

**REPORT AND PROPOSALS FROM THE
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON ATHLETICS TASK FORCE
2001 to 2004**

*Submitted to
President Frohnmayer and the University Senate
May 12, 2004*

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Report and Proposals from the University of Oregon Athletics Task Force 2001 to 2004

PREAMBLE:

The present national movement for athletic reform should prompt careful self-examination by the academic institutions that participate in sports. At the University of Oregon, our determination has been to maintain and improve our proud record of well-run athletics programs that honor academic values. The Task Force on Athletics was established in 2001 in response to issues raised in a number of venues, by the NCAA, by university presidents, by faculty, and by journalists. These concerns are summarized by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in their 2001 report.¹ They concluded then,

“The problems of big-time sports have grown rather than diminished. The most glaring elements of the problems outlined in this most recent Knight report—academic transgressions, a financial arms race and commercialization—are all evidence of the widening chasm between higher education’s ideals and the reality of big-time college sports.”²

The 2001 Knight Commission report called for firm institutional control of athletics, the unquestioned academic and financial integrity of athletics programs, and the accountability of the athletics department to the values and goals befitting higher education. In particular, they called for university presidents to be in charge of athletics, not athletic departments, and they called special attention to the situation of student athletes.

The University of Oregon established a Task Force on Athletics in order to take leadership on these issues. It is important to note that the athletic program at the University of Oregon has not been troubled—this report emerges from a healthy program and out of the institution’s desire to take control and demonstrate accountability. The UO Athletic Department has been a willing participant in our work. This Task Force is forwarding its recommendations in relationship to a successful athletic program, as a voluntary effort to take initiative in athletic reform.

¹ Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, *A Call to Action, Reconnecting College Sports and Higher Education*, June 2001, < http://www.ncaa.org/databases/knight_commission/2001_report/ > (6 Feb 2002)

² Knight Commission Report, June 2001, Letter of Transmittal, page 4.

The Task Force on Athletics was jointly appointed by President David Frohnmayer and Senate President Nathan Tublitz in December, 2001. Co-chairs were Margie Paris, Law, and Suzanne Clark, English (Chair 2003-2004). The membership represented key figures from both academic and athletic programs: the Vice President for Administration, the Athletic Director, Head Coach of Track, the Faculty Athletics Representative, the Chair of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee, the President and Vice President of the University Senate, a representative of the national faculty organization, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, other faculty members, and three student athletes.

Task force members have included chair Suzanne Clark, English; Lowell Bowditch, Classics (2003-2004); James Earl, English; Andrew Marcus, Geography, (2003-2004); Greg McLaughlan, Sociology (2002-2003); Margie Paris, Law; Brad Shelton, Mathematics; Nathan Tublitz, Biology; Martin Smith, Men's and Women's Track Coach; Bill Moos, Athletic Director; Jim O'Fallon, Law and the UO Faculty Athletics Representative to the NCAA and Pac-10 Conference; Dan Williams, Vice President for Administration, Ex-officio; and students Kourtney Shreve, Janell Bergstrom and Joe Jenkins, and Amanda Studdard (2001-2003), Jenny Kenyon (2001-2003) and Jeff Oliver (2001-2002).

The Task Force discovered before much time had passed that one of the most valuable aspects of its meeting was simply the opportunity to exchange ideas face to face with people who were ordinarily all too separated. This opportunity sometimes revealed important differences, but also brought greater understanding and connection. It is our conviction that ongoing dialogue is essential in order for all parts of the University of Oregon to work together in a common cause, in the pursuit of excellence both academic and athletic. As we forward the results of our extended conversations in the form of concrete proposals, we keep that ideal of ongoing mutual exchange firmly in view. We hope our proposals will work to enhance the possibility of continuing such conversations after this Task Force has ended its work and provide the structural support for doing so.

TASK FORCE PROCESS:

2001-2002

The Charge for the University of Oregon Task Force on Athletics was based on the common desire of the President, the University Senate President, and the Athletic Department to approach the growing sense of national concern with a proactive examination of athletics and academics in the local context of the University of Oregon. During the Winter and Spring of 2002, the Task Force began its work with an intensive review of issues and of information. In particular members read relevant documents such as the 2001 Knight Commission Report, various publications on the discussions of athletics and academics, and certain news reports and columns. The Athletic Department provided detailed information on its operations, its budgets, and its self-study. The Faculty Athletics Representative³ and

³ NCAA member institutions are required to employ a Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). This individual must have faculty rank and not hold either an administrative or coaching position in the athletics department. The FAR plays a central role in the overall checks and balances system designed to insure academic integrity, sound governance and commitment to rules compliance, attention to equity, and student-athlete welfare. See: < <http://uoregon.edu/~uosenate/dirsens034/dirUS034-3/Guidelines-FAR.html> >

the Chair of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee⁴ explained their roles. After this study, the Task Force was—and continues to be—impressed by the large amount of information necessary to understand the complexity of questions related to athletics and academics. Much of the news and issues that appear nationally are based on inaccurate or partly understood information, and the translation of national events into the way athletics work at the University of Oregon often turned out to misrepresent the situation. The Task Force soon noticed a phenomenon we eventually called “urban legends,” recurring beliefs and charges that, while often totally or at least substantially untrue, were rarely daunted by accurate information. One of the most important steps toward control and accountability for intercollegiate athletics is to base discussions on good information. *A list of some of the most common of those myths that misrepresent athletics at the University of Oregon is appended to this Report.*

