

Enhancing Campus Conductivity

Resources for Faculty Athletics Representatives to Engage in Conversations about Intercollegiate Athletics

At the 2016 FAR Fellows Institute, attendees heard for the first time about a report on the NCAA study of perceptions of college sports. The survey asked participants questions about whether they thought college sports provides opportunities for student-athletes, prioritizes student-athlete well-being, is committed to academics, and is committed to fairness. *In all cases, the lowest ratings for these questions were from faculty and staff.* In parsing out the data further, it was obvious that faculty had the least positive perception about the value of college sports. While ratings were generally higher for Division II faculty and staff, respondents still overwhelmingly thought that college sports, as an entity, is mainly motivated by making money. This suggests that the respondents are equating college sports with the NCAA.

For this reason, the steering committee for the 4th NCAA Division II FAR Advanced Institute determined that the focus should be on enhancing conductivity on campus – developing resources to initiate effective dialog with campus constituents about the value of college sports in the educational experience. Prior to the Institute, the team worked with Michael Miranda of the NCAA research department to develop a pilot survey aimed at investigating the faculty attitudes in more detail. This was administered to small groups of faculty on campuses of the Institute participants. Perceptions about the respondents' institutions were more favorable than their thoughts about the NCAA. This survey will be administered more widely in the future, but it provided useful information to guide our work during the Advanced Institute September 29-October 1, 2017.

Participants at the Institute included 17 faculty athletics representatives (including four FARs from the steering committee) and four Division II Student-Athlete Advisory Committee members. Amy Dunham, managing director of strategic communications at the NCAA, provided guidance for the participants as she discussed some critical talking points about a compelling direction for college sports:

Student-athletes finish school with more than just athletics experiences. In addition to emphasizing academic standards so student-athletes receive a quality education, playing college sports develops leadership, teamwork, discipline and resilience – skills that build success in the workplace and in life.

Participants considered ways to relay the NCAA priorities for student-athletes of academics, well-being, and fairness and the notion of providing college sports as a

pathway to opportunity. Four working groups were formed to draft components of a resource to build upon the [previous Advanced Institute products](#) and help FARs initiate strategic conversations with campus constituents.

As faculty members, FARs must first support the main mission of their college or university. But they can also help to communicate to different audiences how intercollegiate athletics aligns with the institution’s educational mission. This resource focuses on “enhancing conductivity on campus” – initiating effective dialog with campus constituents about the value of college sports in the educational experience. It is not meant to add work to the already long list of FAR duties, but rather, to help foster communication and build trust with the various stakeholders that FARs must routinely work with to effectively do their job.

This product contains sections that differ in style and focus, reflecting the need to approach different constituencies uniquely. Included are some case studies and scenarios with related talking points for teams of campus constituents to consider. In addition, there are some sample worksheets and discussion points in the appendices that FARs could apply with any group of stakeholders on campus.

Section I: FAR Relationships with Faculty

Section II: Communicating the Role of the FAR with University Administration

Section III: Engaging with the Athletics Department

Section IV: The FAR and Student-Athletes

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Section I. Faculty Athletics Representative Relationships with Faculty

Introduction

The presence of the student athlete (SA) at Division II institutions supports the objectives of the academic mission. The values associated with athletics participation include passion, leadership, dedication to community, teamwork and persistence. Specific *benefits to the individual* student-athlete are the development of discipline, maturity, tolerance and time management. Specific *benefits to the institution* consist of the positive impact of SAs in classroom, on brand, graduation rates, retention, community service, institutional visibility, alumni connections, and campus spirit and camaraderie ([NCAA, "Value of College Sports"](#)). FARs should actively strive to communicate these benefits to other faculty, while also creating procedures and ensuring the availability to work with faculty on difficult cases involving student-athletes. While there are some serious concerns associated with athletics, the high-profile violations of NCAA regulations and reports of other disturbing issues involving student-athletes or athletics staff, should not distort or dominate the reality of the value of athletics. FARs can also help facilitate frank conversations about concerns that exist about college sports and work with the campus community to consider potential solutions to such challenges.

Benefits from Participation for the Student-Athlete

Student-athletes are well known for their time management skills, strong work ethic, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline and maturity. Additionally, they develop a lifetime pattern of health and wellness. Further, through their teams they cultivate a respect for people from diverse religious, ethnic and national origin backgrounds. In competition, they often meet SAs from other geographical regions and benefit from these contacts and experiences. They develop a collective identity as well as understand the possibility of possessing multiple identities – student, athlete, teammate, captain, community volunteer. This is particularly notable at the beginning of their collegiate career when a team's orientation and support help the student's acclimation to college life. Division II SAs are more likely to be first generation students than either DI or DIII ([NCAA, "Research, First in their Family"](#)). Student-athletes are afforded opportunities to earn scholarships, helping to increase retention rates. The experience of an intercollegiate athletics experience along with an education offer immeasurable value in terms of generating mutual respect, creating a sense of unity and understanding that otherwise would not be possible for many students.

Participation in athletics can introduce student-athletes to career opportunities, not only through alumni, but also various NCAA internships and postgraduate scholarships (e.g., <http://www.ncaa.org/ncaa-postgraduate-scholarship-program>).

