University Athletics Committee  
April 10, 2008 
West Side Expansion, Lane Stadium, Room 309


Representatives:  Melinda West for Dwight Shelton

Guest Present:  Jen Albrecht, Student Athlete Volleyball, Jessica Botzum, Student Athlete Swimming, Jon Jaudon, Associate AD, Administration, Natalie Hart, Director of NCAA Initiatives & Diversity Management, Chris Helms, Director of SAASS, Sharon McCloskey, Senior Associate AD/ SWA, Tim Miller, Student Athlete, Wrestling

Recorder  Joyce Wynn, Athletics

Rosemary Goss, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:36 pm.  There was a motion and second to accept the agenda as presented. Motion approved. There was a motion and second to approve the minutes for the March 13, 2008 meeting.  Motion carried.

Student Athletes’ Perspectives:  Olympic sports
A panel of Olympic sports athletes shared their perspective on being a student-athlete at Virginia Tech: Jen Albrecht, Volleyball; Tim Miller, Wrestling; Bryan Collier, Soccer; and Jessica Botzum, Swimming. Jon Jaudon introduced the student-athletes.

- Jen is a double major, double minor, excellent student.  Will go to medical school in the fall, received an ACC post-graduate scholarship.  Four-year starter.
- Tim is a sophomore; probably our very hardest worker in the wrestling room.  Tim brings a work ethic second to none to our wrestling team.  He is a member on the SAAC and a leader on the wrestling team.
- Bryan is a 4th year junior; as a freshman, got hurt and red shirted.  He’s completed his third year of eligibility and has some unique career aspirations.  He started 45 of the 47 games here.  But since we don’t have the program he’s interested in (dual M.S. program in sports administration and MBA), he will attend UCF and play soccer for them next year.  No one has been more involved in our department than Bryan.  He has interned in every program.
- Jessica is the most decorated female swimmer in the history of VT.  Two-time ACC swimmer of the year.  She’s going home before going to graduate school.
Question: What would be any changes you would like to see?
  o Outdoor concert place, it’s not that important but it’s all I can think of.
  o I think some of the facilities could be improved. We did just move our locker room for volleyball. The track team has our old locker room. They have one tiny room with four showers. Things like that. I see the way football and basketball are treated obviously it’s a huge contrast.
  o On that note, during the time I’ve been here, there have been so many upgrades. Eventually Olympic sports will get to the point where it’s just as good as everyone else. We’re getting new things all the time.
  o For some people, the diversity aspect. Campus climate is a whole university wide issue, not just athletics. Our athletic department is more diverse than our campus. Our campus is getting more diverse but having more people that are like you, would help.
  o When we’re on away trips, it would be nice to be able to see classes on line that we miss when we’re sitting in a hotel room.

Question: Jen, with your double major and double minor, have we made proper accommodations?
  o We’d have practice in the spring, and I had a class. They did a good job working with me. There aren’t too many athletes in the biochemistry department, so they weren’t used to it. The faculty have been really accommodating for the most part.

Observation and question: What if you were a 2.0 student in some part – what are your problems – how would you tell us you need help?
  o We do have the SAASS which is here that monitors us. We know whether or not we’re doing well. They can’t just magically come up with a program to do better in school. We have to come here and get help. They can’t come to our house and force us to come in and study. It’s a matter of feeling that the door is open and not being afraid to talk to your teachers, advisors, etc.
  o Our women’s swim team has a good GPA overall, but when I sit back and watch our men’s team who may or may not have the best GPA, I almost get angry at them. If you’re a student athlete here, you almost have to try to fail. When I watch the student athletes that are failing, it’s pure laziness from what I’ve experienced. It’s really hard to fail here with all that they’re providing us.
  o You have to either not care or not know about the services. As soon as you start going down the hill, they contact you. So you can’t not know. You can always get help if you want it.
  o I feel like a lot of people just don’t go to class, and that’s where you find the 2.0. You can always do something to improve yourself. Obviously there are cases when it’s just hard to get a C.

Rosemary thanked the group for being here today.

Hokies Respect Campaign Update (Tim East, David Lowe)
  ● The program was launched in summer 2003 as part of athletic sportsmanship program. Jim Weaver attended an NCAA sportsmanship program. He felt it was necessary for our athletic department to be proactive, not necessarily because we had a problem.
  ● To kick-off the program, Jim and Jon were able to get speakers at Cassell at the beginning of the school year. All athletes were invited including student athletes from other local colleges. It was a terrific event. The marketing department in athletics created a marketing and education plan (mailed flyer with season tickets, included a letter
from Jim Weaver, created a video spot of student athletes and Coach Beamer, placed signs in the stadium and on other items such as posters and cups, logo on our game tickets and a portion of our web is devoted to this campaign).

- The alumni association and alumni relations expressed their interest in supporting this program. We meet and came up with new ideas for the program. Dr. Steger wrote an article in Tech magazine about this. We’ve also incorporated a live reading of sportsmanship statement before games. We have animated video boards.
- We’ve heard a number of different stories and people writing letters to editors of newspapers about how warmly they were received by VT. Bobby Bowden said after the Florida State game how amazed he was at how well he and his team were treated.
- David Lowe: The alumni association members were surprised at the breadth of people that didn’t understand the problems. 90% of us go to the game and don’t see the things that are wrong. We’ve tried to help educate people about what it’s all about. Jim and the athletic department are leading it but we all own it. It’s improving. Don’t know that you ever get there.
- Jim Weaver: You never get there. I get emails that you all don’t want to know about. You never reach the end of the road, it’s a continuous journey.
- We’ll also be working on a program for the summer orientation like the one at Texas A&M. We’ve talked to them about how they incorporate it into their culture.
- We’ve hosted pre-game receptions at the alumni center for the alumni association of the opposing team. Have also offered to set up sites for alumni groups from visiting school and try to talk a little bit about the Hokie Respect campaign.
- Tim: Met with student leadership group and they said they wished the university would take a stronger stand about alcohol abuse at athletic events.
  - Jim: We’ve employed more security through the police officer designation and we’re trying to ask them to be more aggressive in the stadium when they encounter people who are overcome with alcohol to get rid of them.

Questions for the Athletic Director (Jim Weaver)

- Do these sportsmanship issues reach the conference level?
  - Yes, I happen to be on the ACC sportsmanship committee. We put together a major packet of information 2-3 years ago.
- Have we heard anything from our NCAA review?
  - Natalie: They originally told us that we’d hear mid-March or early April, but we have not heard. Our liaison at NCAA said that we should hear in 1-2 weeks.
- Question: I watch and keep track of the Big Ten and the ACC. One thing that bothers me is that at basketball games, students aren’t there and when they are, they’re way up high. I think that should be thought about.
  - Jon: I was at each NIT game and students could sit anywhere they wanted, but they sat in the same general place. It’s become their home.
- Question: Why do we pay $1.25 if I print my ticket at home? It doesn’t make economic sense.
  - It’s the price we pay to the vendor for the software.
Question: About playing the opening game with East Carolina in Charlotte?
  o We have 6 home games this year and our budget is based on 7. We get to share the revenue playing at a neutral site as Charlotte. A lot of schools are doing this because it helps when you have a non-conference game to create more revenue to share.
  o Discussion about communicating the information about why play games in a neutral site.

Announcements
  ▪ Future meeting dates: Tuesday May 6

Meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m