

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

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1. By way of introduction, let me say that I am a professor of Marriage and Family Therapy in the Department of Child Development and Family Relations in the College of Human Ecology. We offer an M.S. degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and a Ph.D. in Medical Family Therapy. I have been the Faculty Athletics representative since July 1st of 2003.

2. 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 I am just beginning my second three-year term. As the FAR, my immediate supervisor is Provost Smith. 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. I am a faculty member and am paid by academic affairs. I represent the Chancellor, the Provost, and I represent you as I oversee what goes on in athletics and work to improve the connection between academics and athletics. You can review my report of activities that is on the Faculty Senate web page to see what I do as FAR.

3. This is my fourth report to this body and my first as a member of this body. In my first report in September of 2003, I reviewed a few of the many problems with big-time intercollegiate athletics that could promote a sense that the culture of athletics is incompatible with the culture of academics.

4. I noted then that in the midst of these considerable challenges have been some remarkable efforts to reform intercollegiate athletics that merited our attention and monitoring. In the past three years, those reform efforts have continued with success. Primary among these efforts have been:

- Strengthening the academic requirements for initial and continuing eligibility to ensure that athletes are moving toward graduation and not just taking easy courses to remain eligible.

- The use of the Academic Progress Rate (APR) to measure academic success is into its fourth year and is making a large and positive difference. The APR, which considers both retention and eligibility, was designed to replace graduation rates as the only measure of success for student-athletes. Each year for each player on each squad, points are awarded: one for retention and one for remaining eligible. In this way a sort of batting average is calculated for each team that can then be compared to other teams on that campus and to other teams across the country.

Underperforming teams each year are subject to contemporaneous penalties that include not being able to replace 0 for 2 student-athletes. That means when a player leaves a team or is not retained and that player would not have been eligible, that player's spot on the team cannot be filled.

Underperforming teams over time will be subject to additional penalties including additional loss of scholarships and the opportunity for post-season competition. Those teams that do well in terms of their APR will be rewarded.

What this has meant is that coaches are considerably less interested in recruiting athletes who do not want to be students and those who do not have a reasonable chance of succeeding academically and graduating. This is very important and positive. Now there is a powerful incentive for coaches to recruit good athletes who also are committed to academic success. If the recruits cannot or will not succeed academically, it will hurt the program both sooner and later.

5. I think most faculty members support these efforts toward academic reform, the more complete integration of athletics into the overall educational mission of the university, and institutional control of athletics. But what can faculty members do to further these efforts? How can we build a better bridge between athletics and academics?
6. If athletics is part of the overall educational mission of this university, and it should be, then faculty members cannot ignore athletics or worse yet see athletics as the enemy.
7. Faculty members must recognize that they have a **crucial role** in overseeing athletics. Faculty members must have a **voice** and claim that voice, faculty members must have **influence** and use that influence responsibly for the good of the university and our students, faculty members must have **access** to information so that they can be part of the decision-making and oversight processes,

and finally, faculty members must accept **ownership** of the responsibility for overseeing athletics.

8. 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 members at ECU? What is our role in of promoting these desired outcomes?
9. Our involvement is through this body and one of its committees: the University Athletics Committee (UAC). The Faculty Senate through the UAC has oversight responsibility for what goes on in athletics. Members of the UAC 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. Please review the Annual Report of the UAC to see what this committee did last year.
10. 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.
11. Please also ensure that within your unit student-athletes are treated the same as other students: no better and **certainly no worse**. This is the essence of academic integrity: fairness for all.
12. One area where I continue to find student-athletes are being mistreated is in terms of the requirement that they miss class while representing the university competing in their sports. These missed classes should be university excused absences and should not hurt their grades. These students should be allowed to makeup the missed work with a comparable assignment and the absences should not count against the total absences allowed. We have an especially large problem with missed-class time because of the travel demands in Conference USA with its large geographic footprint.
13. The UAC, the Department of Athletics, and Conference USA have been working to minimize missed-class time of student-athletes because of competition, but it continues to be a problem. Some of these efforts include the following:
 - The Department of Athletics class attendance policy for student-athletes implemented by Terry Holland. This policy makes very clear how important academic success of student-athletes is to our athletic department colleagues. This is a zero tolerance policy meaning student-athletes should not have unexcused absences.