The benefits of athletics participation then establish a platform for lifelong well-being. The [Gallup-Purdue Index Report](#) entitled “Understanding Life Outcomes of Former NCAA Student-Athletes” highlights that former student-athletes thrive at various dimensions of well-being that surpass the general post-collegiate population. These include purpose, social, community and physical well-being. Especially notable is the willingness of former student-athletes to contribute to the community, thereby creating social capital and civic trust. Additionally, their heightened sense of purpose enables them to achieve higher levels of workplace engagement than former non-student-athletes. Not only is the former student-athlete more content in and passionate about the workplace, but such attitudes probably contribute to the employers’ success and co-workers’ happiness.

Benefits for the Academic Classroom

Faculty members benefit from student-athlete enrollment in their courses. They often bring to the classroom higher GPAs than non-student-athletes, suggestive of their maturity, discipline and work ethic. While they might miss class for competitions in season, they nonetheless tend to be active participants who are willing to take risks and share ideas about assignments and readings. They frequently serve as group leaders and are well positioned to lead a team, knowing how to identify the assets other individuals bring to the group. Their outgoing nature and energy is a plus. Their peers often look to them for guidance, and they can serve as a powerful role model. They bring the life of the campus into the classroom, sharing experiences of games and practices. To the extent an institution is relatively homogeneous, student-athletes might introduce diversity of perspective, class or ethnicity.

A valuable reference about student-athletes and academic integrity was published by the American Council on Education in 2016: [The Student Athlete, Academic Integrity, and Intercollegiate Athletics](#).

Benefits for the Institution:

Athletes represent the institution, and the general public often associates a university with its athletics programs. Athletics can support collegiate traditions, connect with alumni and motivate potential donors. Further, athletics often helps attract potential students and then retain enrolled students ([NCAA, "Division II"](#)). Participation in athletics introduces SAs to a specific support network on campus that can include coaches, trainers and athletics academic staff, thereby potentially relieving demand on other campus services. This is especially notable in relation to the collegiate adjustment process, during which participation on a team can help ease the transition from high school to college.

The Role of the FAR in the Communication of the Value of Athletics

One of the responsibilities of the FAR is to communicate the benefits of athletics to the faculty. The FAR's emphasis should include the significance of athletics to the institutional mission. The FAR further must tie the presence of student-athletes to the success of the institution. Effective means of communication include: speaking at new faculty orientation, reporting at faculty meetings, suggesting syllabi guidelines for SA absences, periodic email reminders of relevant policies, establishing positive relationships across department faculties, and particularly connecting with adjuncts regarding institutional policies and expectations related to athletics. While the FAR should be careful to maintain their focus in the faculty and remain independent from the athletics program, they still might participate in the promotion of faculty involvement in athletics such as faculty attendance at sports events. An important role of the FAR is to explain NCAA policies related to eligibility and compliance to faculty colleagues and advisors. FARs also can share NCAA resources, policies, and opportunities with other faculty members. For example, recent publications on SA well-being, mental health, concussions and sexual assault can be informative to all faculty members. Additionally, the FAR should work with other faculty members to identify and assist SAs in the application for NCAA postgraduate fellowships, graduation completion scholarships and internships ([NCAA, "What We Do: Academics"](#)).

To communicate well with faculty members, the FAR must maintain a regular relationship with the school's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, the academic advisors, coaches, and the athletics academic advisors (where present). In this way, the FAR becomes a channel of understanding between athletics and academics, thereby best serving the SAs, as the FAR communicates the benefit of athletics for the academic mission. SAs also gain understanding of the FAR resource and value for their own academic success. FARs possess the knowledge to convey to SAs the variety of academic resources available including tutoring, writing centers, academic advising, counseling services, career services, accommodations center and scholarship services. The role of FARs, however, is limited; FARs should not interfere in faculty grading decisions, investigate sexual harassment, or the internal workings of the athletics department.

The FAR and Academic-Athletics Conflicts

While athletics benefits an academic institution, instances of academic-athletics conflict may develop. The FAR should maintain institutional integrity and academic primacy in these cases. Such an approach is not only consistent with the FAR's role but additionally will maintain the FAR's legitimacy, credibility and independence. The preferable approach is to actively establish policies and procedures, but some cases will occur which the FAR must mediate.

One issue involves the costs of Division II athletics programs. While the FAR might not have sufficiently detailed financial information to defend athletics spending, the

FAR can explain the benefits of these programs for students and the institution. Reports such as “Understanding Life Outcomes of Former NCAA Student Athletes,” and *Champion Magazine’s* “Debunked” (Winter 2015), as well as the institutional ASRs can provide evidence for the benefits. FARs also can identify SA average GPAs and retention rates.

A second issue is the objective of guaranteeing equal access to all majors and courses for SAs. SAs should not be asked or required to change a major or delay a course due to practice. Coaches should not be involved in academics and course selection. FARs should assure faculty members and advisors that this is not an appropriate role of coaches, and under such instances the FAR should be contacted. (Likewise, SAs should inform FARs under such circumstances.)

Additional information FARs should share with faculty colleagues involves the many demands that SAs must juggle, including practice, classes, study, work and volunteering ([NCAA, "Health and Safety"](#)).

