

**Report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
by Faculty Athletics Representative Aki Hirota, April 22, 2010**

The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) is a member of the faculty or the administration who is designated by the chief executive officer to represent the institution and its faculty in the institution's relationships with the NCAA and its conference. The FAR plays a strategic role in three major institutional responsibilities required by the NCAA: *academic integrity*, *institutional control* and *well-being of student-athletes*. The FAR reports annually to the Faculty Senate in order to maintain critical communications links among the Athletic Program, the faculty, the institution, the Big West Conference, and the NCAA.

**1. Academic integrity**

**(A) NCAA academic requirements**

The NCAA tracks Academic Progress Rates (APR) and Graduation Success Rates, which show the institution's success in retaining and graduating student-athletes. An SA can earn 4 points per year: 1 point each semester for staying eligible and staying in school. The APR is derived by dividing the points each SA earns by the 4 maximum points possible. The figure thus arrived at is multiplied by 1000. 925 is considered to be the benchmark for a 50% graduation rate. The NCAA academic eligibility requirements include that student-athletes be enrolled in at least 12 units and earn 6 units each semester, earn 18 units per year, and meet minimum GPA requirements. The student-athletes must also meet the Progress-toward-Degree requirements—completion of 40% of the units toward degree before the third year, 60% before the fourth year, and 80% before the fifth year.

**(B) Men's Basketball Team: graduation rate and academic performance**

*U.S. News* in March indicated that California State, Northridge's Men's Basketball Team's graduation rate was zero percent. A more careful look at the actual situation is warranted. The report must have been drawn from AY 2008-2009. Over the last two years, 8 senior student-athletes have left the institution to pursue professional careers. Currently, all 8 continue to play professionally overseas.

In considering the APR (Academic Progress Rate), mitigating factors include unavailability of courses due to the State budget cuts, especially in summer; student-athletes leaving school for another institution; and leaving school for family, medical, personal, or professional reasons. The team has posted a low APR partly due to these extenuating circumstances beyond the control of coaches or the institution.

Even with these situations, the Men's Basketball Team's multiyear APR rate has improved over the last three years. The single year APR rate for the last two years is also better than that for the previous two years. In addition, the team GPA at the end of the fall 2009 semester had improved compared to that for the fall 2008 semester. Five of the six seniors are graduating this year, and the sixth has one more semester of courses to graduate.

These improvements came about partly due to the Men's Basketball Academic Success Plan that was put in place for the fall 2009 semester. This plan includes Study Table, Mentoring, and Tutoring requirements. The coaches monitor class attendance and performance, and their

disciplinary actions on non-performing student-athletes include banning them from competition. The coaches are also readjusting recruiting criteria.

Clearly the team's academic performance is moving in the right direction, even though we need to continue striving for further academic improvements.

### **(C) Academic excellence**

With academic support by the advisers and the athletic administration and emphasis on academics on the part of the coaches, academic records of student-athletes have been steadily improving. Throughout the year, many Matador student-athletes have been named to the Big West All-Academic team.

70 Matador student-athletes were named to the 2010 **Varsity 'N Honor Roll**, honored by University President Dr. Jolene Koester and family and friends at a recent ceremony at CSUN's University Club. For membership, a student-athlete must have completed a minimum of one season of varsity competition and have achieved a GPA of 3.2 over the previous two semesters. Top honors went to Lauren Michaels, a junior in Marine Biology on the Women's Track & Field team, and Justin Burridge, a junior Finance major on the Men's Volleyball team.

Moises Gomez, on the men's soccer team, and Kristin McLaughlin, on the women's water polo team, were recently named Big West Scholar-Athletes of the Year.

Kristin McLaughlin (water polo captain 2009-10) is a senior Political Science major and Spanish minor with a 3.78 GPA. She has won many academic honors including the Dean's Academic Excellence Full-Tuition Scholarship to Baylor Law School and a full-tuition academic scholarship to Michigan State Law School. She is waiting to hear from other schools before making her choice of professional school for the fall. She hopes to practice family law.

### **(D) Missed Class Policy**

One of the issues affecting the academic success of student-athletes is missing classes for university-sanctioned athletic activities. At the beginning of each semester, the Athletics Department prepares letters with each student-athlete's schedule of sanctioned games. Student-athletes submit these letters to their instructors and ask for a signature that indicates that the instructor has received the letter.

It will be a great help if faculty members would clearly indicate their missed-class and make-up policies so that student-athletes can understand at the beginning of the semester what the possibilities are for successfully completing courses. One problem is that, even if students learn that the instructor's policy will render successful completion of a course difficult, finding another class to enroll in may not be possible. I would appreciate it if faculty colleagues could make efforts to accommodate student-athletes participating in athletics, just as you would students participating in Model United Nations, music performances, or other field trips.

