
Members Absent: Thomas Giffin, Mike Kelly, Larry Killough, David Lowe, Steve McMullin, Jessee Richardson, Sarah Thomas, Larry Taylor.

Representatives: Mercy Azeke for Candi Clemenz, Yalanda Bryant for Norrline Bailey Spencer, Bill Campion for Zenobia Hikes, Greg Reaves for Dixie Reaves, Melinda West for Dwight Shelton.

Guest Present: Shauna Cobb, Director of Compliance, Chris Helms, Director of Student Athlete Academic Support Services, Jon Jaudon, Associate Athletic Director, Administration.

Recorder: Joyce Wynn, Administrative Assistant, Athletic Department.

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Tour of Athletic Academic Support Services (Chris Helms)

- Chris Helms distributed a blueprint of Student Athlete Academic Support Services (SAASS). He acknowledged the freedom that was granted to SAASS to plan the space.
- This space supports many different learning environments – classrooms, private tutoring rooms, study halls, reference library, computer lab, learning technology lab, etc.
- There is 18,000 square feet of space.
- There is wireless network available throughout and live ports available as well.
- The space is also used in the evenings (e.g., reference library, conference rooms) and on weekends. SAASS has added learning specialists and programming to accommodate students with learning disabilities and challenges. They use these spaces for things like structured study hall – it’s not just a quiet place to study – specialists are working one on one with student athletes. Those spaces are used primarily at night for that program.
- SAASS moved into this facility in July 2006. Wall coverings will highlight and recognize student athletes and academic achievements. An outside firm will do the design work. It is hoped to be complete before the fall semester of 2007.
- Jim Weaver commented that those in Athletics believe that this academic component on the west side expansion is the most important part of this entire complex. It impacts all student athletes in all 21 sports, as well as the cheerleaders, High Techs, student trainers and student managers.
- Chris commented that this is relatively removed from other athletics department space and this reinforces the idea that this is a place to focus on academics.
- The Committee took an actual tour of the space.

Coach’s Perspective: Volleyball (Chris Riley)

- Comments from Chris Riley:
  - It is an honor to be coaching at Virginia Tech, “I feel that I can make an immediate impact.”
o Came from Towson University in Baltimore and was at St. John’s University in New York before that. Was raised in Long Island, New York.
o Commented that Virginia Tech was unbelievable in how it treats its students and student athletes, and the resources available.
o One of the things Chris did when first hired was to call some of the players and recruits, to ask them to tell what had sold them on VT. At least 50-60% of them said they walked through Lane Stadium West Side Expansion and saw what resources they would have academically and their parents fell in love with the support and resources their daughters would be provided.
o Lane Stadium West Side Expansion it is a must show to all recruits as it sells Virginia Tech Athletics. Many volleyball players have the potential to play professionally (overseas).
o “Our goal, academics comes first. Of course, we want to win as many games as possible. But in the long run, the importance of what we all do here is to make the lives of our students better and give them more of a chance to be successful.”
o Graduating seniors this year produced the first All-American in Volleyball at VT.

- Q: How many are on the roster?
o We have 12 scholarship athletes and we carry 14-16 roughly.
- Q: Based on my observation at pep rally – I notice that a lot of the girls who came on the stage were on crutches. How is their health? (three on crutches).
o That would have been in the pre-season. One of the good things is we are very cautious – they’ll put a kid in a boot for a sprained ankle (which is 90% of the injuries we get). We are very healthy. Volleyball is a very anaerobic sport – our kids get sore more than they get injured. So far, only two days have been missed by our 11 kids practicing this spring.
- Q: Talk about the ACC and Volleyball.
o This year, the ACC only got one team in the NCAA tournament. They went 20-1-1 overall – there is no tournament at the end. The thought was that the ACC was getting weaker in volleyball. But at the end of the year, our conference ranking was 7 or 8. The year before, our overall ranking was 10. So with the majority of the teams being fairly young, except for Duke we made a jump. A pretty young conference. It’s very competitive. Last year, Duke was clearly better than everyone else.
- Q: Where do you go to recruit players?
o I’ll go anywhere to recruit – my goal is to get the most talented players. Turns out California, Midwest have the better players. If you can get a kid to this campus, you’ll get a 90% success rate. I have not had a kid who has come to campus who has said “I don’t think I’ll be happy here.” The challenge is to get them to come here. In recruiting for volleyball, you’ll find 10th graders committing. All the kids are committed by juniors. For now, it is on the parents to get here to visit (NCAA rules for recruiting do not permit us to pay for the visit until they begin the senior year of H.S.) – it’s kind of regionalizing recruiting, which makes it a challenge.
- Q: From an athletic standpoint, what is the value you hope to add?
o In the next few years, once we become ACC champions and get into the NCAA tournament, our recruiting battles with UCLA, Colorado State, Penn State will be easier to win. Once we make that turn, we’ll be at more of an advantage. I really feel that we can make this program into a top-10 program. Blacksburg and VT has more to offer than other schools – e.g., Cassell is a great place to play and provides a big home court advantage. Once we turn that corner, we’re the “big fish.” If the program is a top 25 team, you’ll go to 2500-3000 attendance at games.
Around here especially, this is the big draw – you just have to give them a reason to come. We’re developing a better style, that is more fan-friendly and more exciting to watch.
- Q: In my recruiting in Undergraduate Admissions, I will have a student ask about volleyball. What is it you would like for us to tell a student in this situation (they haven’t been recruited).
o There is an online questionnaire on our web site – they should fill this out – you never know where there is going to be a diamond in the rough. We get back to all of these.
• Q: Based on the data that has been shared with us, your team has the highest GPA – would like to acknowledge you for a job well done.
  o Thank you – our kids are so focused on what they do. They had a 3.5 GPA as a team.
• Q: Given that your students are doing so well, what type of utilization do your students have in SAASS – do they in fact use it?
  o Absolutely – we emphasize that they shouldn’t rest on their laurels. Our kids did a great job – they are teaching the younger kids what it takes to be successful. They help each other and hold each other accountable. They use tutors and study space, about 50/50.
• Q: Do these kids routinely have tapes coming out of high school?
  Yes, 95% of them do or could have something they could show us.
• Rosemary Goss thanked Chris for being here to share his perspective and answer questions.

