University Athletic Committee
October 19, 2005
Bowman Room, Jamerson Center


Members Absent: Coleman Collins, Zenobia Hikes, Art Keown, Jerry Niles, Dixie Watts Reaves, Jesse Richardson, Mallory Soldner, Norraine Bailey Spencer, LaChelle Waller, Jim Weaver.

Representatives: Bill Campion for Zenobia Hikes, Brian Katen for Jesse Richardson, Greg Reaves for Dixie Reaves

Guest Present: Steven Clarke, Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center, Beth Dunkenberger, Head Women’s Basketball Coach, Chris Helms, Coordinator, Student Athlete Academic Support Services, Jon Jaudon, Associate Athletic Director, Tim Parker, Assistant Athletic Director Compliance

Recorder: Joyce Wynn, Athletic Department

Joe Tront, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm. The minutes of September 22, 2005 were approved. The agenda was accepted as proposed.

Business

Coaches Perspectives: Women’s Basketball (Beth Dunkenberger)
Beth said: I spent nine years here as an Assistant Coach and now is back as a Head Coach. I have tried to carry on as former Athletic Director Dave Braine told each student athlete that they were here for three reasons. First to be a student and get your degree, second play your sport to the best of your ability, third to be a good role model. Last year we had one senior that fulfilled all these. Her goal was to go to graduate school in physical therapy. As the leading scorer, she lead the Women’s Basketball team to the NCAA for the third consecutive year, maintained a 3.5 GPA, got an internship at a local physical therapy clinic and has started physical therapy school at MCV in June and is doing great. We have 5 seniors on team this spring and all are scheduled to graduate this spring or the following spring. Coach discussed the various majors and player aspirations. Coach commended the academic advisors for doing a great job working with the players and coaches. Three freshmen this year are business majors with average GPAs of 3.9. Coach said: I think that when we recruit competitors they are competitors in the classroom as well as on the court. Some of them do not have the opportunities to be challenged academically or to be mentored along the way, but if they are competitors then they do the best to their ability whether it is school or basketball. That is a big key to us as we recruit. We have five commitments for next year. I will go with the brighter student any day when it is close. I know that a bright student will be bright on the court as well. As role models, we have partnered up with Shawsville Elementary School through programs in the athletic department. We started
practice last Friday; our first game is November 6, 2005. If you every have any complaints or questions about any of our student athletes you are welcome to call me. We have a unique way of getting student athletes attention that’s Breakfast Club. You get up at 6:00 am and run.

In the Q & A that followed, coach Dunkenburger discussed her recruiting theme of climbing up ladders and cutting down nets. She said: Student athletes love to win championships and it is something that is catchy that kind of sticks. I took over at Western Carolina and they had never had a winning season. We recruited that next incoming class and told them that they were going to climb up ladders and cut down nets and in 4 years time sure enough they won their first championship in the schools history. I think you have to say it and you have to believe it in order to have a shot at it and it’s a nice view up top.

She also discussed her thoughts on supporting her student athletes as they pursue careers beyond VT including careers as medical doctors, coaches, and other professions. She described her recruiting practices and said she recruits with a mind toward success in the classroom as well as on the court. The coach was asked about Rayna Dubose and she said that Rayna comes to practice each day and is on track to graduate next December. Coach commented that the teams to beat this year are Carolina and Duke, both of which we play at home. The committee thanked the coach for the great job she is doing both on and off the court.

**Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center Study:** (Steve Clarke)

Handout

Steve discussed his center’s work and said: “We are doing a full scale project this year at football games. The Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center was formed in 1999 after the period of 5 deaths happening in late 1997 and 1998. Since then we have been able to slowly grow our program. We offer three or four different classes for students that are experiencing difficulties with alcohol. Ninety percent of them are referred to us as a result of contact with the judicial system. We also do a lot of alcohol abuse prevention on campus working with various programs around campus. For the first time this year we did a 25 minute program at new student orientation. We have been working on the drinking environment within campus and also within the town of Blacksburg. We work with the town council and the neighborhood associations to deal with student issues and conflicts. The other thing that we do is work with the local bars getting them trained. We also get involved in law enforcement working with the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech Police Departments. We have gotten a grant the past 4 years to help with law enforcement at football games. This year is the first year we do not have that money. This is one issue that we need to find a solution for.”

Steve indicated that tailgate drinking is “not that bad.” His group started a study of tailgate drinking in 2002 and repeated it in 2003 followed by a larger study in 2004. This year as a result of the earlier studies the center received a grant of $100,000.00 from the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol Prevention to develop metrology and for studying alcohol consumption in other related behaviors at tailgating parties. The center is trying to recruit ten schools to do a much larger scale study. “So far we have commitments from Nebraska, Oklahoma, Florida, and JMU. We are trying to get six division one programs that are consistently in the top twenty and we are also trying to get four division II programs that are consistently in the top twenty. The idea is to get a two year grant to explore ways to actually do some things to intervene on behavior and to deal with situations that revolve around them. The main thing we are concern about is drinking and driving.”
Steve further commented that “for the most part we are not seeing a large amount of excessive alcohol consumption. We are seeing a lot of alcohol consumption. There is a great increase especially this year in the numbers of student tailgating in the Public Lot.” He noted that 45% of people in the tailgate lots have no affiliation with this university. We have had complaints from visiting fans using the Public Lot this year that we have never had in the past. Steve has pulled his researchers out of that parking lot because they were getting abused. Lu Merrit suggested that part of the problem could be the timing of the games this year. In the past we have had noon and 3:30 PM games and this year they are night games. Several committee members agreed that night games seemed to incur more drinking and bad behavior than day games. It was noted that West Virginia University problems began 15 years ago with excessive student tailgates near the stadium. They did nothing about it and that seemed to encourage non-students who go there to see the WVU football team as it is the professional team of West Virginia. That behavior spread and appears to be out of control. Committee members concurred that we need to do something about our situation before we end up like WVU.

Steve further commented: “Our mission is to reduce high risk drinking. Our mission is not to address underage drinking. We address alcohol overdose issues with educational programs since we have a death from that over in the Harrell Street area just a year ago after a football game. We do a series of programs that are geared toward what we call the harm reduction approach. Our goal isn’t to eliminate alcohol or tell students that they shouldn’t drink. We try to educate students to provide them the knowledge that they need to make their own personal decisions about alcohol.”

The committee expressed concern about not only the issue of abusive drinking at sporting events, but also about the trend toward abusive behavior in general.

**Action Item:** Steve and Joe Tront will discuss these issues with the SGA and encourage them to enact programs to remedy potential problems before they get out of hand or before they have to be remedied by enforcement officers. Further discussions will be held at the next meeting.

**NCAA Compliance Legislation Update** (Tim Parker)

Tim Parker presentation was tabled until next meeting.

Joe Tront adjourned the meeting at 4:45 PM.