

Senate Reference No. 22-4

To: The Fort Wayne Senate  
From: A. Nasr, Chair of the Senate Executive Committee  
Date: August 26, 2022  
Subj: 2021-2022 Annual Report of FAR Activities

Please see below for the 2021-2022 Annual Report of FAR Activities.

## Annual Report of FAR Activities

As set forth in the “Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Faculty Athletics Representative Position Description” this is the annual report of the activities of the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) for the Academic year 2021-2022. The report is traditionally filed each April and therefore is from April 2021 to April 2022.

The global pandemic has affected the work of the Faculty Athletic Representative. Sporting events have continued for much of the year with differing amounts of fans as time has progressed. During the pandemic, the student athletes did not stop being students, and they did not stop practicing and working out. The work of advising, certifying, and helping student-athletes continued all during the pandemic.

Due to the pandemic, and the resulting additional stress and uncertainty, the number of students who have had academic and medical difficulties is continually high. In the academic arena there are many more students having issues and complications with professors, due dates, and missed classes due to medical reasons. In a non-pandemic semester, I deal with 5-8 issues where a student has a conflict with an instructor. These numbers increased during the pandemic and have remained steadily higher during 2021-2022. As FAR I am included in conversations about student athlete well-being and I work as a bridge between the student athletes and their instructors. There were at least double the 5-8 issues in a non-pandemic semester.

In Fall 2021 and part of Spring 2022 there was continued COVID testing of student athletes. Student-athletes were tested regularly and as a result there were numerous quarantines for those student athletes. Some student-athletes missed multiple weeks of class due to successive quarantines. For every student athlete who was quarantined an email was sent to each instructor of that student and I was included on each and every one of those emails and their replies. In each case I helped mediate any conflicts or confusion to keep things moving smoothly. There were well over 60 emails on this topic in Fall 2021 alone. Spring 2022 was also be busier than usual. As with the Fall 2021 semester I was asked to mediate in more than the usual number of student/faculty conflicts. In all, I have worked with approximately 24 different cases in the reporting period.

In most semesters, there are a number of faculty who do not return the grade check forms sent to them by student athletes. These forms are critical in monitoring student athlete eligibility to keep the university in compliance. When the student athlete’s efforts to get the forms back are not working, coaches approach me to request that I reach out to faculty who have not completed the forms. I was asked to reach out to approximately 23 faculty to encourage them to turn in the forms. Most faculty responded to my request but there were a few who never got back to me and never turned in the form.

One of the other duties of the FAR is to ensure that student athletes are being treated the same as other students on campus. This means that they are not being given any extra benefits or advantages not available to other students or not permitted by NCAA policies. Whenever there is a grade change submitted for a student-athlete that could affect their eligibility, I am asked to reach out to the faculty member to make sure that the change in grade was due to the efforts of the student and not their status as a student-athlete. I am asked to follow-up on grade changes several times per year in a normal year. During the last year the pandemic has accelerated this with more students needing incompletes and make-up work. I would estimate that I have had 6-8 cases during the time of this report. In each of those cases the faculty have indicated that there was no special treatment of the student-athlete and

that the opportunities offered to the student-athlete were the same as what were offered to any other student.

#### Conferences Attended:

**NCAA Regional Rules Seminar.** Summer 2021. This meeting is usually a several day conference in person. Due to the pandemic the sessions were broken up across several different times during the summer and released as recordings to be reviewed. The conference holds meetings and trainings on NCAA rules and policies and the enforcement and application of said rules and policies.

**Faculty Athletics Representative Association (FARA) Annual Conference.** Various dates in November of 2021. Virtual Meeting. This conference is an annual meeting of all Faculty Athletic Representatives. The meeting includes training, education, and information for FAR's. This years meeting was virtual due to the ongoing global pandemic.

**NCAA National Convention.** Various dates in January, 2022. Due to the pandemic, the convention has been moved to a virtual convention and spread across several weeks. I attended numerous training and information sessions related to my duties as FAR.

#### Athletic Travel:

Due to the pandemic and my schedule, I was not able to travel with any of the teams this year.

