present at the Student-Athlete Well-Being Committee meeting. Mr. Davis provided a student-athlete perspective on various topics including medical insurance. The MWC Spring Joint Council meeting will be April 12-15, 2005 in Fort Worth, Texas.
12. Institutional SAAC Issues.
 - a. Hazing. The committee was requested to send any institutional hazing policies to Ms. Slater as soon as possible.
 - b. Official Student Organizations. Ms. Gardner inquired to whether or not other institutional SAACs are recognized as official student organizations. Ms. Gardner reported that the Colorado State SAAC is currently investigating how to become an official student organization in order to receive organizational benefits. Ms. Gardner will update the committee on any progress.

- c. SAAC Exchange Program. Ms. Suszek reported on the efforts of UNLV to develop a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Exchange Program. Please reference the attached Division I Proposal. The committee endorsed the proposal and requested that the Joint Council review it during its April 2005 meeting. The committee would like the MWC to support the proposal as NCAA legislation in the 2005-06 NCAA legislative cycle. Ms. Groke agreed to speak with the Division I SAAC for their feedback and Ms. Henry suggested the committee discuss strong supporting arguments on the December conference call. It was noted that various student-government organizations already have exchange programs and that they might be a good resource for supporting information.
- d. Campus SAAC Activities. Each committee member shared a list of recent SAAC activities at their respective institutions:

Air Force Academy

- The Air Force Academy student-athletes participate in community service activities with individual teams.

Brigham Young University

- Habitat for Humanity.
- Joint community service project with Utah.
- SAAC sponsors a social with administrators and coaches at the beginning of the academic year.

University of New Mexico

- SAAC is continuing to work on a proposal to gain priority registration for student-athletes.
- Student-athletes read to local elementary schools students and visits local cancer patients.

San Diego State University

- Student-athletes are involved in a food and clothing drive.
- Shop with a Jock has over 90 student-athletes participating.
- Works with the University of San Diego on various community service projects.

UNLV

- SAAC participates in various community service activities including work at a local Boys and Girls Club and local libraries.
- Working with cheerleading team on being recognized by the NCAA as an official sport.

Utah

- Habitat for Humanity.
- Joint community service project with BYU.

- Student-athletes are selling Utah wristbands to raise money for a vaccination program in the Philippines.

Wyoming

- Senior banquet
- Reading at elementary schools once per week.
- Always-a-Cowboy run (to benefit cross country runners who were killed during September 2001).

13. Meeting Recap. Ms. Lopez reviewed items discussed at the meeting throughout the weekend and encouraged committee members to implement new ideas on their campuses. She also encouraged members to contact Ms. Henry if they are interested in being the Mountain West Conference representative on the NCAA Division I SAAC.

14. Other. Ms. Davis inquired regarding an international track and field student-athlete who was not declared eligible by the NCAA. The concern surrounded the student-athlete arriving in the United States but then being told she was ineligible and therefore could not compete. Ms. Henry asked Ms. Davis to send her additional details on the student-athlete and she will investigate further.

15. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 12:12 p.m. MT.

KS/CH:ks