FARs increasingly understand that most SAs lack sufficient sleep. FARs also should be prepared to explain to faculty members best practices associated with “return to learn” (and advocate if necessary) for students who suffer concussions ([NCAA, Sports Science Institute, "Concussion"](#)). On campuses where trainers contact faculty members regarding injured SAs, the FAR should be copied so that they are positioned to answer questions.

Indeed, given the many demands of SAs, they might need preferential treatment for registration, absences or exams. Depending upon the specific situation at an institution, FARs might advocate for policies for SAs. Perhaps at certain institutions it is wise to suggest such policies apply not only to SAs but to other students who have extensive and intensive commitments to the institution. When such preferences are not available, the FAR should seek solutions with individual faculty members in cases where SAs need to enroll in a filled course, miss a class or lab, or miss an exam. Solutions might include offering to proctor an exam, or contacting the FAR at another institution to proctor an exam in cases in which the SA will be traveling for competition.

In all these instances, the FAR should realize that Division II supports life in the balance, and opportunities for both athletics and academic development. Moreover, the work of the FAR varies depending upon the resources of the athletics department and the context. FAR responsibilities and the relationship with the faculty will differ given whether the institution is large/small, public/private, liberal arts/professional, commuter/residential, and reporting lines. *FARs must maintain life in the balance, too!* In this case it is the balance between athletics and academics. How do FARs maintain their independence from athletics departments but maintain their approachability for SAs? FARs might hold some office hours in

the athletics building. They also might attend preseason compliance meetings, practices, student-athlete awards ceremonies, and competitions. FARs should keep at the forefront, however, the focus on institutional integrity, the academic mission and SA well-being.

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Section II: Communicating the Role of the FAR with University Administration

The faculty athletics representative plays a key role in ensuring the academic integrity of the intercollegiate athletics program at every NCAA college or university, facilitating institutional control of intercollegiate athletics and enhancing the student-athlete experience. As neither a member of the athletics department nor the institution's administration, the FAR holds a unique position as an independent voice in the management and oversight of college athletics.

Articulating the Role of the FAR

The FAR is empowered by the NCAA to participate in administrative processes that affect the student-athlete experience. The specific scope of duties and responsibilities vary across divisions and institutions, just as institutions themselves vary in the composition of their administration. Often the largest challenge for the FAR and institution is to define the means by which the FAR can best advocate for the student-athletes, faculty, and mission of the university or college. In order to represent these constituencies, the FAR should be in constant communication with appropriate administrative offices and personnel.

Common to all FARs is that they ultimately report to the president or CEO of their respective institutions. Beyond this, however, the complex structures and channels of the administration can be difficult to navigate. Nonetheless, the FAR should be communicating with a number of constituencies within the administration and directly involved in decision-making processes. There is no ideal model for how the FAR should be communicating with the administration, nor is there a single method determining the FAR's role in university governance.

The Worksheet

Much of the work of the FAR is articulating the formal and informal roles, responsibilities and expectations within their institutions. The worksheet below provides a template for better defining the unique position of the FAR at your institution within the unique organization of your administration. The worksheet also offers possible models for initiating effective communication with and across appropriate administrative entities.

Complete the worksheet by answering the following questions about six "offices" in administration that are most frequently represented in varying forms in the management of intercollegiate athletics:

- President/CEO
- Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

- Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students
 - Enrollment Management
 - Communications/Public Relations
 - Social Equity/Title IX/ Diversity
- What is the org chart of your institution? How do the six administrative offices report to and communicate with one another?
 - Who does the athletics director report to? How often? In what form?
 - Which office speaks most frequently when it comes to athletics and/or student-athlete concerns?
 - Within each office, who speaks most frequently when it comes to athletics and/or Student-athlete concerns?
 - How familiar is each office with the role and duties of the FAR at your institution?
 - What are each office's expectations for the role and duties of the FAR in effectively overseeing the concerns of athletics and/or student athletes?
 - What resources and information can you provide to help these administrative offices more effectively do their job as it pertains to athletics? To student-athlete concerns?
 - In what ways is each office not communicating with the FAR? In what ways is each office not communicating with each other about concerns related to athletics and/or student-athletes?
 - How often does each office discuss athletics positively? How often does an office discuss athletics or student-athletes negatively, or only in the context of damage control?

Discussion Points for Communicating Effectively with University Administration

The answers to the above questions will help articulate the role, as well as opportunities, of the FAR within the administration at your university. Below you will find a list of topics that are frequently points of communication between FARs and the six administrative offices. Whether these topics are relevant or appropriate to the FAR at your institution will depend on the answers you have provided above. Additionally, the following topics of communication do not represent a “to do” list for the FAR. Rather, they are discussion points designed to foster possibilities for further involvement and exchange. Many of these topics are relevant across multiple offices. Likewise, some are regularly addressed in formal structures, such

as committees or scheduled reports, while others will be covered in informal meetings and conversations.

