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# SAAC SPEAKS

THE VOICE OF THE DI NATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As we embark on a new school year, the occasional conflict between academic and athletic time demands begin to resurface. As a student-athlete you will be faced with missing class on an occasional basis, completing make-up exams, and turning in assignments early or late. This is where communication, time management, and proper planning will facilitate a smooth semester both on and off the field....

## Back to School

By: Trisha Gibbons (Western Athletic Conference)

During the first week of class student-athletes should introduce themselves to each professor and inform them of the obligations as a student-athlete. It is imperative to communicate the dates that you are expected to miss class. If you do not know these dates beforehand, be sure to talk to your coaches as they can help you put together a calendar for each professor. As the semester progresses, it is important that the lines of communication between you and your instructor remain open. Remember to remind them in advance that you will be leaving on a certain class day due to athletics. This gives you ample time to reschedule a make-up test or plan to turn in an assignment early.

In order to keep a healthy balance between academics and athletics, time management is crucial. Lay out a schedule of class and practice time, and

make sure to pencil in some time for studying, as well. You should know when all of your exams, papers, and assignments are due. When traveling to away contests, utilize those long bus or plane rides by studying. If you fall behind or find yourself struggling, do not be afraid to seek help. Get a tutor, have a classmate take notes for you when you miss class, talk to your academic advisor, and know who your faculty administrator representative is—this support group can help if scheduling problems with a teacher arise and mediation needs to occur.

Jessica Thompson, a women's soccer student-athlete from the University of Nevada emphasizes time management and responsibility. She said, "It's important to learn how to manage time responsibly and keep up with academic work." With the time demands of a new school year, it is important to put as



much work into academics as you do on the field.

Plan ahead and turn in assignments early: if you are going to miss class, communicate with the instructor ahead of time, and manage your time responsibly!



## Off the Seat of the Chair By: Kerry Kenny (Patriot League)

As we shift from summer to fall and move towards the start of yet another impending year of academics and athletics, there is a scent of change in the air. You see, as the winds begin to shift and the leaves begin to change colors (in most parts of the country anyway), the beautiful pageantry of nature once again is upon us. In a very similar way, the NCAA Division I Membership will be going through a similar period of change. August 6, 2008 marked the start of what could be a very definitive period in the history of the Association. (Continued on page 3)

At every level (campus, conference, and national), the term "SAAC" is gliding off the tongues and resonating with the ever-increasing student-athlete population. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is gaining clout among NCAA administrators and increasing its influence throughout the membership. As our perspectives are acknowledged more and more, student-athletes must be cognizant of the ways the SAAC can help. That's why I would like to share a few ways you can potentially utilize your SAAC to improve student-athlete well-being...

## Put Your Campus SAAC to Use

By: Justin Pollard (Pac-10 Conference)

### 1. Raise Your Voice

The number one goal of SAAC is to get the student-athlete voice heard in the world around us. Fortunately for us, the NCAA has engineered one avenue already: legislation. Make sure to discuss all of the new legislative proposals at your campus SAAC meetings so we can give a strong and unified opinion to the decision-makers on items that affect us directly! Better yet, try to establish direct connections with administrators by inviting your Athletic Directors (ADs), Faculty Athletic Representatives (FARs), and Senior Woman Administrators (SWAs) to campus and conference SAAC meetings. This is a great way to let them know that student-athletes care about what's going on and also a great way to create avenues for collaboration in the future.

### 2. Give Something Back to the Community That Has Given Us So Much

As student-athletes we have been given a tremendous amount of opportunities and with them come a great deal of spotlight. One of the best ways to create a positive image for yourself and every student-athlete is to give back to your local community. Ways you can do this are by holding a clothing drive, a food drive, picking up trash outside, or help out at a local shelter.

Use your position to set a positive example of service to others and encourage your peers to get involved. People helping people...it's a beautiful thing!

