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To: Faculty Senate

Re: Annual report on the activities of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Athletics and Physical Education.

Date: August 12, 2010

From: Susan P. Ashdown 

The committee met twice this year. As chair, I reviewed all of the travel schedules and leave times for the varsity teams. The Petition Review Committee (myself, Tom Brenna, and Jim Maas) reviewed and acted on petitions from students requesting exemption from the PE requirement and the swim test. Andrea Dutcher has created a system whereby bulk mailings will be sent to all non-freshman students who have not filled these requirements each semester, which we hope will decrease the number of problems with requirements.

The committee undertook a review of funding in response to the need for budget reductions. The many efficiencies introduced in the PE program were noted including addition of the PE classes to Faculty Center, electronic grading, online course evaluations, and automated bursar billing. Overall the committee felt that the appropriate level of reorganization and reduction of costs had been undertaken, and, given the importance of athletics as a point of connection with alumni and of physical education as a contribution to the well being of our students, that further funding cuts be closely reviewed. Meetings were held with Susan Murphy and Provost Fuchs to discuss this.

Issues with early morning practices for athletes and research based evidence of problems associated with sleep patterns of young adults were discussed. Informational meetings with coaches were organized to familiarize them with this research.

A review of the physical education and swim test requirements has been undertaken. The sub-committee assigned to this topic has completed a report including results from research on obesity and mental health.

Challenges to the committee include continuing review of budgets and support for athletics and physical education to ensure that our students are served in the best and most efficient way in this time of limited resources. It is clear from the meeting with the provost and subsequent communication that there is a difference in viewpoints on these matters; discussions with the provost will continue.

The committee will meet in fall semester for a general introduction of new members and discussion of two issues, the finalization of the review of physical education and the swim test with recommendations, and organization of a meeting with the Provost.