

Athletic Council:

Annual Report, 2000-2001

The Athletic Council for 2000-2001 consisted of the following members: Greg Pfitzer (chair and faculty representative), Viviana Rangil (faculty), Eric Weller (Fall 2000, faculty; replaced in Spring 2001 by Mary Correa, faculty), Chuck Joseph (for the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty), Don Hastings (for the Dean of Student Affairs), Rebecca Booker (student, '03) and Ned Merrick (student, '02). Tim Brown, Athletic Director, served as an ex-officio (non-voting) member of the Council and was replaced during his sabbatical by Assistant Athletics Director, Katherine De Lorenzo. Committee meetings were attended regularly as well by student interns Mary Meager and Scott Backer and by Women's Basketball and Softball Coach, Erika Gillis.

The committee is charged in the faculty handbook with recommending to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty policies regarding the Skidmore athletic program, "including the determination of the scope and level of competition in intercollegiate, club, and intramural sports; eligibility rules; establishment of priorities for the athletic program; and such other matters as may be brought to the Council's attention by the Athletic Director or by any of the constituent groups of the college community."

The Athletic Council met monthly (and on occasion twice a month) throughout the academic year 2000-2001 to discuss issues related to the faculty mandate outlined above. Below is a brief summary of the most important of matters discussed in the first and second semesters.

NCAA Self-Study

The Athletic Council spent time in its fall meetings discussing the "NCAA Division III: Institutional Self-Study Guide to Enhance Integrity in Intercollegiate Athletics." The study is designed to assist colleges in assessing the role of athletics in an institution's educational mission. It contains many thought-provoking questions related to "Institutional Purpose and Athletics Philosophy," "Principles of Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct," "Institutional Control and Accountability of Athletics Program Finances," "Sports Medicine," etc. The Athletic Council reviewed and endorsed answers provided by the Athletics Department to questions posed in the guide and helped formulate institutional responses to broader, all-college issues.

An area of concern prompted by these discussions and carried over into regular business of the Council was gender-equity. Skidmore completed a Gender-Equity Survey in 1998, addressing matters of participation in sports by male and female students, revenues and

Much of the spring term was devoted to consideration of a proposal made by Jon Ramsey for "Clarifying and Modifying Academic Eligibility Standards for Skidmore Student Athletes." Dean Ramsey has been working for a number of years on this proposal designed to help students "balance the commitments of time and discipline required for academic and athletic success." The report raises important issues relevant to the work of the Athletic Council and asks questions such as: "Exactly how will we apply NCAA Division III eligibility policies when a student athlete is in serious academic jeopardy--that is, either on 'probation' or not meeting 'minimal continuation standards'?" "By what means, and by whose authority, will we decide on an individual athlete's eligibility to practice and compete?" and "What is the best balance of time commitments between a student's academic and athletic endeavors? What is the best strategy for achieving academic success when the student athlete is in serious academic jeopardy?"

The committee discussed at length these important questions and recommended to Dean Ramsey that he continue with the practice that is currently operational by which the records of individual students in academic difficulty are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and where determinations of eligibility are made by the Dean of Studies office in compliance with NCAA guidelines in consultation with the Athletics Director. However, members of the Council felt strongly that any provision that would declare a student/athlete ineligible for intercollegiate athletics because of academic difficulties should be

Weller/Mary Correa, both of whom served the Council wonderfully this past year.

As outgoing chair, I would like to thank interns Mary Meager and Scott Backer for taking detailed minutes at our sometimes convoluted meetings. In addition, on behalf of the Athletic Council, I would like to extend best wishes to Katherine De Lorenzo and Erika Gillis who will be leaving Skidmore after this semester. Their hard work on behalf of the Athletic Council this year was appreciated greatly.

Respectfully Submitted

Greg Pfitzer, Chair (2000-2001)