Faculty Senates and Campus Athletics Governance

Steering Committee, Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA)
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The NCAA has indicated its long-term intent to rebalance responsibility for Division I athletics program policy by shifting some areas now covered by the NCAA Handbook to the campus level. In all respects bearing directly or indirectly on academic areas under faculty policy control, this will increase the burden on faculty governance. The Steering Committee of COIA recommends that faculty senates review the current structures and procedures for campus athletics governance to assess whether their design and current function will allow the faculty to fulfill these added responsibilities effectively and efficiently, within the context of each faculty's view of its proper role and level of engagement. This brief document reviews and adapts to the current context essential elements of the faculty role in campus athletics governance outlined in guiding documents approved by Coalition senates in the past. Chief among these are Campus Athletics Governance: The Faculty Role (2004) and Framing the Future (2007). Additional useful sources are: The NCAA FAR Handbook (1998), the Faculty Athletics Representative Association FARA Survey of FARs (with tables; 2008), two published studies based on a 2009 COIA survey of FBS school practices (2011), and an NCAA Survey of FARs (2011).

Every campus has unique traditions, policies, and procedures for athletics governance. This document will speak in terms of three basic institutional components: the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), the Campus Athletics Board (CAB), and the Senate (which covers faculty senates or councils, university senates, academic senates, etc.). Its broad recommendations should **not** be read as prescribing specific structures or policies: they are to be understood in terms of *functions* that could be adequately realized under any number of structural arrangements. No recommendation should be seen as implying that if a current arrangement is working well it should be changed. Recommendations are principally intended to facilitate each senate's own assessment of how well current arrangements are working.

There are three key issues: Is the Senate as capable and willing to engage an athletics issue with implications for academics as it is a purely academic policy or oversight question? Are structures and procedures adequate to allow the Senate to fulfill its own view of its policy and oversight responsibilities? Should changes be made to improve the Senate's capacity and performance?

Recommendations:

1) To maintain the capacity of the Senate to fulfill its responsibilities with regard to athletics:
   a) There should be a written description of the Senate's appropriate role, specifying areas of athletics governance that are faculty responsibilities (such as relevant academic policies), and others that should involve faculty consultation or review.
   b) Orientation of new senators should convey this description, along with information that may be pertinent background for specific campus issues concerning athletics.
   c) The Senate should designate one or more colleagues as continuing agents of senate engagement in athletics, with terms that exceed or bridge those of Senate officers.

d) A colleague designated to serve as an agent of the senate in athletics should maintain contact with the FAR and CAB, and bring issues to the attention of Senate leadership; if no colleague has been designated, an interested member of the Senate leadership should play this role.
e) There should be at least one major Senate review of athletics annually, at which the FAR, CAB Chair, and Athletics Director, among others, report and engage discussion.

2) To ensure the Senate has the institutional resources to fulfill its responsibilities:
a) Expectations for information to be provided to the Senate by the administration or Athletics Department should be specified by policy.
b) The detailed role of the CAB should be stipulated in writing, and the Senate should advocate for involvement in that level of faculty representation and the appointment of faculty representatives that it deems appropriate.
c) There should be an appropriate venue, such as a committee or subcommittee, with central Senate involvement, for the development of policy concerning academic issues connected with athletics; if the CAB is not a committee of the senate, any role it plays in development of policy concerning academic issues should be subject to confirmation by the Senate or its agents on the CAB.
d) Faculty action on athletics matters should involve consultation with the FAR and others, such as the CAB chair, AD, representative student-athlete associations, and so forth; the Senate should seek means to contribute informed participation in as broad a range of athletics decisions as the Senate deems appropriate for its campus role
e) Given national instances of academic fraud connected with athletics, the Senate should advocate for a venue and procedures for due diligence confidential faculty oversight that will permit assurance that campus policies to prevent fraud are fully effective.

3) In order to fulfill the NCAA stipulation that: "The faculty athletics representative is recognized as the representative of the institution *and its faculty* in the relationship between the NCAA and the local campus":
a) The Senate should advocate for the degree of consultation in FAR appointments and reviews that it feels appropriate.
b) The Senate should be fully informed of the role of the FAR as approved by the campus, including the formal, written FAR job description.
c) The Senate should advocate that the FAR be provided sufficient resources to fulfill the approved FAR role.
d) The Senate leadership should encourage a close working relationship between the FAR and Senate; periodic discussions with an Senate executive committee or ex officio Senate membership for the FAR are possible approaches.
e) If the Senate has designated a colleague to serve as continuing senate agent in the area of athletics, that colleague should seek to work consultatively and constructively with the FAR.

4) To assess the appropriateness and success of its policies and actions with regard to athletics, Senate leaders or a colleague designated as continuing senate agent for athletics affairs should maintain regular contact with peers at other conference schools. On the national level, COIA invites active participation and contact with other Senates in the FBS.