2002-2003

During the school year of 2002-2003, the Task Force took up the question of student athletes, carrying out their investigations of the situation at the University of Oregon not only by examining the records and statistics provided by relevant offices in Athletics, Academic Advising, and by Jim O’Fallon, Faculty Athletics Representative, but also by extensive interviewing of student athletes themselves. The report, issued in Winter quarter of 2003 to the President and the University Senate, found the University of Oregon in compliance with NCAA regulations and in general to be commended for the treatment of student athletes and for their academic success. At the same time, the report acknowledged that the national issues of commercialization, competition, and exploitation affect athletes at the University of Oregon and require continuing vigilance. *The Student Athlete Welfare report can be read at:* < <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/Statement&appendix.pdf> >.

The Task Force also held a public forum⁵ and held an information-gathering session with University of Oregon faculty who are expert in the questions of the marketing and economics of sports. *The 2003 Interim Report based on this research can be read at:* < <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/interimreport.pdf> >.

2003-2004

At the beginning of the school year of 2003-2004, Task Force chairs reported to the Faculty Leadership Caucus⁶ their sense that ongoing committees of the Senate and the Administration should take up the questions of athletics in appropriate domains, such as the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and through the Faculty Athletics Representative. In November, President Frohnmayer and the Senate jointly reconvened the Task Force to take

⁴ The University of Oregon Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) has 8 elected faculty members and provides advice and consultation to the director of athletics, the vice president for administration, and the president concerning any and all aspects of intercollegiate athletics. The term of office is 2 years ; no faculty member may serve more than 3 consecutive terms.

See qualifications: < <http://uoregon.edu/~uosenate/dirsens034/qualificationsIAC.html> > (6 May 2004), and Current Charge: < <http://www.uoregon.edu/~uosenate/dirsens001/zIACcharge.html> > (6 May 2004)

⁵ Task Force, *Campus Open Forum*, March 2003, < <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/Forumtranscript.pdf> >

⁶ Annual conference of the UO Senate Executive Committee, Senate Budget Committee, Faculty Advisory Council, and past Senate presidents to set an agenda for faculty concerns and goals for the coming year.

the initiative in addressing further possibilities for academic and athletic relations. The Task Force needed to gather information about concerns and appropriate solutions for the University of Oregon in the areas of commercialization, governance, and student athletes. This was important in part because the processes of faculty governance and communication within the University can be improved to address questions of athletics, and the Task Force is making some specific recommendations to do so.

In Winter of 2004, Task Force members heard about the concerns of faculty, staff, and students in a Panel Discussion on Intercollegiate Athletics and Higher Education⁷ sponsored by AAUP⁸ and the University Senate. Following that, the Task Force organized intensive small group conversations with all members of the University Senate who wished to sign up. Over half the Senate came to small group meetings conducted by Task Force members, with four to seven people present at each one. These small groups carried out their conversations for an hour and a half and successfully articulated an extensive list of concerns and suggestions. Both Senate members and Task Force members who participated in these conversations commented on their depth and usefulness. *A summary of these conversations is appended to this Report.*

The Task Force then turned to the work of writing a series of proposals, drawing on suggestions to address concerns that emerged from Senate small groups as well as from themselves.

The Task Force is submitting to President Frohnmayer and to the University Senate these suggestions for practical steps that can be taken to improve academic/athletic relations, particularly through better governance and communication. Some of these will require the passage of legislation by the Senate; others will require implementation by the administration. *The proposals follow in this Report.*

⁷ Panel Discussion Information, < <http://uoregon.edu/~aaup/14Jan04PanelAthletics.html> >

⁸ American Association of University Professors, University of Oregon Chapter.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS:

- 1. The Task Force and the Athletic Department recommend a voluntary financial contribution by athletics to the Presidential Scholarship fund.⁹**

This voluntary contribution will help symbolize the mutuality of the relationship between athletics and academics.

- 2. We specify reforms in the review process of the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR).**

These reforms will help make the position more accountable to faculty and staff concerns while not diminishing the President's role in choosing and evaluating the FAR.

- 3. We specify clarification of the educative standard of the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC).**

This clarification will help guide IAC decisions to reflect the University mission and values.

- 4. We specify items requiring the Athletic Department to consult with the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC).**

These reforms will help to keep the IAC informed and involved in significant athletic decisions.

- 5. We recommend that an Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) member be part of any open search for head coaches, or its chair consulted.**

This participation in the selection of head coaches will allow the IAC to represent the interests of the University Senate.¹⁰

- 6. The Faculty Athletics Representative shall report at the beginning of each fall term to the University Senate on specified topics.**

These reports will keep the University Senate regularly informed on local and national changes in athletics.

- 7. The Athletic Director shall provide a "State of the Athletic Department" report to the University Senate at the beginning of each winter term.**

These reports will ensure that the University Senate hears regularly about the concerns and plans of the Athletic Director.

⁹ Presidential Scholarships are awarded annually to the state's brightest students. Scholars receive approximately \$5400 per year, renewable for up to four years of study. Source: < <http://financialaid.uoregon.edu/SCG-presid.htm> > (7 May 2004)

¹⁰ All hiring processes follow UO Human Resources and Affirmative Action guidelines.

