

To: President Robert Kyr
University of Oregon Senate

From: Kurt Krueger
Chair, Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

RE: Annual report of the 2014/15 IAC

Dear President Robert Kyr and the University of Oregon Senate,

As Chair of the 2014/2015 IAC, the following is my annual report. It includes our history, accomplishments, our shortcomings, and my personal recommendations for the IAC.

History

The previous IAC (2013/2014) was wrought with dysfunction and a lack of regularly scheduled meetings. In all, the 2013/2014 IAC convened only three meetings all year.

Furthermore, the committee's charge was compromised, when the Faculty Athletics Representative and the Athletics Department administration refused to join our meetings.

These developments were an obvious cause for confusion within the IAC.

Accomplishments

Faced with this situation, we first reached out to Athletics and to President Coltrane to attempt to repair and hopefully reconvene our meetings with the personnel who are included in our charge – that is, the FAR and the Athletics Department representatives.

Our first action was to send a letter to Interim President Scott Coltrane, and Athletics Director Rob Mullens, inviting reconciliation and involvement in our meetings. President Coltrane did not respond. Mr. Mullens did respond positively, but he did not commit to attendance.

Next, our committee authored and approved a response to former (2013/2014) Chair Rob Illig's annual IAC report to the Senate. Chair Illig's report was submitted to the Senate without general IAC review. After the fact, and for the record -- the general committee disagreed with several of his conclusions. We submitted our response to the Senate.

In September, the IAC was tasked by the Senate Task Force on Sexual Violence and Survivor Support to address sexual violence as it pertains to athletics. We did that, as you will see.

Three years ago, the Athletics Department sponsored a course FHS 199 – Special Studies in Intercollegiate Athletics. This was a "life-skills" course, predominantly attended by student-athletes.

The curriculum, among other topics, did address sexual assault prevention education. This course was disallowed by the UO Senate's Committee on Courses for academic insufficiency.

A more complete course was proposed in 2014 which addressed similar topics, with a strong sexual assault prevention education component. This new course was numbered CPSY 199.

In response and collaboration -- the IAC developed a working group of administrators, experts, and professors to review this course, prior to its implementation.

This CPSY 199 working group comprised two Title IX experts, the Chair of the Committee on Courses, two other current or former members of that committee, the special assistant to the Provost overseeing student-athlete development, a national expert in men's issues, and more. A distinguished panel, without a doubt. This group reviewed the CPSY 199 course's goals and syllabus -- and confirmed this course as academically sound and unassailable.

We followed our working group sessions with a letter to the Dean of the College of Education, confirming the viability and support of this important course.

This course is currently ongoing. The instructor's and adviser's goal is to expand its offering in the future. The IAC is confident that its role in the establishment of this course affirmed its academic integrity, and its success for the future education of UO students and student-athletes.

The IAC proposed a motion to the Senate, which asked for an IAC faculty member to take part in the special admits advisory group, which is under the direction of Enrollment Management. Our purpose is to be involved in the review of student-athletes who are seeking admission to the University under special circumstances. This motion was proposed and passed by the Senate. It was reviewed by President Coltrane. He rejected our motion, and suggested that this motion be withdrawn by the Senate.

The IAC reviewed tandem presentations from two members. One excellent presentation effectively and statistically showed the relationship between alcohol consumption and its effect on sexual assault.

The second brought to light alcohol marketing with regard to the Athletic Department's current contract with IMG (a global sports and media business) and Miller/Coors beer. We found that the Oregon Athletics logo is somewhat pervasive in the marketing of alcohol. We still have many questions to be answered about this issue, but the IAC member who has compiled this report has reached an audience with the President and other administrators. There is more to come on this issue.

Another outstanding presentation was presented to the IAC by an expert in men's issues -- explaining the role of men in society and how men are socialized. It was a fascinating and educational presentation, which will be most valuable if integrated with Athletics at some future time. The IAC members who experienced this presentation were, no doubt, influenced -- and we have advocated for its wider distribution.