### 3. Take Care of the SAAC and the SAAC Will Take Care of You

All across the country, campus and conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committees' are taking the initiative to improve the student-athlete experience. SAAC groups are doing so by helping administrators and campus faculty understand the best ways to utilize the Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund (SAOF). One of the best ways to use the SAOF is to create inclusive events that encourage student-athlete pride and solidarity. Some examples that your SAAC may try are talent shows, date auctions, game show nights, camp-outs or contests. The SAOF can also be used to give student-athletes an opportunity to develop their leadership skills through speakers, workshops and other interactive events. Take advantage of the resources you have!

This article lists only a mere sampling of the things you can do to utilize your campus and conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committees' more efficiently.

It is important that we take the time and initiative to use our campus and conference SAACs to their fullest potential.

This year, be a leader and encourage your fellow student-athletes to get involved. Do your best to be creative and innovative. Aim to help people in your community and focus on being a positive representation of student-athletes across the nation.

This year, be the difference at your school or in your conference!



Two DI National SAAC representatives working with Habitat for Humanity



Two University of Hartford SAAC representatives after a coat-drive

Two years ago, the Big South Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee created the Kallander Cup – named after the Big South Conference Commissioner Kyle Kallander. The Cup was intended to inspire Big South student-athletes to shine both in and out of competition in effort to raise money a selected charity. The Big South Conference institution that raises the most money over the course of the academic year is recognized at the conclusion of each academic year.

This past year, the Big South SAAC chose the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America, supporting its mission to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions. Big South student-athletes managed to raise more than \$14,000 while the conference office added more than \$4,000 separately. Liberty University claimed the Kallander Cup collecting a total of \$4,045. The total amount raised will help grant wishes for three children

The campus SAAC's from each Big South member institution were the engineers behind the fundraising efforts. Ranging from 50/50 raffles at sporting events to auctioning off student-athletes' assistance in their respective communities, a variety of activities and fundraisers were organized to gather donations.

"I am so proud of Big South student-athletes," said Big South commissioner Kyle Kallander. "Today's headlines are so often filled with negative or tragic stories involving college students. The fact that these student-athletes, with their busy academic and athletic schedules, raised more than \$18,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation is truly heart-warming and reinforces our belief that leaders are developed through athletics."

By: Ben Kieffner (Big South Conference)

This wonderful organization brings joy and wonder to so many deserving children through the granting of their wishes. We are honored to be able to support their generous efforts."

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of America president and chief executive officer, David Williams, stated "We are very excited to partner with the ten schools that are a part of the Big South Conference. Because of these student-athletes' tremendous efforts, three wish kids and their families will have joyful, life-affirming experiences to counter the difficulties of their medical conditions."

The Big South Conference has not yet decided what charity will be the focus the upcoming year's Kallander Cup race; however, student-athletes from the Big South are poised to surpass expectations once again. It will be another race to the end for the Cup!

### ABOUT MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. Born in 1980, the Foundation is now the largest wish-granting charity in the world, with 67 chapters in the United States and its territories. With the help of generous donors and nearly 25,000 volunteers, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted more than 164,000 wishes in the United States since its inception. For more information about Make-A-Wish Foundation, visit [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org) and discover how you can share the power of a wish.



(Continued from page 1) [Off the Seat of the Chair](#) By: Kerry Kenny (Patriot League)

...On that date, the Division I Leadership Council met for the very first time, setting a new governance structure at the Division I level into motion. After more than a year of planning by many across the Division I landscape, the more user-friendly version of the Division I governance structure has officially begun. It is intended to give a better flow to both broad-based issues and legislative issues, as each of the new bodies is given a greater level of specificity in their responsibilities. The new structure will also benefit student-athletes because 11 members of the National SAAC will serve on either a Division I or an Association-wide council/committee. It will allow student-athletes to have a direct interaction with even more constituencies throughout the membership at large. The bottom line is that the Association is moving forward in a new, seemingly productive direction.