8. The Chair of the IAC shall provide an annual report to the University Senate during the spring term.

These reports will improve communication by providing the Senate with a summary of the committee's work and conveying its views of athletic planning and decisions.

9. We recommend a regular gathering of leadership organized by the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and sponsored by the President's office.

These opportunities for personal contact, conversation, and exchange will improve the mutual understanding of athletics and academics.

10. We suggest that the President, the Vice President for University Advancement, and the leadership of the Senate explore the creation of a Committee on Advancement.

This will help address the many questions surrounding athletics in regards to philanthropy, relationships with donors, and communication about the university's values and activities.

11. We recommend additional measures to improve advising about majors and to ensure that student athletes are treated like other students.

While advising is already very good, we suggest a few improvements.

12. We recommend specific efforts to inform the University and community public about the promotion of academic excellence and community service among student athletes.

This will help to communicate information about the excellent academic and service records of our athletes.

The full text of the proposals is provided on the following pages.

PROPOSALS: THE TASK FORCE ON ATHLETICS CHARGE and RESPONSES (2003-2004)

CHARGE A. *Advise the President (now serving as chair of the Pac-10 presidents and chancellors, and as chair of the Presidential Oversight Committee of the BCS) on significant national issues related to intercollegiate athletics, especially those involving the fiscal impact of increasing competitiveness among institutions, the commercialization of athletics, and post-season competition;*

The financial relationship between universities and their athletic departments is the subject of a vigorous national debate. The costs of athletics rise much faster than university budgets generally. Since the University of Oregon's Athletic Department is "self-sufficient," is there a need to contain them? What are the implications of continuing escalation for the future? These questions cannot be addressed by one university alone.

RESPONSE AND PROPOSAL

The Task Force consulted in the Spring of 2003 with faculty members from the Economics Department and Sports Marketing about the issues associated with the so-called "arms race," and again solicited opinions and ideas from the University Senate, both at a forum and in small group sessions, in January of 2004. We found widespread concern about the escalating costs of athletic facilities. We also found widespread concern about the influence of commercial interests on University decision-making about athletics and about the pressure that budgetary concerns could exert on decisions that impact academic values, such as engaging in post-season competition that would remove athletes from more classes. We have made recommendations through our governance proposals for regular attention to these issues by the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and the Senate.

We agree that the University of Oregon ought in principle to support the continuing search in the Pac-10 Conference and nationally (for example, through the NCAA and Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA)¹¹ as well as through legislation) for ways to set limits on competitive expenditure that would not violate anti-trust laws. (The public outcry against such excess overlooks the fact that anti-trust legislation encourages competition.) At the same time we also recognize that unilateral reduction or withdrawal from competition is contrary to the current mission of athletics at the University of Oregon. These pressures and conditions will continue to require vigilance from the administration and the faculty and staff alike.

¹¹ The Coalition On Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) is a group advocating for reform in intercollegiate athletics, created by and representative of faculty senate leaders at Bowl Championship Series conference schools. < <http://www.math.umd.edu/~jmc/COIA/> > (7 May 2004)

Locally the issues of commercialization are both symbolic and specific. The fact that the University of Oregon Athletic Department is now self-supporting is reason for pride. At the same time, this has had the effect of hiding the real mutuality of the supportive exchanges between the whole University and its Athletic Department. Over 5 million dollars of athletic department revenue is returned in payment to the main campus for multiple services, including: housing; tuition for student-athletes receiving grant-in-aid; assessments on donations that directly support the University's capital campaign; and indirect benefits provided to central administration. The Athletic Department in turn draws its fundamental nature from being part of college rather than professional sports, and from the fact that its athletes are students, rather than professionals. The Athletic Department benefits from its association with a great research university in multiple intangible ways.

PROPOSAL

1. Fiscal Relationship between Athletics and Academics

In consideration of past support of athletics, the Task Force and the Athletic Department have a mutual desire for a voluntary financial contribution by athletics made directly to academics for the purpose of creating a beneficial and visible connection between the two enterprises. We recommend and believe it would be appropriate and appreciated by the entire university community if the Presidential Scholarship became the designated recipient of a meaningful contribution from the Athletic Department. The manner by which these revenues would be generated is a matter to be determined by the Athletic Department in consultation with the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee. Possibilities include:

- A. a portion of gate receipts and game concession revenues at one or more major athletic events,**
- B. a ticket surcharge at some or all athletic events, or**
- C. a donation to be determined by the Athletic Department when financially feasible and at a time that would provide the greatest opportunity to bring attention to this "connection" showcasing the academic achievements of the recipients of these scholarships.**

Finally, it is our view that consideration be given to increasing and expanding this type of direct financial support from the Athletic Department to the academic enterprise once the long-term financial condition of the Athletic Department becomes more stable and more adequate levels of operating reserves have been generated.

This proposal for a voluntary additional contribution from athletics to the academic goals of the University serves to further demonstrate the mutuality and common mission of the University of Oregon and its Athletic Department.

CHARGE B. *Examine the current relationship between the UO Athletic Department and academic programs and make recommendations to the President about steps that could be taken to further enhance that relationship, including examination of current faculty governance structures;*

The ultimate authority for athletics governance lies with university presidents, but to be effective in aligning athletics with the academic mission they must have effective input and support from the faculty. The faculty has a legitimate oversight and advisory function in helping to maintain a proper relationship between athletics and the academic mission. This function falls to the Faculty Athletics Representative, the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, the University Senate, and Faculty Leadership. Historically, on many campuses, the effectiveness of these bodies has been eroded by vague appointment and reporting procedures. Although the governance structure regarding athletics is not badly compromised at the University of Oregon, it can be improved.