#### Committee Work:

The following are committees that I belong to or advise and attend the regular meetings of:

**Student-Athlete Leadership Team (SALT).** This meeting is held monthly. SALT has student-athlete representatives from each of the athletics teams. In the meeting they coordinate athletic and service events as well as matters of importance to student-athletes. They also discuss and seek advice on academic matters from the FAR.

**Student Athlete Services (S-AS).** This committee holds bi-weekly meetings to coordinate student-athlete issues and includes representatives from the Mastodon Academic Performance Center, The Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, and the Compliance office.

**Compliance Committee.** This committee meets three times per year. The committee is composed of representatives from different areas of campus that affect student athletes (registrar, bursar, compliance, athletics, student affairs, financial aid, etc). The group coordinates to make sure there are no compliance issues with student athletes.

**Faculty Senate Mastodon Athletics Advisory Sub-Committee (MAAS).** I am the chair of this committee. The committee is a sub-committee of the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Sub-Committee and usually meets at least once per semester. It may meet more depending on need. Its purpose can be found in the Senate Bylaws section 5.3.4.3.2.

**Athletics Health and Wellness Promotion Team.** This is a recently formed committee in the Athletic Department. The committee meets to discuss and make plans for the health and wellness of student athletes. It usually meets 2 times per semester but has met less recently due to the pandemic. Health and wellness is another area where the NCAA encourages the FAR to be involved.

**Mastodon Athletics Advisory Board.** I serve as a member of the Athletics Advisory Board. This committee meets twice per semester and is primarily composed of community members that are supportive of athletics.

**Work with Student Athletes:**

There are several situations where I work directly with student-athletes. To protect their anonymity, I will use generalities and avoid names.

**Student-Athlete Missed Class Worksheets.** These worksheets are given to student-athletes at the beginning of each semester. The worksheets have the days of class that the student will have to miss for athletic events that are officially sanctioned by the university. The student-athletes work with the faculty member to come to an agreement and the faculty member signs the form. If there is a complication with a worksheet, or if faculty have concerns about the days the student athlete may miss, I am called on to mediate between the faculty member and the student-athlete regarding what can and cannot be missed as well as how it can be made-up. My goal is to help both parties arrive at a solution that is acceptable for both while protecting the academic integrity of the course and the students learning. In the Fall semester of 2021, there were 6 such instances. There were approximately 5 in Spring of 2022. Overall, the majority of faculty work with the student athletes and are willing to help them compete and do well academically.

**Advising.** The student athletes have academic advisors in athletics as well as in their major areas so I do not directly advise them for their majors and coursework. As the FAR they occasionally come to me for advice on interacting with faculty and for career advice.

**Appeals.** If a student-athlete has a conflict with a coach or someone in the athletic department and wishes to appeal a decision that has been made, a committee is formed with members from the Athletics Advisory Sub-committee. There were no appeals this academic year.

**Work with the Compliance Department:**

The compliance department serves to ensure that all NCAA and legal rules are followed by the athletics department and that student-athletes stay within the rules to stay academically eligible. If there are violations the compliance department reports them and works through any consequences. I work with compliance to review and comment on any legislative changes and to monitor athletic department processes and practices. In this capacity I meet regularly with the compliance director Rachel Holycross and her assistant Brian Bienz. Whenever there is a violation of NCAA rules and policies, I am required to review the case and sign off on any actions or consequences of the violation. There are usually 5-10 minor violations per year. There have been no major violations this year.

**Academic Eligibility Certification:**

Three times per year we are required to certify that student athletes did or did not maintain their athletic eligibility. This is determined by the academic progress of each student. Each student-athlete is required to hit certain progress towards degree and GPA requirements each semester. The Certification Team (Compliance, Registrar, Mastodon Academic Performance Center, and FAR) meet together for **three to four days (8:00 am-5:00 pm) between each semester** to review the academic record of each student athlete and certify that they have met the requirements and are eligible to play their sport. Each student must be certified individually ensuring that all of their coursework from that semester has been accounted for. With over 300 student athletes this usually takes the full four days. We meet after fall semester, after spring semester, and at the end of the two summer terms to certify

each student athlete. Frequently after this meeting is over there are several student-athletes with complicated situations that we need to come back to and work through until we have solved the complication. This requires numerous emails.