The IAC received a timely presentation on the Coalition of Intercollegiate Athletics, whose founder is a professor at the University. The role of the COIA is a national collaboration of faculty senates, to provide a voice for faculty on intercollegiate athletics. Statistics on injuries, finances, and the influence of athletics in major universities were presented, with numerous questions and engaged responses.

Finally, the IAC arranged for, and sponsored, a visit by Brenda Tracy. She is an emerging national speaker on campus sexual assault. She is a registered nurse, survivor, and activist. Her (alleged) assault 16 years ago by multiple Oregon State football players resulted in personal shame, frustration – and classic institutional betrayal. She has since raised her voice and has made herself available for speaking at college campuses. We have worked hard to have her available to address the UO community, and the community at large.

Her absolutely stunning and unforgettable witness will educate many on the current issue of sexual assault on campuses – particularly with regard to athletics.

Shortcomings

The most obvious shortcoming of the 2014/2015 IAC was the inability to bridge the gap between the committee and the Athletics Department. Our charge tasks us to communicate with the FAR and Athletics administration. The current and outgoing FAR has declined to attend any meetings. However, his replacement has attended and has shown a willingness to communicate.

The current Athletics Director and the AD administration have indicated that they will not attend meetings of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee.

In addition, our committee fell short of its charge to include five students on our committee, one of whom would be a student-athlete. After multiple requests to the IAC Executive, who is asked to designate student representatives, this requirement was not completely fulfilled. However, we did benefit immensely from the voice of two very active and engaged students, and a third who joined us halfway through the year.

Future recommendations

It is my opinion that the IAC should survive and grow.

However, there is much uncertainty surrounding this committee.

Last year, former President Gottfredson appointed a parallel committee to advise the President on matters relating to Athletics. This committee is named the President's Advisory Group on Intercollegiate Athletics (PAGIA). It is a group of appointed members, and closed to the public.

Originally, I was fundamentally opposed to the formation of the PAGIA. I have changed my opinion. I now believe that the PAGIA can remain intact and active, as an advisor to the President -- with modification.

The President deserves an advisory group that is confidential and free of distraction. The financial review of Athletics and the review of Athletics support systems are essential to the President. This is information that is essential to the operation of the UO administration.

However, I maintain that the PAGIA should make its general discussions available to the UO community, and at the very least, publish minutes of its meetings.

I propose cooperation between a more-transparent PAGIA and an active IAC.

Further, I see the future IAC as an advisory group – with a strong and effective voice. The goal of the IAC should be to better the student-athlete experience. This year, we have shown that we can do this.

I do not recommend that the IAC assume an oversight or “watchdog” role with respect to Athletics. We have demonstrated that we can affect and improve the student-athlete experience and the awareness of the campus community with regards to athletics issues.

Finally, the charge of the IAC must be reviewed and revised. I will assume that our new FAR will indeed attend our meetings in the future. However, if the Athletics administration continues to decline to attend meetings – voting privileges and membership will need to be altered.

Also, I recommend a thorough review of the role of the IAC. For my 6-year term, it has never been truly clear if our committee is an advisory or oversight committee. Not an easy task, but this issue must be defined in order for the IAC to continue to be effective.

Summary

As you can see, the IAC is no longer dysfunctional. In fact, the committee has made some very important accomplishments and contributions, and can obviously play an important role in the University community.

And I would like to say – this committee has a bright future – if it defines its goals and purpose, and stays on track – with dedication to the student-athlete experience.

There are many issues that are waiting for next year’s IAC to address. I suggest a review of the educational, tutoring, and career planning role for student-athletes. It is equally imperative that we continue to be active in the sexual assault prevention education of student-athletes. Finally, a discussion of the relationship and influence of athletics and academics is ongoing.

Finally, I would like to thank every single member of the IAC for his/her engagement this year. It has been extraordinary. This committee was a group of smart and extremely motivated members. Personally, I am extremely thankful for each member’s participation.

Any credit for the accomplishments and successes of this year’s IAC must go to the outstanding members of this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Krueger
Chair, Intercollegiate Athletics Committee 2014/2015