RESPONSE

Discussions about athletics are made especially difficult when they are carried out without good information or good processes for making decisions. While there are real differences of opinion that need to be addressed about the functioning of athletics in a university, these differences of opinion can scarcely be honored or negotiated without face to face contact, access to facts, and reliable procedures. At the University of Oregon, members of the Senate expressed particular concern about a perceived lack of response to their questions and values. Many felt that they were not consulted or their opinions were ignored when decisions were made that they thought would have a financial impact on the University, or when decisions were made that affected the academic standing or the public perception of the University. Often in our small group conversations, the Task Force found that this disaffection was the result of lack of communication, bad information, misunderstanding, and even of myths, perhaps resulting from media coverage that did not hold true for the University of Oregon. While the University already has the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and the Faculty Athletics Representative as formal links between the Senate, the Faculty, and the Athletic Department, the Task Force believes that these structures need to work better.

We have prepared a set of detailed recommendations to ensure faculty have good communication with the Athletic Department and processes of governance to connect them. Educating the faculty about athletics is crucial to building a common base of knowledge, understanding and trust between the academic and athletic communities, and to enhancing the role of faculty in governance of athletics. There should therefore be regularly scheduled reports by key athletic governing entities to the University Senate, which is the representative body for the faculty. We want to emphasize that these recommendations have been jointly written by the Senate President and Vice President, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and the Chair of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee in consultation with the Athletic Director. Thus these reforms are not being imposed upon unwilling participants,

but rather emerge from within. We are submitting our proposals both to President Frohnmayer and to the University Senate: implementation will require action from the administration in some instances and the adoption of appropriate motions by the Senate in others.

PROPOSALS

2. Review Process of the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR)

To insure that faculty governance of Athletics is maintained at a consistently high level, we propose reforms in how the position of Faculty Athletics Representative is reviewed. Specifically, to ensure that the FAR is meeting performance expectations, he or she should undergo an administrative review once every five years. The five-year review shall:

- A. be overseen by the President of the University, and**
- B. be conducted by a three person committee, which shall include a designee of the President of the University Senate, an administrator designated by the President of the University, and an at-large tenured faculty member from the University.**

The five-year review in no way infringes on the authority of the President of the University to evaluate the FAR and set FAR performance expectations at his or her discretion.

The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) is the faculty member who insures that athletics are in compliance with NCAA regulations and other external mandates. The FAR, in conjunction with the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC), alerts the faculty to issues and events of importance, explains the circumstances, and makes recommendations for action when appropriate. One of the criticisms to emerge from the public forum, the Senate Forum, and the Senate small groups was that the FAR stayed in the position too long, and so lacked accountability to the faculty. This was not a charge specifically criticizing the performance of the FAR at the University of Oregon, but rather a fear that those working with Athletics become too isolated from the concerns of the faculty at large. The Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) also recommends a revision of the FAR position. However, it is not a good idea to promote a constant turnover of the FAR, because that person must know NCAA regulations in minute detail to enforce the rules properly and guard against violations. This knowledge base takes time and effort to acquire. Therefore the desire that the FAR be more accountable can best be addressed through a review process.

3. Intercollegiate Athletics Committee Educative Standards

In decision-making, the IAC shall represent the academic standards of the University that are embodied in the University of Oregon Mission Statement.¹²

The Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) is the committee overseeing athletic concerns that are internal to the University. The IAC, in conjunction with the FAR, alerts the University community to important athletic issues and potential controversies, explains the circumstances, and makes recommendations for action when appropriate. The Task Force has thought carefully about ways to improve communication and believes that the IAC, as a regular committee of the University Senate, should take a stronger role in informing and educating the University about athletics, and in maintaining the importance of academic values in discussions of athletics and decisions related to athletics.

4. Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and Athletic Department Consultative Specifications

To improve faculty governance of athletics, we propose reforms in how the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) educates its members to the complexities of University athletics, in reporting obligations of the Athletics Department and the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) to the IAC, and in IAC faculty participation in hiring decisions. Specifically:

A. To better educate its committee members to the complexities of University athletics:

- 1) the IAC shall hold a once yearly retreat prior to the academic year. The retreat shall provide a forum for new members to learn about the role of the IAC in supporting the Mission Statement of the University of Oregon, to learn about administration of campus athletics, and to be informed on issues potentially requiring IAC attention in the year ahead.**
- 2) The Task Force recommends the Senate establish a mechanism for getting more timely appointments and commencement of service for new Senate and student members on the committee.**

B. In order to carry out its governance function, the IAC shall be consulted by the Athletic Department on:

- 1) any proposed changes in departmental recruiting policies, academic advising, expectations regarding student schedules,**

¹² University of Oregon, *Mission Statement*, < <http://uoregon.edu/~uosenate/UOmissionstatement.html> > (6 May 2004)

or any other practice that could affect the academic or financial standing of students who are athletes. The IAC need not to be informed of all changes mandated by the NCAA for student athletes, which fall under the purview of the FAR, although the IAC should be notified of any major changes.

