

**Faculty Athletics Representatives Meeting Minutes**  
**Sunday, September 30, 2007**  
**Lock Haven University**  
**Lock Haven, PA**

Participants: Dr. Robert C. Ziegenfus, Chair (Kutztown); Dr. Robert Maris (Mansfield); Dr. Kevin Roth (Clarion); Dr. William Biddington (California); Dr. Kurt Fuellhart (Shippensburg); Dr. John Benhart (Indiana); Dr. Craig Stevens (West Chester); Dr. Gregory Smith (Cheyney); Dr. Tim Knoster (Bloomsburg); Dr. Shala Davis, East Stroudsburg University.

**Agenda Items and Discussion:**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Announcements
  - a. FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium, Baltimore, MD November 8-10, 2007
  - b. NCAA Convention, Nashville, TN, January 10-14, 2008
3. Conference Issues with Mr. Steve Murray
  - a. Women's Soccer Schedule
  - b. Our Recommendation from 2006-2007 for Missed Class Time Study for Women's Soccer
  - c. New Scheduling Changes Related to Conference Expansion – These first three topics were discussed as one given their inter-relationships. Ten teams are needed to have divisional play, and the confirmed expansion of the league provides this opportunity in soccer. The primary issue, according to Mr. Murray, was who would play whom. The Presidents directed Steve to control costs and missed class time. Steve then convened a meeting of nine athletics directors to develop a proposal, and they wanted full cross-overs. The Presidents rejected this proposal and asked that a new proposal be developed that reflected their wishes. For women's soccer, the final schedule reduces cross-overs from 6-7 to 1-2. This new schedule ameliorates many of the concerns previously expressed about the missed class time in this sport. For sports other than soccer, it was noted that the spring sports present the major problem because of the short season. Baseball appears to be the most affected sport in the new schedule as distributed by Steve. There will be 24 mandated games, instead of 20, scheduled over seven weeks with one bye week. This requires the start be two weeks earlier than in previous seasons. The softball schedule change is also quite significant with three divisions of five teams, but the even bigger issue is how to determine eight playoff teams from across three divisions.
  - d. Alternate Overnight Meeting of FARs/SAAC (Dr. Kurt Fuellhart) – Dr. Fuellhart suggested the Conference consider having the overnight meeting alternate between the spring and fall so that spring sports athletes not be deprived of

attendance. Steve felt that this would not be feasible for the SAAC. He believes a fall meeting must be primarily informational to get the new SAAC members oriented to working with each other and with the SAAC on their respective campuses. Conversely, the spring meeting has traditionally been used for the development of leadership skills.

- e. SAAC Sportsmanship Initiative – the FAR Role? Mr. Murray indicated that the banner discussed last spring is now available and will be unveiled when we meet with the SAAC after lunch. The sport-specific pre-game ritual is planned for implementation in the spring. As usual, our role is to be supportive of this new initiative.
  - f. DII Strategic Positioning and Community Engagement Initiatives – Our interest as FARs is in what our role will be as well as that of the institution and the Conference. The discussion focused on the Community Engagement Initiative. Steve indicated that the specific conference role is still uncertain. As mentioned at the last meeting, it is likely that the Conference will hold the members accountable with oversight by the President’s Council. At this juncture, a few elements are clear: 1) the NCAA will provide additional direction at some point; 2) subsequent to that event, the Conference will host a meeting in the Spring Semester 2008 to discuss both issues; 3) the NCAA has already decreed that grant monies must be funneled into the Community Engagement Initiative within conference budgets. The development and implementation of the Initiative will be a primary consideration during this academic year. As stated at the last meeting, the FARs are concerned about the potential additional time demands that may be placed on student-athletes who participate in these activities. Furthermore, we believe that whatever role the student-athletes have in this process that it not be delegated to the SAAC to coordinate. The Athletics Directors should have the lead role.
  - g. FARA Presence on the PSAC website – Prior to the meeting, this idea had been presented to Mr. Murray. There were no objections to the concept. The only issue that remains to be discussed is who will design the site and work with the PSAC webmaster to upload and maintain it.
  - h. Academic Success Rate Status – This issue was not addressed because of time constraints.
  - i. Other – The Spring Semester FAR/SAAC two-day meeting is scheduled for March 29-30, 2008.
4. Conflict Avoidance Scheduling – The only update offered was by Dr. Maris who has been asked by the new administration at Mansfield University to coordinate the development of a proposal on this topic.

5. Extended Discussion topics – There was no time for any discussion, but Dr. Ziegenfus did ask if any FARs in attendance were required to report to their Faculty Senate (or other equivalent body). There were no positive responses. It was the opinion of several FARs that their Senate probably has little or no interest in athletics issues. That is, of course, until there is a major negative publicity problem.
6. Recommendations for Advisory Council – None.
7. Other – Dr. Davis asked for input on the subject of excused absences. Athletic competition is commonly, though apparently not universally, considered such an absence. There was general agreement that the best solution is to have this term defined in the University Catalog and then placed in the Student-Athlete Handbook. At East Stroudsburg University, Dr. Davis is proposing to request Senate approval of a specific list of such absences to reduce confusion about the term.