The Missed Class Policy adopted by the Faculty Senate is listed in the University Catalog and reads as follows:

#### **Missed Classes While Representing the University**

When representing the university in official curriculum-related, university-approved activities requires a student to miss classes, faculty are expected to provide, within reason, opportunity to make up any work or exams that are missed. . . .

University sponsors of these activities have an obligation to respect the importance of regular class attendance for successful academic performance and to minimize the number of such absences. Instructional faculty have an obligation to respect the importance of such student participation, and to assist student participants in meeting their academic obligations.

## **2. Institutional control & compliance**

Administrators of the Athletics Department, coaches, and the Compliance Review Committee have regular meetings to review NCAA regulations. They are diligent in monitoring any violations. Student-athletes also attend regular meetings at which the regulations are reviewed.

Big West Conference institutions committed an average of 8 violations in AY 2007-08 and 8.34 in AY 2008-09. CSUN had 8 and 7 respectively. This year CSUN has had 9 minor violations. Within the Conference by far the largest number of violations occurs in recruiting. CSUN had a camp advertisement that did not include appropriate language. Another large number of violations occurs in eligibility. CSUN committed 4 violations in this category, such as allowing a Student-Athlete to practice before completing NCAA paperwork or a mandatory medical exam, or allowing an SA to practice beyond a temporary certification period. Penalties for these violations are withholding the SA from a certain number of practice sessions. Recently the most frequently occurring violation is wearing a commercial logo larger than the permitted size or not using the Big West logo on special attire when participating in an event for a cause such as cancer awareness. Penalties for these range from a warning, through a letter of admonishment to the coach, to a fine. CSUN committed one offense in this category.

The occurrences of these minor violations are considered normal in the world of NCAA, where numerous detailed legislations exist. Since having discovered the violations, the Athletics Department has promptly imposed penalties and reported to the Big West Conference or the NCAA. These organizations have found the penalties to be appropriate in all cases. The mechanisms for institutional control at CSUN are functioning properly.

## **3. Student-Athletes' Well-being**

The Athletics Department is diligent in looking after the welfare of student-athletes, and encourages them to get involved in university activities, community service, and seminars on various issues, such as career planning. Some of the events this year are:

In October Water Polo and Softball participated with Chase Street Elementary School in the Walk to School event to promote exercise and healthful eating.

In November and December the student athletes collected donations to provide gifts to a family for Christmas through the M.E.N.D. (Meet Every Need with Dignity) program.

They raised funds for the Big West Coin Drive in February to donate to the Children's Hunger Fund Haiti Relief effort.

Many of the SAs will “Walk A Mile In Her Shoes” this Saturday, April 24, to help bring awareness to the Valley Trauma Center and the Ending Violence Against Women Campaign.

On May 16<sup>th</sup> the SAs will host the Northridge Games—a clinic for disabled children.

The FAR conducted the NCAA annual survey of the two teams the NCAA had designated. This year’s survey is titled GOALS (Growth, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Learning of Students in College), and is the most comprehensive study ever conducted on the experiences of student athletes. The results will be used to help formulate future NCAA policies and legislation.

#### 4. Team elimination

March 1 an announcement was made that the Women's Swimming Team was to be eliminated as of the end of the Spring 2010 semester because of continued financial difficulties faced by the University. Swimming was chosen because it is not a protected sport in the Big West Conference. (That is to say, schools are not required to have swimming to be members of Big West.) Some of the swimmers are seeking to transfer to other institutions. Those who choose to remain at CSUN will continue to receive their athletic scholarships.

#### 5. Some Highlights of AY 2009-10 at Cal State Northridge

The **men’s volleyball** team is one of the contenders for the NCAA championship. Cal State Northridge is currently **ranked third in the nation**, and was ranked #1 in the nation three times earlier this year.

The **women’s water polo** team, ranked **tenth in the nation**, is the favorite to win the Big West Tournament this weekend. The Matadors have already won a school-record 27 wins, and were co-champions of their league. Several women on the team will be All-American candidates.

The **men’s and women’s track & field** teams are aiming for repeats of their league titles this year. Cal State Northridge will host the Big West Championships May 14-15 at Matador Track. The Matador women have won four straight league championships, and the Matador men have won three of the last five Big West titles.

The **softball** team is still in the hunt for the Big West Conference title, and could be a candidate for the 2010 NCAA Tournament.

Three **men’s soccer** players were accorded all-league first team honors, and Terry Davila was named Big West Coach of the Year for the fourth time while at Cal State Northridge.

Six **women’s soccer** players won All-Big West honors, 12 players were named to the All-Big West Academic team, and Keith West was named Big West Coach of the Year.

In February Terry Craven (baseball), Dorothea “Granny” Heitz (special inductee), Garrett Noel (track & field), Priscilla Rouse Becker (softball) and the 1967 Junior Rose Bowl team were inducted to the Cal State Northridge **Hall of Fame** before more than 400 people representing family, friends, and University employees.