- 2) any decisions, large donations, or commercial offers that potentially change the financial landscape of athletics or might influence University finances outside the Athletic Department;**
- 3) any decisions that potentially affect the campus environment, including construction, removal, or remodeling of facilities, changes in the timing of facilities use, or changes in permitted uses of facilities;**
- 4) scheduling of athletic events, including scheduling changes made to accommodate other universities or the media;**
- 5) addition or termination of sport teams, or changes in the status of sport teams.**

The Athletic Director or designee shall consult with the Chair of the IAC to determine if changes in Athletic Department procedures, policies or activities obtain a threshold deserving of attention by the full committee.

C. The Faculty Athletics Representative shall keep the IAC informed of ongoing investigations and major violations.

While the IAC in principle already carries out the functions of consultation that we hope to underscore, we believe that codifying the duties of all involved is the next necessary step. The Task Force has outlined these specific recommendations to ensure the smooth functioning of the IAC. The result will be, when implemented, that all parties know clearly what their responsibilities to the IAC should be, and the IAC has a planned program of reporting to the Senate. Members of the IAC, like the FAR, must learn a considerable amount of information about athletics that most faculty members do not know, so the Task Force is including a recommendation for a fall term retreat as a mechanism for getting up to speed.

5. Head Coach Search Consultation

In cases where an open search process is conducted for head coaching positions, an Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) faculty member shall be included on the search committee. When the search is abbreviated, the Athletic Director shall consult with the Chair of the IAC.

The selection of head coaches is important to the University as a whole: to its reputation and to the way academic values are promoted in each sport. We recognize that the search process for head coaches is often carried out in ways that make committee participation impossible, but the principle we wish to advocate is that the University Senate, through consultation with the IAC or its Chair, should have a voice in the process.

6. Communications from the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR)

To improve faculty understanding of external regulations affecting University athletics and the faculty role in insuring compliance with those mandates, the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) shall report at the beginning of each fall term to the University Senate. The FAR shall report on:

- A. the responsibilities of the FAR position,**
- B. significant NCAA rule changes that may affect the University and student athletes in particular,**
- C. University compliance with NCAA regulations (especially with regard to the welfare of students and recruits) and areas of potential concern,**
- D. possible roles for faculty governance in:
 - 1) affecting external mandates so that they better reflect the academic priorities of the University,**
 - 2) adjusting University procedures to improve our performance on externally mandated indicators that are consistent with the academic priorities of the University (e.g. retention and graduation rates), and****
- E. other topics that the FAR deems relevant to the University community.**

This requirement for annual reports ought to help maintain better connections between the FAR and the University Senate as well as to keep the Senate up to date about how well the Athletic Department is complying with external mandates.

7. Communications from the Athletic Department

To improve faculty understanding of Athletic Department priorities and procedures, the Athletic Director shall provide a “State of the Athletic Department” report to the University Senate at the beginning of each winter term. The Athletic Director shall report on:

- A. issues related to student athlete welfare,**
- B. priorities for the Athletic Department and the fit of these priorities with the University Mission,**
- C. the financial status of the Athletic Department and projected revenues and expenses,**
- D. planned expansion, remodeling, or removal of athletic facilities,**
- E. changes in the status of sports teams,**
- F. changes in facilities management (e.g., operating hours) that might affect the University community,**
- G. any major violations by the Athletic Department,**
- H. possible roles for faculty governance in assuring that academic policies and practices are consistent with supporting:
 - 1) the intellectual growth and academic success of student athletes, and**
 - 2) the viability of athletics as an integral part of campus life, and****
- I. other topics that the Athletic Director deems relevant to the University community.**

Annual reports from the Athletic Director will also help improve internal communications. The Task Force has benefited from the presence of the University of Oregon Athletic Director Bill Moos on the committee because he could so immediately provide answers to questions, dispel rumors, and give faculty a chance to express views. We recommend this openness.

8. Communications from the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee

To inform faculty about the consistency of athletic policies and practices with the academic mission of the University, and to insure that the IAC tracks this compliance, the Chair of the IAC shall provide an annual report to the University Senate during the spring term. This report shall cover:

- A. issues related to the welfare of student athletes,**
- B. the short- and long-term financial status of the Athletic Department and the implications of this status for the overall University budget,**
- C. planned expansion, remodeling, or removal of athletic facilities,**
- D. reports on scheduling conflicts and resolutions,**
- E. any major violations by the Athletic Department,**
- F. possible roles for faculty governance in assuring that:**
 - 1) Athletic Department policies and procedures are consistent with the Mission Statement of the University of Oregon,**
 - 2) academic policies and practices are consistent with supporting the intellectual growth and academic success of student athletes, and**
- G. other topics that the IAC deems relevant to the University community.**

The annual report from the IAC will provide an opportunity for that committee to exercise its function in governance as well as to communicate internal information to the University Senate. We believe that this strengthens the role of the IAC in representing faculty interests.

9. Communications with Faculty Leadership

To provide opportunities for full and frank discussions of issues and to help address ‘cultural differences’ between athletics and academics, the Task Force recommends a regular gathering, over refreshments, of Higher Administration Officials, Athletic Department Administrators and members of the Senate and Faculty Leadership. We suggest these meetings be organized by the IAC, be sponsored by the President’s Office, and occur at least twice yearly or once a term as feasible.

The Task Force wishes to underscore the importance of maintaining ongoing relationships between faculty and athletics administration. In addition to enhanced reporting structures, we believe that regularly scheduled informal gatherings of leadership can serve to keep a sense of conversation alive.