Another noteworthy event also occurred during the first week of August, as the White Case Settlement was approved and finalized. To briefly recap, the White Case was an anti-trust class action lawsuit dealing with full cost of attendance for certain student-athletes. Although there are certain funds that are specifically available to qualified members of the class for defined career development services and/or educational expense reimbursement, the main outcome of the settlement that impacts ALL current student-athletes is the tweaking of how the \$218 million of the Special Assistance Fund (SAF), the Academic Enhancement Fund (AEF) and the Student-Athlete Opportunity Fund (SAOF) are distributed. In the past the SAF and AEF were more restrictive in terms of how they could be distributed and who would be able to receive them. However, under the terms of the settlement, all three funds can now be distributed using the least restrictive guidelines of the SAOF. This increases the amount of funding available to student-athletes that are able to demonstrate a need for financial assistance. . In terms of student-athlete well-being, it allows more student-athletes to have access to these funds, which should end up being a positive asset to student-athletes. For more information on the settlement, please visit the NCAA website at <http://www.ncaa.org>, and click White Case Settlement on the sidebar to the left.

As we embark on the 102<sup>nd</sup> year of the NCAA, student-athletes are as academically and athletically sufficient as ever before. On behalf of the entire National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, I wish the best of luck to all Division I student-athletes in both their academic and athletic endeavors in 2008 and 2009. We are Division I; one division, one voice.



## Letter to SAAC Members Everywhere

Dear Members of Student Athlete Advisory Committees,

My name is Alan Hauser, and I am a faculty member and the Faculty Representative for Athletics (FAR) at Appalachian State University. I also am President this year of FARA, the national Faculty Athletics Representatives Association. Please allow me to speak with you briefly about our common interests in intercollegiate athletics.

The weekend of July 18-20 I spent, along with Roger Caves, FAR at San Diego State University and President-Elect of FARA, several very enjoyable and informative days attending the national meeting of the Division I SAAC in Minnesota. We already knew from past experience that many student athletes have excellent ideas to offer, as when legislation has been discussed at national NCAA meetings in January.

At this meeting in Minnesota, we were especially impressed by the enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication of the student athletes at the SAAC meetings.

We discussed numerous matters, including legislation currently working its way through channels, as well as the needs and interests of student athletes, and the work of the Division I Football and Basketball Academic Enhancement groups. A key function of the FAR on each campus is to ensure that student athletes are being provided a quality academic and athletic experience. In order to do that, it is important that FARs be in regular contact with student athletes. We propose strengthening ties between our national association, FARA, and your national SAACs.

This year at FARA's national meeting in November in San Diego, our theme will be "Enhancing the Student Athlete Experience." At this conference we will have various programs and panels focusing on the life of student-athletes on our campuses, in our conferences, and throughout the NCAA. We will involve student athletes on these panels and in these programs in order that we may learn from you, that you may inform us about issues important to you, and that we may discuss ways in which FARs and student athletes may work with one another in order to improve the student athletes' experiences on each of our campuses.

We have put together a list of what we consider to be ten key issues currently facing intercollegiate athletics. We would be interested in hearing your responses.

Here is the list:

1. Admissions requirements for student athletes, and special admission policies
2. Issues concerning the continuing eligibility of student athletes

3. The availability of academic services to student athletes

4. The availability of summer school courses to student athletes

5. The length of season schedules for specific sports

6. Voluntary/mandatory activities in specific sports

7. The 20 hours/week rule during the championship season, and off season time rules

8. The need to improve Academic Progress Rates in specific sports

9. Missed class time and missed class policies

10. The escalating cost of intercollegiate athletics.

Roger and I are optimistic that, by working closely together, FARA and the national SAACs can help each other to address these and other issues in intercollegiate athletics. To that end, we look forward to a productive relationship between our groups. While at this point we have interacted only with the Division I SAAC, we hope in the very near future to strengthen ties between FARA and all three divisional SAACs.

Thanks for all that each of you does for intercollegiate athletics.

Best regards,

Alan J. Hauser, Appalachian State University, (President, Faculty Athletics Representatives Association)

Roger Caves, San Diego State University (President Elect of FARA)

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