

The Highly Engaged FAR

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE

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). These groups firmly believe each Division III multisport conference should provide FARs with opportunities to formally express their thoughts and opinions with regards to conference policy and operations, especially as they impact the academic and personal well-being of student-athletes. The level and extent of the formal involvement of FARs in the activities of athletics conferences will vary. FARs should be considered for service as conference officers, have a role in the conference committee structure, and be involved in conference-level decision making.

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 at the conference level?

- An estimated two-thirds of Division III conferences identify FARs as a key constituent per the conference constitution or bylaws. All Division III conferences should identify FARs as a key constituent.
- Sixty percent (60%) of conferences identify a specific role for the FARs in the governance of the conference where they actively assist in the establishment of conference policy (e.g., propose policy, vote). Without an explicit role and expectations, it will be challenging to ensure the sustained impact of FARs at the conference level.
- In approximately 40 percent of conferences, there is a FAR Committee or Council with varying roles and responsibilities. The Committee or Council's role varies ranging from advisement of academic eligibility, integrity, and compliance issues to holding voting power on all conference matters, including representation by the chair of the Committee or Council on an executive-level conference group. Recognizing the diversity of Division III conferences, those that do want to improve engagement and the impact of their FARs should examine and delineate their roles and responsibilities.
- In 40 percent of Division III conferences, FARs hold a position at the same level or higher than directors of athletics and serve as chairpersons within the conference committee structure. To serve effectively as an independent advocate for student-athletes, all conferences should examine and consider the position FARs currently hold in conference affairs and strive for a proper balance.

Recommendations for Division III Multisport Conferences

The conference is called on to establish clearly stated expectations, best practices, potential policies and education for the FAR. This involves ensuring the conference commissioner and conference executive committee leadership are committed to providing necessary support for the FAR's role in the conference, both of which are vital to the success of these efforts. Directors of athletics and presidents and chancellors can help to support more FAR engagement at the conference level.

1. Codify in the conference bylaws the FAR's role in the conference governance structure.
2. Develop a model of information-sharing for conference FARs.
3. Develop a model to establish regular opportunities for conference FARs to meet, whether in-person or remotely.
4. Develop expectations related to the role the conference office should play in facilitating FAR engagement in conference affairs.
5. Ensure funds from the Strategic Initiative Conference Grant program are effectively being utilized for the professional development of FARs within the conference.



Our conference has a long history of FAR involvement. That group is a vital part of the governance structure of the American Rivers Conference. The faculty often has a different view of how a piece of legislation will affect a student-athlete from the academic side. As such, their vote is a formal one that is passed on to our Presidents Council to provide a multi-level view of the legislation. The FARs also can be called upon, through an Executive Committee, to help the commissioner rule on issues.

Chuck Yrigoyen, commissioner, American Rivers Conference