10. New Faculty Committee on Advancement

To address the many questions surrounding athletics in regards to advancement such as philanthropy, relationships with donors, communication about the University's values and activities, etc., the Task Force suggests that the President, the Vice President for University Advancement, and the Senate Leadership explore the creation of a Committee on Advancement. A faculty committee could work with the Vice President for University Advancement to provide mutual understanding of athletic concerns and to also address a wider set of issues.

The Athletic Department has built an excellent relationship with donors, and has excellent outreach and communications with alumni and the wider community. While faculty have not traditionally been very active in external relationships, with the loss of state funding they are recognizing the changes in University advancement. Many members of the Senate would like to help build good external relationships for academic programs. Additionally, some participants in small group meetings thought there was too little faculty voice in decisions about development and communications. A certain amount of misperception exists: some thought that athletics competed with academics for control over the direction of the University and how and when resources are spent. They even wondered if development officers steered academic donors towards athletics. A faculty committee on advancement could address these concerns.

CHARGE C. *Continue to examine issues related to academic integrity for student athletes.*

Nationally, intercollegiate athletics is plagued by concerns of academic integrity and student athlete welfare. These problems surface every year at various institutions, but fortunately they not grievous at the University of Oregon.

RESPONSE AND PROPOSALS

The Task Force reported in Spring of 2003 on the welfare of student athletes. In general, we found that the University has succeeded in providing for the academic success of student athletes. That report has been appended to this one. During further discussion in 2003-2004, both with members of the University Senate and among members of the Task Force, we heard misconceptions and concerns that led us to propose two recommendations about the academic interests of student athletes. In the current report, we find that academic integrity can be strengthened with more attention to academic advising for student athletes. Advising is an issue for all students, but it is especially important for athletes because university-sponsored activities can impinge seriously on their time.

11. Academic Advising of Student Athletes

To maintain and improve upon academic advising of student athletes, we recommend earlier involvement of academic advisers from Services for Student Athletes.¹³ We recommend further effort to educate student athletes early in their academic career on major options and the overall process of degree completion, as well as NCAA regulations and personal interaction with faculty, to allow student athletes to become more proactive in their own academic processes. Once a major is declared, we recommend higher utilization of department advising, when possible. Specifically:

- A. Underclassmen should utilize Services for Student Athletes academic advising to create schedules each term and to create tentative academic plans for their careers. During their first two years on campus, student athletes should learn the processes of degree completion at the University of Oregon (ex. group requirements), academic rules relating to athletic eligibility (ex. 12 credit hour rule), and academic progress required of them by the NCAA.**

Upperclassmen should utilize department advising to address program and institutional academic progress. Services for Student Athletes academic advisers should serve as consultants, available to answer questions and provide guidance in academics, as well as maintain the lead role in assuring that student athletes remain in compliance with NCAA academic requirements. Upperclassmen should also use Services for Student Athletes advisers to prepare for transitions into graduate school, internships, or careers.

- B. All student athletes should also receive guidance on how to interact with faculty regarding missed classes due to travel, assignments, etc. and be encouraged to initiate those interactions.**
- C. A specific policy on attending academic counseling at Services for Student Athletes is suggested.**

The general principle guiding the treatment of student athletes is that they should be treated like other students: completing a university education is the goal for all students, including student athletes. Members of faculty and community alike have raised questions about the majors of athletes. We investigated, and found that the questions have no basis at the University of Oregon—athletes major in a wide range of subjects, many well-known for their difficulty—see our Appendix on “Myths and Reality about Athletics at the University of Oregon.” However, we also heard of

¹³ Advising program mandated by the NCAA, and a division of Academic Affairs at the University of Oregon. <<http://www.uoregon.edu/%7Estusvc/>>

talented athletes who may not find major advisers early enough in their careers to help foster their interests and abilities in order to develop to their full potential. All students could, in fact, benefit from earlier advice in majors. However, student athletes have such crowded and unforgiving schedules that it is especially important for them to get the right advice early.

12. Community Awareness of Student Athletes

To bring to light the academic and service aspects of the student athlete, we recommend specific efforts to highlight, within the campus community and the community at large, the promotion of academic excellence and outstanding community service efforts that are already taking place. Specific suggestions include:

- A. Increased communication with the Oregon Daily Emerald¹⁴ and the Register-Guard¹⁵ regarding events/news relating to academics and community service.**
- B. Further promotion of academics and community service at large athletic events, similar to the current “Student Athlete of the Week” video segments aired at football games.¹⁶**
- C. Creation of a community service poster representing all sports to compliment annual team posters produced by Athletic Department marketing.**
- D. Yearly communication of academic information of student athletes in conjunction with the annual report by the Athletic Director.**

Student athletes may appear as if they are not well-rounded because their academic successes and their extensive community service activities do not get the attention that athletic events receive. The Task Force acknowledges that there may be little we can do about this. However, our recommendations are offered in the hope they will help.

¹⁴ An independent campus newspaper at the University of Oregon.

¹⁵ Daily newspaper of the Eugene-Springfield region.

¹⁶ Short video highlighting the academic and athletic achievements of students in other sports.

