

**Report to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee
by Faculty Athletics Representative Aki Hirota, April 30, 2009**

NCAA Certification

NCAA requires re-certification of athletics programs every ten years. CSUN has been going through a certification process, involving a wide segment of the campus and the community, including the writing of a Self Study Report in late Spring 2008 and a campus visit by an NCAA Review Committee in April 2009. While the final report of the Committee has not yet been issued, the preliminary comments by the Committee allow us to hope that CSUN Athletics will be recertified with no major issues.

Below is a **report on the three major areas of institutional responsibility** under NCAA regulations that the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) is required to observe: Academic integrity, institutional control and compliance, and the well-being of student-athletes.

1. Academic Integrity

In recent years NCAA has emphasized that student-athletes be students first, stay academically eligible, and graduate. In response to these emphases, CSUN has steadily made improvements in its academic services. Undergraduate Studies, to which the Academic Advisers for Athletes report, and the Dept of Athletics have created academic improvement plans and have monthly meetings in order to support student-athletes' academic success. A *University 100* section for student-athletes has been created, which seems to be a success.

Academic Excellence

Two CSUN students were granted **The Big West Scholar-Athletes of the Year Award** on March 12, 2009.

- Ryan Pineda (baseball), a sophomore majoring in Economics, and double-minoring in Marketing and Management, and
- Jaclyn Rymer (softball), a junior majoring in Magazine Journalism

68 out of nearly 400 student-athletes were honored at the **Varsity N** celebration April 13 for having achieved a GPA of 3.2 or above for Spring and Fall semesters, 2008.

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 schedules of games. Student-athletes submit a letter to each of their professors 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, the possibility of 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. Student-athletes are serious about their education. I would appreciate it if faculty colleagues could accommodate student-athletes participating in university-sponsored athletics competitions as you would students participating in Model United Nations, music performances, or other field trips.

The Missed Class Policy for these curriculum-related activities, which was adopted by the Faculty Senate and is listed in the University Catalog, reads, in part, as follows:

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

In order to have institutional control over compliance issues, CSUN has an Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Council, a Compliance Review Committee, and a Student-Athlete Substance Abuse Policy Committee. Athletics administrators, athletics academic advisors, an Admissions & Records officer, a Financial Aid officer in charge of student-athletes, coaches, student-athletes, and the FAR hold regular seminars and meetings to review NCAA regulations. Coaches must pass the annual NCAA Coaches Test. Yet, since the 500-page NCAA Division I Manual lists many regulations, many of which are subject to interpretation, everyone understands that minor violations occur. Institutions are expected to monitor and report any violations that do occur to the NCAA and the Conference.

Only minor violations have occurred this past year. Some examples are

- 1) A coach failed to obtain a medical approval from the Athletics Training Room before allowing prospective student-athletes to try out, and
- 2) Being informed by an academic advisor that a student-athlete had become academically eligible, a coach allowed him to compete before he was certified and filed with the Conference Office as eligible.

When they have discovered violations, the people of the Athletics Dept have acted quickly and properly to report the violations and impose penalties. The NCAA has found these penalties to be appropriate.

3. Wellbeing of Student-Athletes

Spirit is high because of excellent athletic records this year:

The Men's Basketball team won the Big West Conference Championship two years in a row, won the Big West Tournament, and played an impressive game against the University of Memphis in the NCAA Tournament in Kansas City.

The Men's Volleyball team has been ranked #3, #2 and #1 in the nation at various points in the year.

At a well-attended and emotional **Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony** on March 1st, six individuals and one team were inducted.

The Athletics Dept has been diligent in looking after the welfare of student-athletes. For example, the Athletics Dept offers seminars on issues such as drugs, rape, and career planning. They encourages student-athletes to get involved in university activities and to perform community service. The most recent example was "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," a campaign to educate about violence against women. The CSUN Athletics Dept has been commendable for its competence and its dedication.