- Office of the President
 - * Legislation (NCAA, conference, university policies)
 - * Student-athlete well-being
 - * Compliance/institutional integrity
 - * Academic integrity
 - * Campus initiatives as they pertain to athletics and/or student-athletes
 - * Reporting student-athlete academic success
 - * Share the FARA resource entitled “[What College Presidents Need to Know About FARs](#)”

- Provost/VP of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer
 - * Academic integrity
 - * Academics-athletics balance
 - * Priority registration (conflict resolution scheduling)
 - * Course offerings/scheduling conflicts
 - * Retention and persistence
 - * Academic programming/curriculum
 - * Advising
 - * Academic support services for student-athletes

- VP of Student-Affairs/Dean of Students
 - * Student discipline/conduct
 - * Inclusion/diversity
 - * Housing/meals
 - * Student-athlete health
 - * International students
 - * Retention/persistence
 - * Advising
 - * Practice and/or competition facilities

- Enrollment Management
 - * Admissions
 - * Financial aid
 - * Recruitment
 - * Progress toward degree
 - * International students
 - * Transfer certification

- Communications and Public Relations
 - * Visibility of student-athlete academic success
 - * Visibility of student-athlete community involvement
 - * Visibility of faculty engagement with student-athletes
 - * Boosters/foundation activities
 - * Relations with local media

- Social Equity/Title IX/ Diversity
 - * Recruitment of faculty, staff and students
 - * Compliance (Title IX, EEOC, Affirmative Action)
 - * Student-athlete well-being/inclusion
 - * Educational programs (diversity awareness, sexual harassment training, Safe Zone training, etc.)
 - * Investigations

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Section III: Engaging with the Athletics Department

The effective functioning of the FAR depends on having positive working relationships with various constituencies across campus. The relationship between the FAR and the athletics department is especially crucial. FARs should connect regularly with different members of the athletics department, including the director of athletics, senior woman administrator, coaches, student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC) president, director of compliance, sports information director, and the athletic training staff.

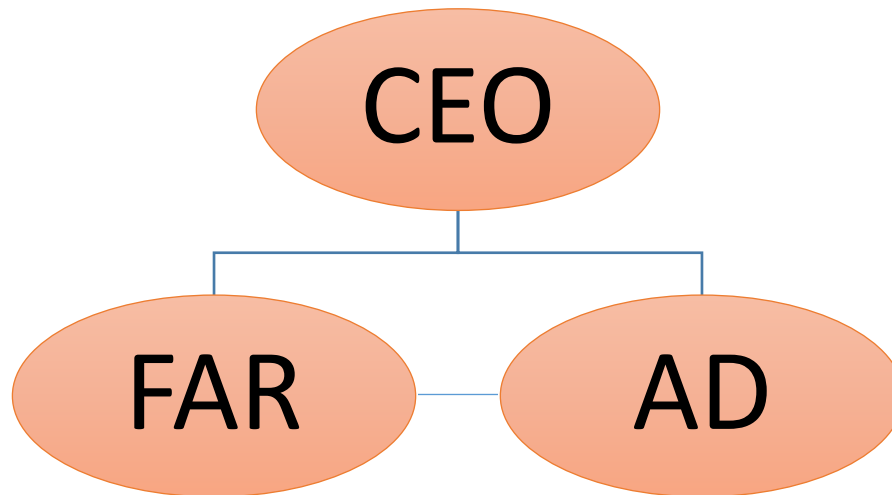


The relationship is different between the FAR and each of the members of the athletics department. However, each of these relationships must involve a mutual understanding of roles and expectations, as well as the mutual support, of the FAR and the members of the athletics department. This section will explain the importance of these relationships, provide talking points to facilitate conversations and relationship development, and offer some case studies to prompt discussion of these important issues.

Director of Athletics

The director of athletics (AD) is the face of athletics and oversees the other roles in the athletics department. The AD sets the tone for the culture of the athletics department as it supports the student-athletes and the overall mission of the university. The FAR is responsible for advocating for the interests of student-

athletes, which involves working closely with the AD in maintaining a sound academic culture. The relationship between the FAR and AD is a primary focus and can be depicted as the foundation of a triangle with the university CEO serving as the apex.



There are several opportunities for FARs to collaborate with ADs in enhancing the overall success of student-athletes. For example, the FAR and AD should meet regularly to discuss various concerns between academics and athletics. One topic of discussion is faculty concerns. It is the responsibility of the FAR to inform the AD of valid concerns of the faculty in order to address the coaching staff, as needed. In addition, a discussion on the concerns of the SAAC, as well as concerns of individual student-athletes, should be examined. Further discussion could be related to problems between coaches and student-athletes. In addition to bringing forward concerns to the AD, the FAR should also listen to concerns brought forward by the athletics department. Among those already listed, an active and continued conversation about items discussed at conference and NCAA meetings regarding implementation of needed changes or enhancement of strengths is a necessary part of this relationship. In all of these discussions, it is important for the FAR to maintain a perspective that is independent from that of the AD so as to avoid perceptions of bias. FARs must maintain their independence as they collaborate with the AD.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Meet regularly with the AD
- Inform the AD of valid faculty concerns
- Discuss student-athlete concerns
- Listen to the concerns of the AD
- Discuss items from conference and NCAA meetings

- Maintain independence to avoid the perception of bias

Senior Woman Administrator

The NCAA defines the senior woman administrator (SWA) as “the highest ranking female in each NCAA athletics department or member conference...The designation is intended to enhance representation of female experience and perspective” at the institution (<http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/senior-woman-administrator>). The relationship between the FAR and the SWA can be important insofar as it pertains to matters involving compliance, student-athlete eligibility, gender equity, and/or student-athlete well-being.