CONCLUSION:

During the nearly three years of its work the Task Force on Athletics has studied and discussed the situation of athletics at the University of Oregon in the context of a vigorous national debate. President David Frohnmayer has participated in the national decision-making. Our Athletic Director, Bill Moos, and our Faculty Athletics Representative, Jim O'Fallon, have been able, as Task Force members, to inform us about the discussions occurring in their national organizations. The University of Oregon faculty has had a forceful presence on the national scene as well, with English professor and Task Force member James Earl leading the formation of COIA and supporting changes in NCAA practices. Thus the Task Force has worked with an informed ear to this national debate while it has looked at the local scene at the University of Oregon.

We found both pride in the successes of University of Oregon athletics and strong concern about the effects of increased competitiveness and commercialization. What steps should be taken here to improve the relations between academics and athletics? The Task Force believes that strengthened forms of faculty governance and ongoing communication will be important at the University of Oregon to keep the discussion current. We have an ongoing sense of our joint interest in fulfilling the mission of the University.

The Task Force on Athletics has had an inclusive membership. Our proposals have been developed in cooperation and consultation with those affected: the University Senate leadership, the Athletic Department, the FAR and the IAC, and student athletes. Our proposals emerge from a group that has many disagreements; the struggle to find common ground has not always been easy. Thus our proposals do not represent a one-sided set of demands, but rather a set of recommendations upon which we had consensus.

We forward these proposals to the University Senate and to President David Frohnmayer with the hope that they will improve the relationship of academics and athletics at the University of Oregon.

Myths and Reality about Athletics at the University of Oregon

Submitted by the University of Oregon Task Force on Athletics

May 2004

Certain ideas seem to be ubiquitous in discussions of athletics—like “urban legends,” they have the resilience of folklore. Perhaps this is because they reappear frequently in national media stories. Nonetheless the Task Force lists some of the myths we have frequently heard here, with a brief description of the “reality” at the University of Oregon.

The majority of myths and concerns associated with student athletes are addressed in detail in our 2003 report on “Student Athlete Welfare” available at:

< <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/Statement&appendix.pdf> >

FINANCIAL ISSUES:

1. Myth: Athletics takes money from academics at the University of Oregon.

Reality:

The Athletic Department is self-supporting. That is, it receives no money from the university general fund.

Furthermore, over 5 million dollars of athletic department revenue is returned in payment to the main campus for multiple services including: housing; tuition for student athletes receiving grant-in-aid; assessments on donations that directly support the University’s capital campaign; and through indirect benefits provided to central administration.

2. Myth: It would be less expensive for the University if our Athletic Department were to be modeled after Ivy League or other programs where there is less emphasis on athletics.

Reality:

Very few intercollegiate athletic programs nationwide are self-supporting. The UO is unusual in this regard. Many distinguished academic institutions conduct extensive athletic programs that are supported by the general fund. At Ivy League and other institutions, athletics programs do still exist—yet the programs are unable to support themselves through gate receipts, marketing and fund raising. It isn’t even the case that less emphasis on athletics enables academically selective colleges and universities that do not offer athletic scholarships to avoid special problems for student athletes, particularly systemic underperformance in academic subjects. (See William G. Bowen’ and Sarah Levin, Reclaiming the Game: College Sports and Educational Values, Princeton University Press, Sept 2003.)

GOVERNANCE ISSUES:

- 1. Myth: Athletic Department administrators are over-represented on the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee. The committee has a decidedly pro-athletics bent.**

Reality:

Athletic Department administrators serve with elected Intercollegiate Athletic Committee members in an advisory capacity only. They do not hold voting power. The appearance of over-representation may simply be a matter of meeting attendance.

- 2. Myth: There is no faculty oversight of the academic welfare of student athletes.**

Reality:

In fact, there is a faculty member who insures that the University is in compliance with the academic and student welfare requirements of the NCAA. Our “Faculty Athletics Representative” is currently Jim O’Fallon, of the Law School.

ACADEMIC & STUDENT-ATHLETE WELFARE ISSUES:

- 1. Myth: Student athletes do not perform academically as well as other students. Many drop out. The athletics program is simply a professional training program rather than a part of the university.**

Reality:

Most recent figures at the University of Oregon show a graduation rate of 62% for student-athletes, 4% higher than the general student population.¹⁷ Only an extremely small percentage of student-athletes at the UO and at Division I institutions nationwide are on a track to compete in their sport at the professional level. Student athletes who graduate complete the same degree requirements as their non-athlete peers.

- 2. Myth: Student athletes pursue the same or ‘easy’ majors.**

Reality:

Upon examination of majors declared by student athletes at the UO, we found a reasonable distribution across the curriculum similar to what one might expect to see among the general student population. The distribution of majors of student athletes closely resembles that of their non-athlete peers. Of the top 20 majors at the University of Oregon, 18 (90%) are also the most popular majors for student athletes.

¹⁷ NCAA 2003 Graduation Rates available online at < <http://www.ncaa.org> > or view UO Rates for past 6 years at: < <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/UOgradratechart.pdf> > (May 2004)

3. Myth: Student athletes receive excessive and/or inappropriate academic assistance from the Athletic Department.

Reality:

Academic services for student athletes are supervised by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, not the Athletic Department. Student athletes do have NCAA-mandated programs in place for managing their academic careers. At the University of Oregon, these programs could be considered a model to which academic advising and tutoring services for all students should aspire. The infrastructure of the University of Oregon is, we might note, different from some other schools where academic advising may indeed be under the direction of the Athletic Department.