- The resolution passed by this body last year asking C-USA to consider strategies to minimize missed-class time. This has already resulted in the Commissioner of C-USA placing minimizing missed classes as the second most important factor to consider in scheduling decisions after the fairness of the schedule.
 - C-USA has initiated a visiting student program whereby student-athletes traveling to other C-USA institutions for competition will be granted visiting student status meaning they will have access to libraries, computers, and faculty members to proctor exams, and other academic resources to enable them to keep up with their studies while away from campus.
 - Working locally to create non-conference schedules that minimize miss-class time. Our coaches and athletic administrators control the non-conference scheduling. We cannot ask C-USA to do what we don't do.
14. I think it is important to note that all of these efforts were initiated by ECU. We are leading C-USA in addressing this problem and finding ways to make improvements. This will continue to be an area of focus for the UAC and we have plenty more work to do. In the meantime there are some things that you and your faculty colleagues can do to help.
15. Although most faculty members willingly work with student-athletes to effectively manage their missed-class time while representing the university, some do not treat the student-athletes fairly. For example:
- Some faculty members give them make-up assignments that are not comparable.
 - Some require that any missed exams or assignments count as the lowest grade that can then be dropped.
 - Some do not honor the university excused absence policy at all and count all absences for whatever reason as unexcused, and once the maximum allowable missed classes has been reached, lower the student's grade.
 - Some do not allow students to take quizzes and exams early or make them up and require that students take a comprehensive final exam that then may be worth a large percentage of the course grade.

These situations cause student-athletes to be punished for something they cannot control. They do not choose to miss class;

they are required to miss class to represent the university. This is an example of an excused absence.

16. Most of the time these problems occur because the faculty member doesn't understand the university excused absence policy. Please be sure faculty members in your unit understand the policy this body passed last year. Please help faculty members in your unit to understand the importance of following the policy. Please help faculty members in your unit to recognize that student-athletes have no choice in the matter. Please help faculty members in your unit to understand that the vast majority of student-athletes work hard to be successful academically and will work with them to make up missed work. Please help the faculty members in your unit to recognize the importance of treating student-athletes fairly. This education effort on your part will help considerably.
17. I believe that with all things considered, we are in good shape here with our athletics program. 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 just need to keep working to make sure this process works.
18. I want to conclude my report today with a quick review of how our student-athletes are doing academically. They do well for the most part, but they could do better. A quick review of the report from the Academic Integrity Subcommittee, which is before you and on the Faculty Senate website, reveals that as compared to the overall student body at ECU our student-athletes are doing well. Please review that report for specifics. Please note that I included similar data from two previous years for comparison.

Let me highlight just a few of the academic accomplishments of student-athletes this past academic year:

- ECU ranked third in Conference USA with 158 student-athletes named to the Commissioner's Honor Roll (requiring a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better).
- ECU ranked second in Conference USA with 35 student-athletes winning Commissioner's Academic Medals (requiring a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or better).
- There are 12 student-athletes who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 4.0.
- Ms. Terri Davenport from the women's track team won a C-USA Postgraduate Scholarship (\$4000).

- Ms. Sarah Hunt from the women's swimming team and Ms. Heidi Krug from the volleyball team were selected Scholar Athlete of the Year Award Winners. C-USA Scholar Athlete of the Year awards are presented to the top student-athlete in each conference-sponsored sport. The award is based on academic achievement, athletic achievement, and community service.
- ECU with an overall average GPA of (2.805) for student-athletes is sixth in C-USA out of 12 institutions.
- The ECU women's golf team with a team GPA of 3.575 won the C-USA Sport Academic Award. They also won the conference championship in golf.
- And while spending all the time they do on academics and athletics, our student-athletes managed to contribute over 3400 hours (2004-2005: 3122 hours) of community service.

This academic success can be attributed first to the student-athletes, the vast majority of whom are committed to being the best students they can be, and second to Ms. Nita Boyce and her staff in the student development office, who do an impressive job providing academic support to student-athletes.

19. Finally, 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 all have an essential role to play in the continued successful integration of athletics into the overall educational mission of this university.
20. Thanks for your attention. Are there any questions?