The FAR should meet with the SWA to provide another line of communication for the SWA to express her views regarding strengths and challenges of the athletics program. The FAR and SWA should meet as necessary to maintain an open line of communication involving this important voice from the athletics department.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Establish an open line of communication with the SWA
- Encourage the sharing of ideas regarding compliance, student-athlete eligibility, gender equity, and student-athlete well-being

Coaches

Coaches are an excellent source of mentorship for the student-athletes on their teams. The FAR and coaches should collaborate regarding the well-being of student-athletes. The FAR should meet with coaches to discuss administrative and academic policies at the university, conference and national level. FARs should be encouraged to attend athletics department meetings in order to foster two-way communication. FARs and coaches should communicate about the new Online Coaches Education Program available via Division II University on NCAA.org. This new system replaces the previous coaches recruiting exam and will be the standard for providing education related to recruiting and student-athlete well-being in the future. Additionally, FARs should talk with coaches about establishing a protocol for student-athlete absences before they occur, and FARs should educate coaches on the advising process and the implications for compliance and student-athlete eligibility.

The most recent [FAR Study Report](#) found that “most FARs believe that their coaches behave ethically and have the SA’s best interests in mind. However, they believe that their coaches do not always listen to what their SAs have to say” (Supplemental Tables 55a – 55g, FAR Study Report).

Recommendations for FAR:

- Discuss administrative and academic policies at the university, conference and national level
- Attend athletics department meetings
- Communicate about the new Online Coaches Education Program
- Educate regarding the effects of advising student-athletes

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) President

The relationship between the FAR and SAAC president is vital to the FAR's role as an advocate for student-athletes because it helps the FAR understand the perspective of the student-athletes. Beyond understanding the student-athlete voice, the FAR is the link to pathways of opportunity for student-athletes. The FAR has the opportunity to inspire dialogue about the relationships the student-athlete population may have among each other, as well as the student body as a whole. FARs should also discuss the need for developing life and professional skills (e.g., resume building, mental well-being, university deadlines, NCAA regulations, communication etiquette), as well as scholarship and other developmental opportunities. FARs should also ask about student-athlete achievements that may not be recognized (e.g., internships, research, scholarships, other successes) to showcase the diverse achievements of student-athletes and their impact on the university as a whole. Feedback should be sought by asking whether the advising needs of student-athletes are being met. Lastly, to enhance faculty and athletics relationships the FAR can help SAAC in the recognition of faculty and their support for student-athletes.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Advocate for student-athletes
- Provide pathways of opportunity for student-athletes
- Discuss the need for developing life and professional skills
- Showcase the diverse achievements of student-athletes and their impact on the university
- Foster the recognition of faculty for their support for student-athletes

Director of Compliance

Compliance officers work to ensure the integrity and fairness of athletics programs in accordance with NCAA guidelines and legislation. FARs and compliance officers must work closely together to monitor the academic progress and eligibility status of student-athletes. In order for the FAR and compliance officer to work together, they must have an understanding of each other's duties and responsibilities, including standard operating procedures for academic and financial reporting. Another component of the relationship between the FAR and director of compliance is the reporting of NCAA violations. As the legislative expert of the athletics department, the director of compliance should educate the FAR on changes in

legislation and relevant information regarding the academic eligibility requirements of student-athletes. The FAR then serves as a check and balance to ensure accurate information is reported and all guidelines are being followed. By working together in this fashion, a feeling of trust and confidence in performance can be established.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Develop an understanding of each other's duties and responsibilities
- Become educated on changes in legislation and relevant information regarding the academic eligibility requirements of student-athletes.
- Serve as a check and balance
- Establish a feeling of trust and confidence

Sports Information Director (SID)

The relationship between the FAR and the SID is important to promote the academic achievements and professional communication of student-athletes. By working together, the SID and FAR can publicize the academic achievements of student-athletes, develop profiles of student-athletes who accomplish extraordinary things in and out of the classroom (e.g., internships, research projects, scholarships), provide examples of the positive influence of faculty on the success of student-athletes, and help student-athletes to produce positive social media messages and engage in effective professional communication with the faculty, administration, coaches, community members and members of the media.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Work with SID to publicize academic achievements and accomplishments of student-athletes and the influence of faculty on success
- Help student-athletes produce positive social media messages and effective professional communication

Athletic Training Staff

The athletic training staff is an integral component to the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes. When an athlete incurs an injury (e.g., concussion, debilitating injury, illness), it is important for the athletic training staff to communicate pertinent information to the appropriate campus office for student support and accommodations. It is a good idea if the FAR is included on communications regarding the athlete's prognosis, specifically "return to learn" status. In the event that a student-athlete must miss classes due to injury or illness, the FAR may play an important role in ensuring that the appropriate faculty are notified of such absences so that student-athletes receive fair treatment from faculty in terms of appropriate accommodations, including the opportunity to make up missed work. The importance of this is documented by the [CARE Consortium study](#) launched in 2014, which found that "student-athletes are

returning to play an average of 14.3 days after suffering a concussion.” This amount of time would be similar for returning to learn. The FAR should work with the athletic training staff to ensure the stepwise progression of returning to academics is followed as described in the guidelines developed by the [Sport Science Institute](#). The athletic training staff can also be a valuable asset in the education of faculty regarding the necessity of appropriate recovery time following certain injuries and illnesses. Developing a positive relationship between the FAR and athletic training staff can help facilitate this education. FARs are encouraged to initiate conversations with their athletic training staff to help develop these relationships in hopes of protecting the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes.

