Association-wide News

From the FARA President:
FARA 2019 is over, but it was an outstanding meeting. Keynote speaker, Seattle Mariner owner John Stanton discussed the convergent interests of professional and collegiate sports. In a Q&A, he emphasized the importance of education and the need to be realistic about the likelihood of post-collegiate competition. Tom Paskus led other analysts from NCAA research in a presentation on the preliminary results of the 2019 GOALS study. Major takeaways: college students identify as students and athletes, striving to perform well in both capacities. Large numbers of our student-athletes already feel stressed prior to matriculation. Once on campus, they frequently feel not in control. Yet, most institutions are under resourced with respect to counselors for student-athletes. Additionally, student-athletes wish they had more time for sleep. Tom Paskus also informed the FARs about student-athlete levels of reported wagering and the status of State legislation on legal gambling.

Looking forward, we encourage you to attend the 2020 NCAA Convention in Anaheim. FARs will participate in the Thursday morning panel, “Plays Well with Others: FARs and the Cross-Campus Connection.” A reception for FARs will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. Friday, January 24.

Finally, do not be a stranger. Let us know if you have questions or suggestions. Also please contact us if you are interested in participating on one of FARA’s standing committees or as a future Executive Committee member. Please remember to save the date for the 2020 FARA Annual Meeting November 5-7 in Indianapolis, IN.

For additional summary information on the Association-wide sessions click here.

Joan Davison
FARA President
Rollins College

Sam Perelman, a representative of the NCAA Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee summarized and explained the SAAC’s response to the NIL issue. The SAAC’s statement voices concern about the potential unintended consequences for student-athletes and their teams of hastily adopted policies. Moving forward, NIL will be an issue for all three divisions as the Board of Governors has asked all three divisions to address changes in NIL. As always, the presence of SAAC representatives at FARA provided useful insight to the members.
The Thursday evening banquet recognized the Walter Byers and Jim McKay recipients, four outstanding student-athletes who credit their coaches and faculty with their current success. Dean Beckman, FAR at St. Mary’s University of Minnesota emceed the presentations with warmth and humor. We congratulated Rachael Acker, University of California swimmer, and Derek Soled, Yale fencer, as Byer honorees. Jennifer Haskel, Northwestern soccer player, and Benjamin Colin, Iowa swimmer, received the McKay awards. Also recognized with the David Knight Award was Dr. Eileen McDonough, a 36 year FAR from Barry University.

*Ethical Leadership in College Athletics and the FAR’s Role – A Recap*

Chuck Brown, Division III FAR Representative, Pennsylvania State Univ. Erie, the Behrend College

Mike Brown, Professor of Management at Penn State Behrend and ethical leadership researcher, led a panel discussion on ethical leadership and the FAR’s role and why it is important for building and maintaining successful college athletics programs. Each panelist addressed several topics including what their schools were doing to promote ethical leadership within their athletics programs, what additional efforts that could be implemented, and what FARs are currently doing and could be doing to promote ethical leadership on campus.

The panelists included Dr. Leslie Hallick, President at Pacific University (DIII), Dr. Dennis Francois, Director of Athletics at Central Washington University (DII), Dr. Jeremy Jordan, Associate Dean of the School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University (DI), and N.J. Kim, former student-athlete at Emory University (DIII) and current Division III vice chair SAAC. Dr. Jordan noted that since FARs are the conduit between a multitude of constituencies on campus, it is tremendously important for FARs to build relationships and to have a high level of trust to promote ethical leadership. Dr. Hallick mentioned that the Director of Athletics at Pacific is a member of the Provost’s Academic Council to ensure appropriate ethical leadership and academic processes. When hired five years ago, Dr. Francois started a code of ethics that “has become the mantra of what we do.” He adds, “We have a moral and ethical obligation to assure that our student-athletes earn a degree and if that doesn’t happen, then we have failed on our end.” He lauds the FAR’s involvement in building faculty affiliate programs to strengthen campus engagement, which promotes ethical leadership. Finally, N.J. Kim stated that the FAR becomes a second parent to many student-athletes, so trust and constant communication is critical to building and maintaining a strong ethical environment.

*Sports Wagering – Where Should the FAR be in This Discussion?*

Tim Day, FARA Division I Vice President, Iowa State University

The Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (aka PASPA, the Bradley Act) was overturned in 2018, leading to a rapid proliferation and geographic expansion of legalized sports gambling in the United States. Thirteen states currently allow single-game sports betting. Five others have already passed the necessary legislation and are currently developing their programs for operationalizing sports wagering. Another six states are currently considering similar legislation. As a small example of the amplitude of sports wagering, Iowa recorded about $1,400,000 per day in bets in the first couple months of legalized sports gambling in the state this fall.

Allowing faculty to financially benefit from intimate information about the educational or health status of our students runs contrary to our mission. As Saint Joseph’s stated in their policy, “Allowing Saint Joseph’s University students, faculty, staff, contractors and members of the Board of Trustees to gamble on the
performance of University student-athletes or staff members runs contrary to the sense of community that is so critical to the University.” FARs may need to drive these conversations on our campuses.

The 2019 FARA Annual Meeting included an in-depth discussion regarding the impact of this proliferation of legalized sports wagering on NCAA athletics and our institutions.

This discussion was led by Tom Paskus, Principal Research Scientist in the NCAA research staff. Paskus also serves on a sports wagering internal working group at the NCAA. NCAA Legislation prohibits sports wagering at any level in sports sponsored by the NCAA for all student-athletes, athletics department staff and institutional staff with athletics-related responsibilities -- that includes Faculty Athletics Representatives! However, a 2016 study revealed that a significant percentage of student-athletes bet on sports. For example, about 25 percent of male student-athletes reported that they bet on sports that year. Further, 49 percent of men and 23 percent of women who wagered on sports agreed, “If I chose to wager on sports, I could consistently make a lot of money.” Note, these data were gathered prior to the broad liberalization of sports wagering triggered in 2018.

This is a critical time for our industry to direct a deep examination of our policies in this space, and clarify the values and the data that shape our rules and educational efforts. FARs occupy a critical nexus between our institutions, our student-athletes, and our athletics departments; we should be poised and prepared to contribute to this important discussion.

Further, FARs may need to play a role in working with our institutions to craft policies related to faculty and/or staff wagering on college sports. On September 24, Saint Joseph’s University enacted an interim policy prohibiting betting on St. Joe’s athletics events, with violations treated as other transgressions of “community standards,” but without a great deal of prescription of what that can mean. On October 10, the Purdue University Board of Trustees approved a “sports wagering policy” prohibiting faculty, staff and students from wagering on games involving Purdue teams at the peril of discipline up to termination. Legal questions remain about the durability of these bans; some frame these as new contractual terms limiting legal activities, and that would make them difficult to enforce. Other institutions are looking to shared governance structures to restrict faculty and staff gambling on their sports teams. At many institutions, faculty senate-type structures have authority to define betting on campus teams as faculty misconduct.

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FARA is the Faculty Athletics Representatives Association, the professional association for faculty athletics representatives (FARs) in all three NCAA divisions.