

# **Boston College**

## **Athletics Advisory Board Annual Report, 2009-10**

This Report is intended to summarize for the University community both the major developments related to Boston College's intercollegiate athletics program and the Athletics Advisory Board's (AAB) activities during the preceding academic year.

### **1. The Year's Academic and Athletic Highlights**

#### **A. ACC Academic Collaboration**

The Inter-Institutional Academic Collaborative among Atlantic Coast Conference Universities (ACCIAC) sponsored its fifth year of initiatives, with full participation by BC students. The collaborative is funded in part by a portion of the revenue from the conference championship football game. Under this program, three BC students have been studying this summer in Bali, Germany and Italy, respectively. Three more BC students were sponsored for study abroad during the past spring semester, and an additional six BC students have been awarded ACC IAC study-abroad scholarships for the coming fall semester. The fifth annual "Meeting of the Minds" conference, designed to showcase undergraduate research at member institutions, was held at the Georgia Institute of Technology in April 2010, and eight

and they are applied at each NCAA

and this year's review was conducted in February 2010. The review is intended to evaluate and improve procedures in place to ensure compliance with NCAA rules and to "strengthen the institution's overall control and integrity of the athletics program." Among the areas reviewed are the institution's governance and organization of its athletics program, procedures for certifying student-athlete eligibility, academic support for student-athletes, procedures for maintaining and reporting data for the NCAA's Academic Performance Program and procedures for recruiting and awarding financial aid to student-athletes. The report based on this review, received by Boston College in March 2010, made some suggestions for improvement, but concluded overall that "...the compliance systems at Boston College are sound and complete" and that "The overall organization and structure ... displays a high level of com0.2 (ge)2t0.2 (2 (e) 0.2 (nt) 0.2 (of)-0.r2 (om) 0

advising for student-athletes, (3) practice and competition schedules and the difficulties they pose for student-athletes in balancing academics and athletics, and (4) the place of student-athletes in the broader community life of the University. The AAB heard a variety of perspectives on these issues, including those of coaches, student-athletes, administrators, and academic support staff and also had the opportunity to examine some data gathered by the Office of Institutional Research.

Academic integrity was the topic of our October meeting with guests Don Hafner and Joe Burns, but we returned to the issue in subsequent meetings with Patrick Rombalski and with the LRSA staff. One issue surrounding the general topic that had previously arisen was that of whom to inform when student-athletes are accused of academic integrity violations by faculty. Vice Provost Don Hafner expressed the opinion that such violations are an academic matter and should be reported to an academic unit of the University, such as LRSA. However, he also pointed to a number of sticky procedural issues, including possible lack of knowledge at the Academic Integrity Board level of the different colleges that a particular student involved in a case is also a student-athlete and reluctance to disclose information before a case has been adjudicated.

Considerable time was also spent discussing efforts around the University to educate all students about the meaning of academic integrity in various contexts and particularly about the rules for proper citation of sources of information. Joe Burns described the online academic integrity tutorial that all BC freshmen must now successfully complete before being allowed to register for second semester courses. The LRSA counselors also described in detail their efforts to provide education on proper citation, particularly to academically at-risk student athletes, who may lack experience in writing research papers prior to entering BC. In addition, the counselors also described the extensive training and certification undergone by LRSA tutors to make it clear to them what type of help is appropriate to extend to a student-athlete and what type is not. At LRSA's invitation, AAB Chair Bob Taggart and Director of Institutional Research Jess Greene made a follow-up visit to the LRSA office on August 2, 2010, to learn more about tutor training and documentation of tutor observations by senior staff members. Vice President for Student Affairs Patrick Rombalski also discussed academic integrity during his visit to the AAB's April meeting and he expressed the opinion that cheating cannot be dealt with solely in the classroom. He described a University-wide initiative that is currently underway to help instill integrity and other values as core values of the University community. Based on research studies that he had seen, he expressed doubt that integrity problems arose primarily among student-athletes, which echoed similar doubts expressed by Don Hafner at the October meeting.

The second major theme of the monthly AAB meetings was academic support and advising for student-

LRSA counselors echoed this sentiment in their visit to the May meeting and said that further efforts are currently underway to define more clearly the roles of different sources of academic advising help. The student-athletes also stressed that all students need to be proactive in seeking out advising help. In their November visit, the coaches felt that it would be helpful if they received an overview at the beginning of the year of different sources of advising help available so that they might better steer team members particularly freshmen and sophomores, toward the most appropriate form of help.

In terms of student-athlete advising outcomes, Don Ha

The AAB asked the SAAC representatives during their December visit to describe the difficulties they face in balancing academics with athletics. The students acknowledged that this can be difficult and that sometimes compromises are necessary, especially in terms of revising term papers or other written assignments. At the same time, they said that their schedules force them to use their time as efficiently as possible. Both the coaches and the SAAC representatives did argue that some form of priority registration for student-athletes would make it less difficult to fit required courses into their available time schedules. However, the Provost's office has previously expressed the opinion that the override system is a more equitable means for resolving scheduling difficulties faced by all students, both athletes and non-athletes.

The fourth major theme of this year's AAB meetings was the degree of integration of student-athletes into the broader life of the University community. When asked about this, the SAAC representatives did acknowledge that the demands of athletics and academics forced them to sacrifice some of the social aspects of University life. In addition, common interests and schedules often cause them to spend a good deal of time with teammates or other student-athletes. However, they did point to a coming service immersion trip (this trip to New Orleans subsequently took place over spring vacation) that was planned around student-athlete schedules, and they said that SAAC was working on arranging some joint activities with other student groups on campus.

In his April visit, Vice President for Student Affairs Patrick Rombalski talked about the need to better integrate the University generally. He felt that many campus groups, not just athletic teams, sometimes have the effect of isolating their members from the rest of the community. He discussed plans for more social and study space in future dormitories. He also pointed out that, as they stand, the dormitories do integrate all students. While student-athletes or other group members may tend to room together, they are on the same floor with other students. He also talked about new models of service activities, new freshmen welcoming programs and efforts to reduce excessive alcohol consumption as possible further steps toward breaking down barriers among all campus groups. He stated that the ultimate goal is creation of a greater sense of identification with Boston College among both students and other members of the community.

## **B. Committee Composition**

At the beginning of the year, the AAB welcomed newly-elected members Bob Murphy (Economics) and Joe Pedulla (LSOE). At the end of the academic year, Bob Bloom (Law) and Paul Spagnoli (History) completed their elected terms, and Richard Albert (Law) and Kathy Bailey (Political Science) were elected by the faculty to three-year terms, beginning June, 2010.

Please feel free to seek out any AAB member with questions and concerns you may have. One of the Board's primary functions is to serve as a channel for communication between the academic and athletic programs, and we are always open to your questions or other input.

**The Athletics Advisory Board:**

Robert Bloom (Law)

Mary Ellen Fulton (LSOE)

Jessica Greene (Institutional Research)

Michael Moore (Psychology)

Robert Murphy (Economics)

Joseph Pedulla (LSOE)

Michael Sacco (Intersections Project)

Paul Spagnoli (History)

Edward Taylor (CSOM)

Robert Taggart (CSOM, Chair and  
Faculty Athletics Representative)