Recommendations for FAR:

- Advocate for fair treatment in the case absence of student-athletes due to injury or illness
- Assist in the education of faculty regarding recovery requirements
- Initiate conversations in order to protect the physical and mental well-being of student-athletes

CASE STUDY 1

Dr. Willy Nilly is the FAR at Raccoon University. During his time as the FAR, he has worked with two SIDs. In his efforts to promote the achievements of student-athletes at Raccoon University, Dr. Nilly suggested to the first SID that s/he publish a list of student athletes who were on the Dean's List of the various colleges. The SID responded to Dr. Nilly that publishing such a list was unnecessary because the various colleges already published their Dean's List that included the names of the various student athletes. Dr. Nilly replied that although the names of student-athletes were listed in the college Dean's Lists, their status as student-athletes was not indicated, so no one knew they were student-athletes. The SID still saw publishing a separate list for student-athletes as unnecessary and did nothing about it. Dr. Nilly did not offer any more suggestions to the SID and did little to work with him/her in the future. The first SID subsequently left and a new SID was hired. Dr. Nilly again approached the new SID about publishing a list of student-athletes who were on the Dean's List of the various colleges. The new SID thought it was a great idea and immediately published a list of student-athletes on the Dean's List and placed it on the athletics department website and also sent a press release to the local newspapers. The SID subsequently met with Dr. Nilly about other ideas to promote student-athletes, which led to several projects, including the production of student profiles for student-athletes who received prestigious scholarships. The SID and Dr. Nilly have a wonderful working relationship to the benefit of both the SID and the FAR.

Talking points:

1. What was the problem between Dr. Nilly and the first SID?
2. What, if anything, can be done to improve the relationship?
3. Why is the relationship between Dr. Nilly and the second SID better?
4. What is/are the differences between the two relationships?
5. How does a FAR build an ideal relationship with the SID?

CASE STUDY 2

Sally Ann and Junabeth are student-athletes on the bowling team at the University of Hard Box. They come into the training room every day before practice to get their wrists taped. While they are in the training room, they overhear a student-athlete talking to her peers about Professor Nit Picky giving her a zero on a major research paper that was due while they were attending an out-of-town competition. She tells her peers that she attempted to submit the assignment via email, but that the wifi at her hotel did not allow her to do so. Sally Ann and Junabeth notice that the student-athlete appears upset and stressed because she believes that the professor is going to fail her for the class. She goes on to say that she tried to talk to Professor Picky, but he told her his policy, as stated in his syllabus, is that if you miss the deadline for this major assignment (worth 50 percent of the course grade), you will receive a zero for the assignment and fail the course. She begins to cry and says that if she fails the course, she will be ineligible for competition next semester. Sally Ann and Junabeth encourage the student to talk to the FAR. They also report the conversation to the head trainer.

Talking points:

1. What is the responsibility of the FAR in this scenario?
2. What is the responsibility of athletic training staff?
3. What concerns about the well-being of the student-athlete are involved?
4. How should the FAR communicate with the professor? Why or why not?
5. What other athletics department members, if any, should be involved?

CASE STUDY 3

Ronald O is a member of the men's soccer team at Exit University. Ronald received a D in one of his courses in the spring semester, resulting in a semester GPA that made him ineligible for competition in the fall semester. Ronald talks to his professor and convinces him to allow him to do an extra-credit project to improve his grade, explaining that he needed an A to be eligible. The professor allows him to do an extra-credit project over the summer and subsequently changes his grade from a D to an A. The Dean of the college refuses to approve the grade change because the gap is too large in her opinion. The SWA, who is also the compliance officer, contacts the FAR to ask him what she should do about the grade change.

Talking points:

1. How should the FAR approach this request?
2. Should the FAR have a conversation with the professor? If so, what should they talk about? If no, why not?
3. Should the FAR talk to the student-athlete? If so, what should they talk about? If no, why not?
4. Should the FAR talk to the dean? If so, what should they talk about? If no, why not?
5. Who else, if anyone, should the FAR talk to about this? If so, what should they talk about?

CASE STUDY 4

The FAR is responsible for administering the annual survey regarding the culture that exists within the athletics department. The results of the survey identify serious concerns that student-athletes have with a particular head coach. The concerns include allegations of discrimination and unfair treatment. This is a sensitive matter because the coach is highly successful and is currently leading his team to a conference championship.

