

The Highly Engaged FAR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CAMPUS

These recommendations are endorsed by the Division III Presidents Council, Management Council, the Division III FAR Engagement Working Group and the Faculty Athletics Representative Association (FARA) Executive Committee. These groups firmly believe a highly engaged FAR will contribute to furthering the central goal of a Division III athletics department — ensuring the best student-athlete experience possible. Despite differences in institutional resources and missions, all Division III campuses can benefit from enhancing the role of the FAR and incorporating the suggestions contained in this document.

The Division III FAR ...

- Helps to ensure a quality student-athlete experience and promote student-athlete well-being.
- Serves as an independent advocate for student-athletes.
- Helps promote student-athlete success in the classroom, in athletics, and in the community by striking a balance among academic excellence, athletics competition, and social growth as students prepare for lifelong success.
- Assists in the oversight of intercollegiate athletics at the campus and conference levels to assure that they are conducted in a manner designed to protect and enhance the physical, psychological, and educational well-being of student-athletes.
- Oversees the nominations of student-athletes for NCAA grant, scholarship and recognition programs.

What Stands in the Way of a Highly Engaged Division III FAR?

- Approximately 50 percent of Division III FARs lack a clear position description with enumerated responsibilities and support. They also lack endorsement by key stakeholders (e.g. presidents and chancellors, conference commissioners, directors of athletics), which is not conducive to an engaged FAR.
- FAR compensation and/or time-release is rare in Division III with approximately 5 percent receiving release time from teaching obligations and 11 percent receiving some financial compensation. A highly engaged FAR provides value to the institution. Compensation and/or time release helps affirm that value.
- Approximately three-quarters of Division III FARs spend between one and five hours per week on their FAR duties. More than 90 percent spend 10 hours or less. Half of their time is spent on academically related issues and approximately one-quarter of their time on student-athlete well-being issues. If recommendations in this document are implemented, the amount of time FARs spend on their duties may increase.
- Approximately half of all Division III FARs have been in their position for four years or less. High turnover rates inhibit the effectiveness of FARs. There are multiple reasons including term limits, rotating appointments, and that the role of FAR may not count toward the service requirement for faculty. This lack of consistency has broad impacts at the campus, conference, and national levels in terms of engagement.
- Nearly half of FARs are not involved in the campus-level Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. There are a number of potential reasons: 1) scheduling conflicts with meetings, 2) the director of athletics being reluctant to ask FARs to be more engaged, 3) coaches taking a more prominent role in the campus-level Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and 4) Student-Athlete Advisory Committee involvement not being a defined role for the FAR on some campuses.
- There is no consistency in the reporting lines for Division III FARs. Current reporting lines include the president or chancellor (38%), the director of athletics (22%), chair of the faculty governance body (11%), the chief academic affairs administrator (9%) and the chief student affairs administrator (8%), among others. This stands in contrast to Divisions I and II, where 80 percent or more of FARs report to the president or chancellor.

Recommendations for Division III Member Institutions

The institution is called on to establish clearly stated expectations, best practices, potential policies and education for the FAR. It involves ensuring presidential leadership and a commitment to provide necessary support for the position (e.g., release time and a stipend), both of which are vital to the success of these efforts. Directors of athletics and conference commissioners also can help to support more FAR engagement.

Specifically, institutions are encouraged to:

1. Ensure the FAR has a detailed position description. Using already established position descriptions and the model position description advocated by FARA.
2. Ensure the FAR reports to the president/chancellor or the athletics direct report (ADR). To carry the authority necessary to fulfill the position’s obligations, the FAR should report to the highest-level campus leader possible. Considering the need for the FAR’s independence as an advocate for student-athletes, the FAR should report to someone other than the director of athletics, although it is important for FARs to have strong working relationships with the director of athletics.
3. Review support for the FAR position on campus and evaluate options related to course release, financial compensation, and recognition of FAR service as fulfillment of campus service requirements. Support creates an additional incentive for faculty to pursue the position, increase the length of service, and increase the level of engagement.
4. Ensure the FAR maintains a high level of visibility on campus. To increase visibility in the athletics sphere, FARs should regularly attend athletics competitions, participate in special events, and contribute regularly to athletics department meetings. To ensure recognition of the FAR role among the faculty, FARs should participate and/or present at shared governance meetings (e.g., Faculty Senate) and engage in activities that facilitate communication between the faculty, the student-athletes, and the athletics department. Student-athletes, faculty, athletics staff and campus administrators should be able to easily identify the FAR and know how to contact him or her.
5. Commit to sustained FAR involvement with the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee on campus. It is an appropriate means for FARs to be better advocates for student-athletes.
6. Consider potentially appointing two FARs at your institution. This model has the potential to increase effectiveness, address attendance issues at key meetings and events, and lengthen tenure.
7. Commit to continuing professional development by supporting and encouraging your FAR to take advantage of educational and engagement opportunities via your conference and at the national level (e.g., the NCAA Convention, FARA Annual Meeting, the Division III FAR Institute).



A highly engaged FAR improves the quality of an athletics department and, more importantly, the student-athlete experience. The FAR serves as an important bridge between the academic and athletic components on campus, providing support and guidance for faculty, staff, and students regarding the athletics experience. Student-athletes have an important advocate in the FAR on academic issues and can ask questions and seek advice in balancing both their academic and athletic pursuits. Similarly, faculty members have a resource to better understand the student-athlete experience.

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