Meeting Minutes of the Athletic Committee of the Faculty Senate

When: Friday, March 28, 2014 – called to order 12:05

Committee Members Present: Joe O’Kroy, Crystal Lanning, Thomas Pedersen, Sylvia Kehoe, Roger Ternes, Earl Blodgett, Gillian McDonald, David Zaske, Grace Coggio, Brian Schultz, Jennifer Willis-Rivera; Students and Community Members Present: Mike Schuenke, Kelsey Kuehnhold, Erica Emery, Rebecca Skelly, Candace Hoelzel, Kayla Donahue, Jonathan Danielson, Katy Dorn, Michael Bollinger, Dominic Riel, Ryan Tibbits

Where: Hagestad 131

I. Minutes from March 5, 2014, approved by consensus

II. Announcements
   • Crystal shared the season’s accomplishments of the Women’s Ice Hockey team

III. New Business
   • Roger reviewed an earlier Student Senate meeting concerning proposed segregated fee increases. Dominic Riel said Student Senate wanted to do its part and passed a 5% increase; however, Roger said that an 11.7% increase would be needed to make up for the money Athletics lost due to cuts

IV. Continued on from the March 5 meeting that ended with #5 of the Considerations for Suspending the Swim and Dive Program (document with detailed information for each of the 8 considerations was distributed to those in attendance):

   #6. Contribution to broad based program.
      • Earl – We currently have nothing but community open rec hours. Suspending a sport does leave open the opportunity for its return and that has happened in the past with Men’s Track (Earl gave history), however, we had the advantage of a track we could practice on.
      Question: Would there be any way that interested students could form a competitive swimming club and are there area meets that would allow a collegiate club to compete?
      • David Zaske - There would be the opportunity for a competitive club because other teams have shown interest (closest is Eau Claire), but transportation and club fees would be an issue.
      • Dominic Riel - Because Student Senate funding is split between student orgs and student clubs on campus, financing a new club would be difficult (there are a large number of clubs). This year’s requests were 3x the funds available. Also, there is no recruitment value in a club sport.
#7. Effect on community involvement and service.
- Swim and Dive has participated previously with SAC community events, including Polar Plunge. Last year there were about 20 students who traveled for Polar Plunge.

#8. What are the enrollment implications, including impact on the university’s strategic enrollment goals?
- Roger - Three athletes transferred out when the team lost its coach last fall. Suspending the team would also have a negative impact on those who are now considering attending UWRF.
- Rebecca Skelly – A couple of athletes have already applied and been accepted to other schools. Also, I’m aware of some recruits coming in who liked our team over another team, but I know some wouldn’t come if we suspend Swim and Dive.
- Candace Hozel – If the team continues to be uncertain, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy
- Michael Bollinger - We have had 9 different recruits come out. They are only looking at schools with competitive swimming and diving programs. People looking at UWRFR might not be coming here specifically for Swim and Dive, but they are looking at us because we have a team. About ½ of the students come from WI and ½ from MN
- Earl – I only applied to one University. If UWRFR didn’t have Cross Country and Track at that time, I probably wouldn’t have applied here.
- Dominic Riel - Discussed the importance of alumni to UWRFR for enrollment and contributions, and that what connects you with a university is what you get involved in.
- Brian Schultz – Other schools in WIAC with comparable sports offerings have on average 3,000 more students, which provides more financial support for athletics than at UWRFR
- Earl – The thought of dropping men’s sports to 6 is distressing

V. Jennifer Willis-Rivera motioned to recommend to the Chancellor to suspend the Swim and Dive team, Joe O’Kroy seconded

VI. Further discussion:
- Dominic – Student Senate pushed strongly to stop the tuition freeze. There’s not a lot we can do, but we feel we have some control over fees
- Jennifer – This time there are no across the board cuts
- Earl – Are alumni a source of revenue?
- Roger – Enrollment gives a buffer to other schools, it’s becoming more difficult to get funds. We reach out to all athletic alum to join Falcon Club. We have exhausted those extra funds that were supposed to be for
special things and are now pulling them into the budget. Everything is being absorbed. It’s tough to endow a fund.

• Brian – I don’t trust state allocations at this point. What’s to say that in a year or two we won’t have to give back again. The state has a surplus, but we get cuts. I have to agree with Jennifer. A decision has to be made.

• Thomas – I have to trust what Athletics is saying about its budget. I believe it’s short sighted of the University to limit recruiting options, but my job on this committee is to look at making athletics work, and I see no other options than to go along with the recommendation

VII. After asking for any further debate, the Chair (Grace L. Coggio) called for a hand vote on the question to adopt the motion: We recommend to the Chancellor to suspend the Swim and Dive teams.

• The vote was 7 in favor, 3 opposed, and 0 abstaining

• The Chair explained the next steps, which included taking the recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate on April 2, then on to the Faculty Senate as a whole on April 9 before presenting it to the Chancellor

• Meeting adjourned at 12:51pm.