4. Myth: Student athletes lose their scholarships if they are injured.

Reality:

It is the policy of the University of Oregon to continue scholarship support after career-ending injuries.

5. Myth: Student athletes are not integrated with the rest of campus in terms of living arrangements and community activities.

Reality:

Over 95% of scholarship freshman student athletes live on-campus. While athletes often request room assignments with other athletes, we find this is a commonplace practice where students congregate with others of similar interests. The rate for athlete upperclassmen living off campus is the same for the general student population, and like other students, they group with students of similar interests. Programs such as SOAR¹⁸ exist and are quite successful at engaging the student athlete with campus and the greater community in activities such as visiting local schools and mentoring school-aged children.

6. Myth: Athletic schedules are in direct conflict with the academic calendar and negatively impact class attendance for the players. Athletes miss too many classes.

Reality:

Football schedules allow students to travel on Friday evenings to avoid missing classes. Ironically, it is often football schedules that are questioned. Other sports do have scheduling conflicts with classes, although the Athletic Department, coaches, and student athletes work very hard to limit time missed.

¹⁸ SOAR (Scholastic Excellence, Outstanding Character, Athletic Achievement, Responsibility to Self and Others) is UO's NCAA CHAMPS/Life skills program <<http://www.uoregon.edu/~soar/guide/guide.htm>> (11 May 2004)

Summary of January Small Group Meetings University of Oregon Senate & Task Force on Athletics

February 9, 2004

To: President David Frohnmayer
From: Suzanne Clark, Chair, Task Force on Athletics
Re: Issues Emerging from Senate Small Group Meetings with the Task Force on Athletics—January 2004

1. Senators are very concerned about the processes of governance in relationship to athletic issues, and in relationship to the broader issues of funding and commercialization faced by the university. The small group discussions were welcomed and well attended (by over half the Senate). It sometimes seemed as if the primary issue was not athletics, but the financial issues symbolized by athletics. Those attending expressed a desire to be better informed and to be consulted. In the Task Force, the need to address a “tectonic plates” shift in university funding was discussed. In discussions of athletics, it always takes a good deal of time to address “urban legends”—for example, the idea that athletes are exploited and then lose their scholarships if they are injured. This is different, however, from the desire to be consulted and represented. It is important to distinguish the need for better information from the desire to be consulted.
2. In particular, many want to talk about the arena decision. Since it was not on the agenda, not all the small groups talked about the arena, but it was a strong issue in several of the groups. The concerns about the arena are both about the processes of decision-making and about the finances. Senators said they wished to address the changing financial situation of the university fully and frankly, “like adults,” including the relationship with major donors. There were concerns about the perception caused by escalating costs: it damages confidence in the leadership, one said. In particular, they thought that the arena decision posed a crisis in faculty governance—the unanimous vote against the arena process last fall meant that even conservative senators expressed disapproval of the process.
3. Senators would like to improve the current means of representing faculty interests in athletics.
 - a. First, they are concerned about the Faculty Athletics Representative. Without specifically criticizing the current representative, they would like to limit the term. They would like the FAR to report more frequently to the faculty. Those in the group with Jim O’Fallon (current FAR) wished that everyone could hear what he told them.
 - b. Second, they suggest a restructuring of the IAC. Some believe that it is dominated by athletic interests rather than representing faculty interests;

others noted that the IAC was bypassed in the Senate consideration of the COIA motion.

4. Senators mentioned a number of ways that faculty governance could be improved. They proposed the establishment of a committee on the model of the SBC to work with Allan Price and the projects of University Advancement, both to understand better and to participate in university philanthropy, relationships with donors, and communication about the university.
5. Faculty would like to do a more successful job of educating the public, the legislature, future students, donors, the athletic department, and the university as a whole about the value and centrality of their research and teaching. Since faculty has no organ by which to do this, except the initiative of individual faculty, and no budget, there is frustration.
6. Senators are concerned about addressing the financial separation of athletics from academics: a number propose a surcharge or tax of some kind to benefit the academic mission. Bill Moos says he will be happy to consider returning any surpluses once a reserve is established.
7. Senators frequently mention the “two cultures” separation of academics and athletics as well. Given the tendency for differences to reemerge with each new encounter, a reoccurring setting for mutual exchange is probably a good proposal—the small group meetings are good, most thought, and some kind of regular meetings ought to be established.
8. Senators continue to be concerned about student athletes. They are worried, and so are students, about the difficulties athletes have in working out schedules and choosing majors, especially those who are very good students.
9. There was also concern about the separation of athletes from the rest of the student body, both in their academic training and advising and in their residential choices.
10. Last year’s Task Force Report on Student Athletes has gradually become widely known and accepted by Senators, but that process has gone slowly. Senators often expressed the idea in the small groups that the academic successes and high standards of the athletic department should be better publicized.
11. The negative stereotyping of athletes (and perhaps of athletics) continues to be a problem, perhaps one that could also be addressed by a direct communication campaign.

Athletics Task Force Reports available on the Web:

UO Task Force on Athletics, Student Athlete Welfare Report 2003
< <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/Statement&appendix.pdf> >

UO Task Force on Athletics, Public Forum Notes March 2003
< <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/Forumtranscript.pdf> >

UO Task Force on Athletics, Interim Report 2003
< <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/interimreport.pdf> >

University of Oregon Task Force on Athletics—Home Page
< <http://uoregon.edu/~vpadmin/taskforce1.html> >