#### Work with the Athletics Department:

I meet regularly with the Athletic Director, Kelley Hartley Hutton, to consult on academic issues and ensure that there is a faculty voice in athletics decisions. The Athletic Director is very open to input and actively seeks ways to improve communication between athletics and academics.

I also have the opportunity to work with the coaches of the different teams. I often attend the monthly Coaches Meetings to stay aware of what is happening on the teams. I also meet with the coaches on a one on one basis from time to time to check in and address any issues. In these meetings we have discussed practice schedules, game schedules, and missed class worksheets. All of the coaches that I have met with actively promote academic excellence on their teams.

As part of my role I attend practices for different sport teams on a random basis. For the year included in this report I have attended at least one practice for baseball, track (men's and women's), softball, basketball (men's and women's), and volleyball (men's and women's), as well as men's and women's soccer.

Part of my duties include being made aware of any concussions. I am notified by the athletic trainers when the concussion is diagnosed and when the student athlete is cleared to return to academics and athletics. I help ensure that faculty in the classes of the affected student-athlete are aware of the injury and of the status of the student. In all existing cases proper protocols were followed. The student was not allowed to compete until completely cleared by the proper medical professional.

I also work closely with the Mastodon Academic Performance Center (MAP). I am notified of any academic problems or challenges with student-athletes. We also meet regularly to review student eligibility and discuss future plans for students. As part of the process of monitoring eligibility, each day I (as well as the employees of the MAP) receive a report of the enrollment and status of student-athletes. Individually we review the report and compare it to the team rosters to make sure that all student-athletes remain eligible. As FAR I work to make sure that university academic policies are being followed and that advising policies are in the best academic interests of the students. The employees of the MAP are very open to my comments and actively seek my input for policies and procedures as well as day to day issues.

On occasion I am invited participate in the interview and hiring process for new coaches and athletic academic personnel. There were several replacement hires this academic year. When invited, I participated in the interview process and gave feedback on the candidates.

When someone new is hired in athletics I participate in the onboarding process. Each new employee comes to meet with me and discuss my role as FAR and how I can help them. This happens frequently with the changes in coaches, trainers, and graduate assistants.

As FAR I am occasionally asked to administer the NCAA coaches recruiting exam. That duty is shared between myself and compliance. All coaches must re-take the exam each year to certify that they know and follow the rules. Each exam takes one hour with 30-40 coaches needing the test. This is usually done in June, July and August of each year. When a new coach is hired, they may also need to take the exam before beginning work.

I also participate in and attend the Athletics annual awards banquet as well as the athletics academic honors awards.

Athletics Events:

As the FAR it is recommended that I attend some athletics events each semester to make sure that the student-athlete experience is a positive one. For 2021-2022 I was able to attend games/meets for: men's and women's basketball, men's and women's soccer, softball, baseball, men's and women's track and field, and men's and women's volleyball. I attend these events to ensure that proper safety protocols are in place and that student athletes are having a positive experience.

Chancellor:

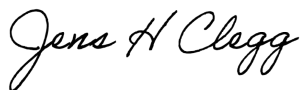
Part of my duties are to meet with the chancellor to discuss the academic progress of student-athletes and give input into issues that affect athletics and academics. I have met or spoken on the phone with the chancellor multiple times in the last academic year.

Horizon League:

In the Horizon League is that FARs are expected to serve on league committees. I serve on the Horizon League Student Athlete Committee as the FAR Representative. This committee is composed of and directed by two student athletes from each school. The committee meets once per month and is a place where student athletes can discuss and plan together. My role on the committee is advisory.

As a member of the Horizon League there are several duties and functions performed by the FAR. At the end of each sport's season the FAR's of the league are sent the names and dossiers of the nominees for awards within that sport. We are required to read over each dossier (about 20-24 athletes per sport) and then rank those athletes on their academic and athletic performance. Those rankings are submitted and the winners are chosen based on the rankings. With 14 sports in the league is is time consuming to complete the process.

The Horizon league group of FAR's holds video conferences at least once per month to meet and discuss legislative and procedural issues. I read the prepared documents and policies and then attend and participate in these meetings.



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