

**FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE
REPORT TO THE FACULTY SENATE**

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- I. By way of introduction, let me say that this is my 24th year as a university professor and my 17th year here at ECU. I am a professor of Marriage and Family Therapy in the Department of Child Development and Family Relations in the College of Human Ecology. I have been the Faculty Athletics representative since July 1st of 2003.
- II. For those of you who may not know, the faculty athletics representative or FAR provides oversight and advice in the administration of the Athletics program and plays a strategic role to ensure academic integrity, institutional control of intercollegiate athletics, and enhancement of the student-athlete experience.

The FAR is appointed by the Chancellor for a three-year term and answers directly to the Chancellor. The position is provided with 50% release from teaching duties. So I teach half-time and do FAR duties half time.

Most importantly, I want to make clear that I **do not** work for the department of athletics. This has been a point of confusion even within my own academic unit. For example my department chair wanted me to get my supplies from the athletics department so that I could save money for the CDFR department.

I am a faculty member and am paid by academic affairs. I represent the Chancellor and I represent you and serve as bridge between academics and athletics.
- III. Today I want to argue for improving that bridge and suggest some ways to do so.
- IV. Last year I started my report by reviewing a few of the many problems with big-time sports including a "win at all costs" mentality and the over-commercialization of intercollegiate athletics. These and other problems have led to a concern that "the tail is wagging the dog" and that academics is not primary and in some cases gets forgotten. At times it seems that the culture of athletics is incompatible with the culture of academics.
- V. I noted last year that in the midst of these considerable problems have been some remarkable efforts to reform intercollegiate athletics that merited our attention and monitoring. In the year just past those reform efforts have continued with some success.

- VI. I think most faculty members support these efforts toward academic reform and the more complete integration of athletics into the overall educational mission of the university. But how do we accomplish this here at ECU and what can faculty members do? How can we build a better bridge between athletics and academics?
- VII. As we consider: *Institutional control, reform of intercollegiate athletics, academic integrity in athletics*, and other such concepts, what do they mean for us as faculty at ECU? What is our role in promoting these desired outcomes?
- VIII. I want you to know that faculty members have a **crucial role** in continuing efforts to oversee athletics. Faculty members have a **voice**, faculty members have **influence**, faculty members have **access** to information and to the decision making and oversight process, but faculty members must accept **ownership** of this responsibility.
- IX. Our involvement is through the University Athletics Committee. That committee has oversight responsibility for what goes on in athletics. Members of that committee represent this body and all faculty members and join me as the Faculty Athletics Representative in working to ensure that academic integrity, rules compliance, and welfare of student-athletes are maintained in athletics.
- X. The University Athletics Committee can chart any course it wishes in overseeing athletics. I think sometimes the importance of this committee and what it can accomplish have been underestimated. I hope this year we will play a central role in monitoring progress toward the goals in the gender equity and minority opportunity plans in the department of athletics. In past years, these plans were developed but not monitored closely and so all the goals were not met. The university athletics committee can play a major role in ensuring that goals are met regarding gender equity and minority opportunity in athletics.
- We must continue to oversee policies and procedures that ensure academic integrity and rules compliance. We must continue to monitor the welfare of student-athletes and ensure that academics come first. We must address the missed class problems caused by extensive travel within C-USA.
- We must join other faculty groups across C-USA and the country in promoting academic reform efforts and the more complete integration of athletics into the overall educational mission of the university.

- XI. Most importantly, as faculty members we cannot contribute to the separation of athletics from academics. Each of you has a role to play. Please communicate your concerns and questions to your representatives on the university athletics committee or to me. Building the bridge has to be a collaborative effort.
- XII. I can assure you that administrators within the department of Athletics are committed to these goals and ideals. Nick Floyd has worked tirelessly to promote academic success for student-athletes. He has supported athletics within the context of the overall educational mission of the university. He has cooperated with faculty and with the university athletics committee. We have never asked Nick for any information that was not forthcoming. He has worked to build the bridge between athletics and academics.
- I believe Terry Holland will continue these efforts. His commitment to academics has been evident throughout his career and was evident during his interview here and since his appointment.
- XIII. I believe that with all things considered, we are in good shape here. We have in place a process whereby faculty can and should have sufficient input into and oversight of athletics. We already have in place a structure that closely approximates what reformers of athletics across the country are calling for. We need to make sure this process works.
- XIV. Most of our student-athletes do well academically, but could do better. More specific information will be available to you with the minutes and on the senate web site in the form of two reports on the academic performance of student-athletes here at ECU. I also included for your consideration the annual report of the university athletics committee.
- In addition, there have been no major problems regarding academic integrity or rules compliance and the welfare of student-athletes has been maintained. But as faculty we need to continue our vigilance, involvement, and concern. We have an essential role to play in the continued successful integration of athletics into the overall educational mission of this university.
- XV. Thanks for your attention. Are there any questions?