

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 2016-2017. During 2016 the FAR was Elliot Blumenthal. The present report contains only the activities of the new FAR Jens Clegg who was appointed FAR in January of 2017.

Conferences Attended:

Faculty Athletics Representative Association (FARA) Annual Conference. November 3-5, 2016. Indianapolis, Indiana. This conference is an annual meeting of all Faculty Athletic Representatives. The meeting includes training, education, and information for FAR’s.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Annual Convention. January 18-21, 2017. Nashville, Tennessee. This meeting is for all FAR’s as well as Athletic Directors, University Presidents, and other administrators connected to athletics. There is training and education as well as meetings and legislative sessions.

Athletic Travel:

Summit League Basketball Championships 2017. March 4-7. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This is the annual basketball tournament for our league. As part of the event there are administrative meetings that the FAR attends.

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 is intended to meet monthly but has only met once so far this academic year and I did attend that meeting. 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 Athletics Advisory Sub-Committee. This committee is a sub-committee of the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Sub-Committee and meets monthly. Its purpose can be found in the Senate Bylaws section 5.3.4.3.2.

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. I send an email to professors with student athletes in their classes explaining how the worksheets work, encouraging the faculty to work with the student athletes, and inviting faculty to contact me with questions. The student-athletes then work with the faculty member to come to an agreement and the faculty member signs the form. On occasion there is a conflict between a faculty member and a student-athlete regarding what can and cannot be missed as well as how it can be made-up. When these conflicts occur I am asked to intervene and come up with a solution that is acceptable for both parties. In the Spring Semester there were 5 such instances. In two of those instances the faculty member felt that too much time was being missed for athletic competitions. I agreed with the faculty member and the team held the student-athlete out of the event or altered the travel schedule so the student could be in class. In both cases the respective coaches were very accommodating and showed that they understood the importance of academics. There was one case where it appeared a faculty member was being too accommodating to the student-athlete. I investigated and found that the class had a very flexible structure and allowed the same flexibility to all students. I determined that there was no favoritism and no academic misconduct. The final two cases were cases in which the faculty member refused to work with the student-athlete and stated that there would be no make-up exam. One of the student-athletes asked me not to intervene for fear of reprisal and decided to take the loss of points and compete. The second asked me to intervene and I did. I attempted to meet with the faculty member in question but they would only email with me. After a few polite exchanges asking for an explanation of their unwillingness to accommodate the student the faculty member demanded that I cease contact and explained that they would not work with the student. The student had to miss the athletic competition to take the exam. 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. I am new to the position and just getting to know the student-athletes so there have not been a lot of these conversations. There have been a few, and I expect as I get to know them there will be more.

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. One of those is usually the FAR. I served on one appeal this semester for a student-athlete.

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 Wendy Wilson. We review the academic eligibility of student athletes and make sure that there are no violations, or that if there are violations they are properly reported. To my knowledge there have been no violations this semester.

Work with the Athletics Department:

I meet regularly (at least 2 times per month) 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.

The Athletics Department also asked me to participate on the **Faculty Senate Athletics Working Group** on their behalf. In this capacity I have attended all of the Working Group meetings, prepared reports, and read numerous reports.

I also have the opportunity to work with the coaches of the different teams. I have attended the Coaches Meetings and I have met privately with a number of the coaches. 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 duties I am made aware of any concussions. I am notified by the coach as well as the Mastodon Academic Performance Center. I ensure that faculty in the classes of the affected student – athlete are aware of the injury and of the status of the student. There have been 2 concussions that I have been notified of this semester. In both cases all 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 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.

I was also asked to participate in the hiring of a new academic advisor in athletics to replace one who retired. I participated in the interview process and gave feedback on the candidates.

Athletics Events:

As the FAR I am required to attend a few athletics events each semester to make sure that the student-athlete experience is a positive one. I have attended numerous athletics events this Spring semester.

Men's Basketball: November 26th, December 29th, December 31st, January 7th, January 25th, February 11th, February 15th, March 5th, and March 15th.

Women's Basketball: November 26th, December 31st, January 25th, and February 11th.

Men's Volleyball: January 27th, January 28th, February 4th, and February 10th.

I also attended the Hall of Fame Banquet and induction ceremony on February 10th.

Chancellor:

I meet with the Chancellor regularly to keep her informed of academic progress and issues with student-athletes. We have met twice this semester. My contract stipulates that we meet at least 4 times per year and we are on track to meet that requirement.

Because of my role with athletics the Chancellor appointed me to the Legal and Governance Working Group in the Realignment process.