Talking Points:

1. How should the FAR address the results with the AD?
2. Should the FAR talk to the student-athletes on the team about the allegations? If so, how does the FAR protect the identity of student-athletes? If no, why not?
3. Should the FAR talk to the coach about the allegations? If so, how does the FAR protect the identity of student-athletes? If no, why not?
4. Should the FAR talk to anyone else?
5. How does the FAR fit into this situation?

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Section IV: FARS and Student-Athletes

Introduction

Student-athletes play an integral role on today's college and university campuses. They contribute to a vibrant campus life and in some cases are the lens through which many view the university. Yet it's crucial that guidance and direction be provided to student-athletes. FARs can help ensure and advocate for student-athlete well-being, academic integrity and fairness within the athletics department.

A fundamental concern of FARs is the well-being of student-athletes. To best serve the student-athletes, it is vital that FARs establish a high degree of visibility in order to develop and maintain a trusting relationship with student-athletes. Products from the [previous Division II FAR Advanced Leadership Institutes](#) have discussed the importance of the primacy of student-athlete well-being and strategies for effective communication with student-athletes.

Here are two scenarios that demonstrate the importance of maintaining visibility and establishing trust with student-athletes.

Scenario #1: Visibility Near and FAR

Dr. Sally is the FAR for Maggie University with an enrollment of 2,500 students. She is a professor in psychology who has been to one FARA convention, but that was four years ago. She does not have regular meetings with the university president. On this Friday, she encounters the president in the faculty dining room. Somewhat out of the blue the president asks her how the athletes are doing. Dr. Sally quickly responds that they are doing well. Later, as Dr. Sally reflects on the conversation, she realizes that she does not really know how they are doing.

As a member of the faculty, Dr. Sally has been very active, having multiple commitments in the university and community. She has not prioritized her relationships with the student-athletes. When she needs to get important input from them, Dr. Sally did not have any SAs to turn to.

What could Dr. Sally do to improve her relationship with student-athletes?

Improved visibility could lead to better relationships with student-athletes. If Dr. Sally had a stronger relationship with student-athletes, she would be in a better position to provide the president with timely information.

Scenario #2: Becoming a trusted advisor to student-athletes.

Senior nursing student Tom is missing a required clinical instruction due to his travel schedule for track and field competitions. This Friday, the team is leaving to compete in national qualifying meet. Tom gave notice to his nursing professor on Thursday before the Friday departure. Unfortunately, Tom has already missed two clinical instruction days, the maximum allowed under state nursing board requirements. Tom has two options. He can compete in the track meet this year and take the nursing course in the following year. But then he would not graduate on time. Second, Tom could skip the track meet and graduate on time this year.

Tom's coach instructs Tom to call Dr. Mike, the FAR for Trust University. Tom has never met Dr. Mike and doesn't understand how meeting with Dr. Mike will help him.

How can the FAR help Tom make this decision?

An improved relationship with student-athletes could lead to a greater degree of ***trust***. If Dr. Mike had a good personal relationship with the student-athlete prior to the present crisis, he would be in a much stronger position to help effectively. Since the decision is very difficult for Tom, having a trusted relationship with Tom would enable Dr. Mike to help him make that decision.

It has become increasingly clear that the roles of faculty athletics representatives are changing, as are the challenges that student-athletes are facing. Though student-athletes continue to present an array of issues both academically and athletically, the FAR must maintain visibility and establish trust to meet the demands. Student-athletes must be assured that their voices and concerns will be met with advocacy and resolve.

BECOME A MORE VISIBLE AND TRUSTED FAR

- Become more involved with SAAC, which provides an opportunity to meet student leaders in each sport.
- Attend athletics competitions, including occasional travel with teams.
- Take advantage of technology to engage with student-athletes. This might include social media or video chatting during SAAC meetings.
- Accompany student-athletes during community engagement activities.
- Set aside and publicize office hours for student-athletes.
- Post a video explaining the role of the FAR and how student-athletes can get in touch.
- Visit practice sessions or meet with teams.
- Monitor study hall.
- Congratulate student-athletes on their various accomplishments.

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Section 5 Appendices

**Appendix I:
Communicating the Role of FAR in Athletics Administration
The Worksheet**

Complete the worksheet by answering the following questions about six “offices” in the athletics department that are most frequently represented in varying forms in the management of intercollegiate athletics:

Athletics Director
SWA
Coaches
Director of Compliance
Sports Information Director
Athletic Training Staff

- ⇒ What is the org chart of the department of athletics? How do the six “offices” in the department report to and communicate with one another?
- ⇒ Who reports to the athletics director? How often? In what form?
- ⇒ Which office speaks most frequently when it comes to academics and/or Student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ Within each office, who speaks most frequently when it comes to academics and/or student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ How familiar is each office with the role and duties of the FAR at your institution?
- ⇒ What are each office’s expectations for the role and duties of the FAR in effectively overseeing the concerns of academics and/or student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ What strengths and information can you provide to help these athletics offices more effectively do their job as it pertains to academics and/or student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ In what ways is each office not communicating with the FAR? In what ways is each office not communicating with each other about concerns related to academics and/or student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ How often does each office discuss academics positively? How often does it discuss academics or student-athletes negatively, or only in the context of damage control?

