

IAC Meeting
Thursday, October 11, 2012 at 2:00 pm
Jaqua Academic Center, Room 236

Minutes

Present: Chair Brian McWhorter, Bill Harbaugh, Laura Hinman, Robert Illig, Andrew Karduna, Kurt Krueger, Peng Lu, Lena Macomson, Jennifer Reynolds, Josh Roth, Dev Sinha, Glen Waddell, David Koranda, members; Rob Mullens, Gary Gray, Lisa Peterson, Eric Roedl, Department of Athletics; and Steve Stolp, Services for Student- Athletes

Absent: Molly Bacon, Donna Laue, Matthew Miyamoto and Nathan Tublitz.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brian McWhorter who welcomed all present. The announced general topic of the meeting was to “promote and safeguard opportunities for student athletes to excel in academics and protect and ensure the academic integrity of student athletes.”

Felecia Mulkey, Head Coach, Acrobatics & Tumbling

Acrobatics & Tumbling is the newest women’s sport at the University of Oregon. It demands a similar skill set to that of gymnastics. At this time there are thousands of high school students training in these skills. Many of them desire to continue to compete at the collegiate level, but they may not have the all-around, i.e., apparatus and artistic (floor exercise), skills demanded of college gymnasts. Until the establishment of Acrobatics & Tumbling, their options have been participating in campus club gymnastics, if available, or spirit group cheerleading, which is not competitive. Athletes want to compete, not just participate for fun or be a sideline cheerleader whose activity is for spectator entertainment.

While not yet sanctioned by NCAA, Acrobatics & Tumbling qualifies as a varsity Title IX sport at UO. It is organized under the auspices National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association (NCATA) with all the official rules, policies and procedures as sanctioned sports. The mission of the NCATA is commitment to promoting Acrobatics and Tumbling, creating competitive opportunities for athletes, coaches and institutions with an emphasis on the value of responsibility, competitiveness, dedication, sportsmanship, and education at the collegiate level, and working toward acceptance as a fully sanctioned NCAA championship sport. NACTA created its own governing body, meet formats and scoring and has sought feedback from the NCAA. The next step is to continue growth and expansion of the sport. There are currently seven schools in the United States with Acrobatics & Tumbling teams and two more may be added by the end of this year.

Coach Mulkey finds her student-athletes to be passionate about their sport. While competing here at Oregon, they are completing their higher level education and further developing their leadership and life skills.

From Coach Mulkey’s perspective, when she is recruiting prospective student-athletes for her team, she is also recruiting for the academic experience they would have at the University. Several questions were asked of Coach Mulkey:

In response to a question about a recent court case concerning Acrobatics & Tumbling, Coach Mulkey related the background on the establishment of the Acrobatics & Tumbling team at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. The athletic department there dropped women's volleyball and instituted a Competitive Cheer team whose members were both competing in Acrobatics & Tumbling and performing as sideline cheerleaders. The situation was eventually resolved and while the circumstances at the time were negative for Quinnipiac, the outcome was ultimately a positive one for the sport. Quinnipiac's Acrobatics & Tumbling team is now in compliance with NCATA.

The University of Oregon has been the leader in the process of requesting the NCAA approval of Acrobatics & Tumbling as an emerging sport. The Acro student-athletes are treated the same as the student-athletes in the Athletic Department's 18 other sports and this year's freshmen are becoming used to being on campus. There are few challenges regarding access to classes as the team's practices are held at 4:00 pm.

Coach Mulkey focuses on both team and individual success. The Acrobatic & Tumbling team members are working with Services for Student Athletes seeking internships in their majors and professionals who can mentor them while they are studying and competing here at Oregon. There is a distribution of chosen majors among the Acro student-athletes, including Human Physiology, Business, Architecture, and Journalism. Some students have changed majors, but Coach Mulkey believes the reason may be that some of those students may have discovered new areas of interest after coming to the university. Of the student-athletes who competed in Acro who have already graduated, three are currently in graduate school, two are coaching in southern California, and one is an entrepreneur in Louisiana.

There are twelve full scholarships available in Acrobatics & Tumbling that are divided among thirty-five to forty student-athletes. There is one special-admit student on the team.

Rob Mullens - Overview of Athletics

(These remarks were to have been presented at the IAC Retreat last month.) The Department of Athletics continues to enjoy exceptional competitive results. Our peers ask what we've done that has led to our success. Oregon is considered a trendsetter in our industry.

Five of our teams have achieved perfect APR scores last year and we have a 90% exhausted eligibility graduation rate. The Men's Basketball program is low because of transfers at the last coaching change; we lose retention points if the student-athlete leaves. The NCAA now reports academic measures by coach on its website.

Oregon student-athletes are also strongly engaged in the community through the O-Heroes program, which now has received 501(c) (3) status. They have partnered with campus academic groups on fundraising and service events.

Chair's update - website and reports on various meetings held

The IAC webpage will be updated soon. It has been a challenge to find who has the authority and capacity to post new and revised information.

Chair McWhorter met with Brian Henley, UO Director of Admissions, regarding special admits and adding a faculty and/or IAC member to the special admits review committee. Director

Henley states that there is not a formal committee; he consults with several faculty members, reviewing applicants' transcripts, math scores and writing skills to evaluate potential academic success.

Special admits data -- for all students across campus, not just athletes -- may be available soon. It was clarified that the data is not being requested to provide information for certain research questions from faculty members; it is for general knowledge acquisition for IAC consumption.

Registrar Sue Evelend is requesting justification for providing the data. Students would not be identified individually, but even using specific sports as an identifier could reveal individual identity because of small admit classes. There is concern about the loss of anonymity to which the student-athletes are entitled.

Chair McWhorter also met with Robert Kyr, President of the University Senate, concerning random drug testing. The Senate passed a motion at its last meeting referring the issue of whether the modification of the OAR to allow Oregon to conduct random drug testing to the Senate Executive Committee to decide if the matter is a Senate issue. The Department of Athletics is conducting random drug testing on a temporary order for 180 days. If members of the IAC wish to submit comments on this issue, they can send them to Chair McWhorter via email.

Ways athletes can be interactive with campus

Steve Stolp, Executive Director of Services for Student-Athletes, talked with James Harris, Associate Athletic Director, about setting up an email message list to notify student-athletes of campus events. Also, the ASUO has established a new commissioner position whose responsibilities will include building communication and engaging UO students in campus issues and activities. Mention was made of students' use of Blackboard for event announcements.

Post-eligibility support

There are student-athletes who have completed their playing eligibility, but who are still on campus completing their coursework. There are also former student-athletes who want to come back to the University to complete their degrees. Brief discussion was held on the merits of assigning mentors to these students – faculty members and older, non-traditional students.

Scheduling of classes and boosting inclusiveness for student-athletes

Due to the increase in enrollment, the scheduling of classes has become challenging for faculty, staff and students. There are often waiting lists for classes and the lack of availability of courses is starting to affect graduation rates. Suggestions for helping this situation included information on course scheduling issues to be presented at new faculty orientation/advising sessions and preparing a handout on UO course scheduling policies and issues.

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting of the IAC will be on Thursday, November 8, 2012, from 2:00 until 3:30 pm, in the Jaqua Academic Center 2nd floor classroom.