Approval of January Minutes (Rosemary Goss)
• The minutes were approved as corrected.

NCAA Athletics Certification Update (Rosemary Goss)
• The process is moving along.
• Today we returned to The Equity and Student Well-Being committee comments for revision, Rules Compliance report had been reviewed and revised by the sub committee and is back to the steering committee. Feedback March 14 at the next meeting. We will also return the Academic Integrity report to the steering committee.
• Jim Weaver commented that the effort has been organized in an outstanding way. The Athletic Department is appreciative of all the time and effort that has gone into it.
• We’ll have our site visit in the Fall.
• The report goes to the NCAA on May 1 and will be made public to the rest of the university community on the Web.

Questions for the Athletic Director (Jim Weaver)
• Q: What are the biggest challenges you see for Athletics in the next year or two?
  o We are very facility driven. Raising money to build the new basketball practice facility and new indoor field house will be the salient issues for us the next two years. This is a very exciting time to be at VT.
• Q: I think the Athletic Department does a great service to the university through the academic side, through the visibility. When I came here from Philadelphia, people didn’t know where VT was. Now they know. It helps us from an academic point of view – getting students, getting faculty, etc. There is one thing that would really help us, and this is a sensitive issue. In order to get credit in giving money to get tickets, have to donate money to Athletics. At other universities, they get partial credit. Would you be receptive to this?
  o When you look at Tennessee and OSU (105k) and in basketball with 25k, you have a totally different dynamic – we have 66,233 in Lane and about 10k in Cassell. As a result of those numbers, I honestly don’t see it happening because we need all the money our donors give us – we get no state funds. That discrepancy in the size is the primary reason that I don’t think that it is viable here. We’re already sold out – and we’d be turning away donors who’ve given to Athletics to make room for someone giving to Academics.
• Q: Is there any thought to a new basketball arena?
  o I believe there is a place for what will become a new basketball facility/convocation center in the long-term plan. I don’t see that happening for 10-15 years, if then. We have as good a home court venue in Cassell as in the conference. The reason we need to go to a new practice facility – is when Cassell was built in the mid-1960s, with two practice gyms that have basketball practice courts that are 2.5 feet from a cinderblock wall. Basketball teams
have become so much more athletic. We can take those facilities and make one a permanent wrestling facility, and one volleyball practice facility as well as cheerleaders and the Hi-Tech’s. Then we’ll build a new practice facility for both men and women’s basketball with lounges, locker rooms and offices. We do not have the “wow” factor in recruiting in basketball now. This facility will give us safer practice areas and the “wow”. In addition, we’ll add a 10k square foot weight room to the south of that facility for Olympic sports. This will be a 16-18 million dollar project. It goes before the Board of Visitors in March for approval of design.

Q: I work with UG students and recruiting, and one of the messages I’ve received often, is when I’m talking to underrepresented students and encouraging them to apply to VT, one of the comments I get is that there are no black students at VT other than basketball or football. It seems that their perception is that if black students are there, it’s only because of athletics rather than their cognitive abilities. What is the Athletic Committee doing with respect to image and are we considering the issues out there of becoming a more diverse university.

- I think you’ve raised an issue that is not addressed by us. We have enough issues trying to recruit our own student athletes. That’s a larger university issue about a diverse student population. That’s not one that the Athletics Department is at the front door of solving. We’ll be a good team player and help do what the university is doing.
- Follow-up comment: I’m listening about the women on the volleyball team and how well they’re doing academically – I think it would be nice for us to have the information about how well the student athletes are doing. It would be nice for us to have that in our recruiting efforts.

- Q: Speaking of fans and image, how do you think the “Hokie Respect’ campaign is going?
  - We’re a leader in the country in this area. We did some good things last year. I believe the working relationship that has been an outgrowth on campus of different components (Student Government, Alumni Association, Hokie Club) has been good. Jim has had some positive responses (and some negative) about the “jerk alert.” But when that guy threw the turkey leg from the top of the north end zone, people were pointing and saying “jerk alert.” It shows that something is working. We’ll revisit it every year. Jim is on the ACC Sportsmanship Committee.

- Q: What happened with getting people into the Maryland game?
  - We determined that we’d have to let the students sit anywhere in the arena. If the ticket holder comes, they’d have to move somewhere else.
  - For the Clemson game this weekend, after viewing the vacancies at the Miami game, the athletic department established a second lottery. We have plans to get everybody in who signed up. I think we can fill the place. We feel like we’ve gone about it in an appropriate fashion and have altered things to accommodate weather and spring break appropriately.

- Q: I’ve heard a lot of fans that get upset about hearing “Enter Sandman” too much at games (diluting its purpose)?
  - I’ve not heard anything like this. I think it will remain what it is in football, and I think it helps to crank up the crowd in basketball. I don’t think it’s been overdone in basketball.
  - Jon Jaudon: It’s typically played at the start of the basketball game and at the last timeout. I think our marketing people have done a good job making the call for when it’s needed.

**Announcements (Rosemary Goss)**

**Future meeting dates: April 5 and May 3.**

Rosemary Goss adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.