Discussion Points for Communicating Effectively with University Administration

The answers to the above questions will help articulate the role, as well as opportunities, of the FAR within the department of athletics at your university. Below you will find a list of topics that are frequently points of communication between FARs and the six athletics offices. Whether these topics are relevant or appropriate to the FAR at your institution will depend on the answers you have provided above. Additionally, the following topics of communication do not represent a “to do” list for the FAR. Rather they are discussion points designed to foster possibilities for further involvement and exchange. Many of these topics are relevant across multiple offices. Likewise, some are regularly addressed in formal structures, such as committees or scheduled reports, while others will be covered in informal meetings and conversations.

Athletics Director

- ✓ Legislation (Conference and NCAA)
- ✓ Inclusion/GLBTQ Concerns
- ✓ Concussion Protocol
- ✓ Relationship with Coaches
- ✓ Campus Initiatives that pertain to athletics and/or student-athletes
- ✓ Campus and community outreach
- ✓ Practice and competition scheduling (travel and minimizing missed class time)
- ✓ Hiring/Search Committees
- ✓ Intercollegiate Athletics Advisory Board(s)
- ✓ Communication with Faculty/Faculty Leadership
- ✓ SAAC Activities
- ✓ Student Discipline/Conduct
- ✓ Eligibility/Certification/Progress Toward Degree
- ✓ Substance Abuse Policy / Drug Testing
- ✓ Booster/Foundation Activities
- ✓ Exit Interviews
- ✓ Academic Support for Student-Athletes
- ✓ Retention/Persistence/GPA
- ✓ Recognition of Student-Athlete Academic Success
- ✓ Missed class policy
- ✓ Scholarships/Funding
- ✓ International Students
- ✓ Student-Athlete Professionalization
- ✓ Coaches' Education
- ✓ Disability Accommodation
- ✓ Social Media Policies for Student-Athletes
- ✓ Social Media Policies

SWA

- ✓ Gender Equity/ Title IX Compliance
- ✓ Hiring/Search Committees
- ✓ Educational Programs (diversity awareness, sexual harassment training, Safe Zone training, etc.)
- ✓ GLBTQ Concerns
- ✓ Student-Athlete Professionalization
- ✓ Relationship with Coaches
- ✓ International Students
- ✓ Scholarships/Funding
- ✓ Hiring/Search Committees
- ✓ Legislation (Conference and NCAA)
- ✓ Mental Health

Coaches

- ✓ Missed Class Time
- ✓ Academic Advising
- ✓ Coaches' Education
- ✓ Communication with Faculty/Faculty Leadership
- ✓ Recruiting
- ✓ Student-Athlete Professionalization
- ✓ Eligibility/Certification/Progress Toward Degree
- ✓ GLBTQ Concerns
- ✓ Missed Class Policy
- ✓ Scholarships/Funding
- ✓ International Students
- ✓ Legislation (Conference and NCAA)
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Social Media Policy for Student-Athletes

Director of Compliance

- ✓ Eligibility/Certification/Progress Toward Degree
- ✓ Recruiting
- ✓ International Students
- ✓ Legislation (Conference and NCAA)
- ✓ Transfer Certification
- ✓ Disability Accommodation

Sports Information Director

- ✓ Recognition of Student-Athlete Academic Success
- ✓ Booster/Foundation Activities
- ✓ SAAC Activities
- ✓ Faculty/Student-Athlete Collaborations

- ✓ Relationships with Local Media
- ✓ Social Media Policy for Student-Athletes
- ✓ Social Media Policy for Coaches

Athletic Training Staff

- ✓ Concussion Protocol
- ✓ Substance Abuse Policy/Interventions
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Disability Accommodation
- ✓ Medical Coverage
- ✓ Student-Athlete Injury Rates
- ✓ Sleep

**Appendix II:
Communicating the Role of FAR with Faculty
The Worksheet**

Complete the worksheet by answering the following questions about the areas within the university faculty that are most frequently represented in varying forms in the management of intercollegiate athletics:

Faculty Senate/Executive Committee
Department Chairs
Academic Deans
Disability Support Services
Curriculum Committee
Advising Center/Office
First-Year Experience / “Bridge” or “At Risk” Coordinators
Faculty-Athletics Advisory Board

- ⇒ What is the organizational chart of each academic area or faculty group? How does each area or group report to and communicate with one another about athletics and/or student-athlete concerns?
- ⇒ Which area or group speaks most frequently when it comes to athletics and/or student-athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ Within each area, who speaks most frequently when it comes to athletics and/or student athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ How familiar is each area or group with the role and duties of the FAR at your institution?
- ⇒ What are each area’s expectations for the role and duties of the FAR in effectively overseeing the concerns of athletics and/or student athlete academic concerns?
- ⇒ What information can you provide to help these academic areas or faculty groups more effectively do their jobs concerning athletics and/or student athlete concerns?
- ⇒ In what ways is each academic area *not* communicating with the FAR? In what ways is each area not communicating with each other about concerns related to athletics and/or student athlete concerns?
- ⇒ How often does each area or group discuss athletics positively? How often does it discuss athletics or student athletes negatively, or only in the context of damage control?