FROM THE EDITOR

This summer edition of the FARA Voice features three articles written by the Chairs of the three divisional Student-Athlete Advisory Committees (SAAC). This comes as a result of an effort over the past three or four years to bring FARA and the SAACs closer together. If you have attended the FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium over the past few years, you may have noticed an increased presence of student-athletes. These student-athletes have served on our panels and have been on our divisional Legislative Review Committees, providing keen insight from the student-athlete perspective.

Each June, the national SAACs have their summer meetings, and these articles summarize the hot topics in each division, from the student-athlete perspective. We hope you enjoy hearing from our student-athletes, and hope these words will assist you in your dealings with your own campus SAAC.

Dennis Leighton, editor
FARA Secretary-Treasurer
FAR, University of New England
NCAA Division I SAAC Update

Perhaps the most important role the National SAAC plays is that of providing the “student-athlete perspective” to proposed NCAA legislation. Our agenda for the upcoming year will be largely set by this legislation. As with every year, there will be some very important student-athlete welfare issues addressed in the legislative cycle. This year, we anticipate the most important student-athlete welfare legislation to come from the Recruiting and Athletics Personnel Issues Cabinet as well as the Amateurism Cabinet.

Some important questions are expected to be posed by the Recruiting Cabinet with regard to recruiting reform. Should there be age limits to when the recruiting process can start? What types of communication, and how much communication should take place throughout the recruiting process? As a National SAAC, our first priority is to protect the interests of current Division I student-athletes. However, as we consider these important questions, we must also consider the well-being of recruited student-athletes. Historically, National SAAC has been in favor of increasing recruiting regulation when it comes to communication and age limits.

Our Committee has been fortunate enough to have worked closely with the Amateurism Cabinet over the past year to assure that we were playing a proactive role in their review of existing Amateurism legislation. As this review culminates with proposed legislation in the 2010-11 cycle, we are excited to continue to be the voice for student-athlete welfare. As a committee, we want to assure that we allow our teams, institutions, conferences and our association to survive in an age of increased technology while continuing to protect the integrity of all student-athletes.

As we learn the specifics of all the legislation within the upcoming cycle, we will solicit feedback from Division I student-athletes across the country to guarantee that we truly represent all student-athletes when we offer our opinion to the Legislative Council later this fall and winter. We look forward to continuing our very important duty of representing all the student-athletes of Division I.

Nick Fulton, Swimming Student-Athlete  
University of Wisconsin  
Chair, Division I Student Athlete Advisory Committee
NCAA Division II SAAC Update

The Division II National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) met in mid July. During our annual July meeting, we discussed a variety of issues. One of the main topics we discussed was the new legislation for the 2011 Convention. We reviewed and discussed the four proposals from the President’s Council, the five from the membership, and the potential Phase II of Life in the Balance.

Jill Willson of Double LL Consulting, met with us to discuss the final product of the website, “My DII Life” before it launched August 2. We have been in close contact with national office staff members about the website and are extremely pleased with what we saw. It is a great website that focuses on everything Division II! It is a perfect resource for Division II student-athletes.

Tracy Schoettle, a national representative for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, came to our meeting to discuss any issues or questions we had about Make-A-Wish Foundation. Not only did we discuss Make-A-Wish Foundation, Ms. Schoettle presented two awards to us. The first award was for the amount we donated last year to the organization, and the second award was for meeting the $1 million dollar mark since our start with the Make-A-Wish organization! For the 2009-10 fundraising campaign Division II raised $404,737.93, more than four times our $100,000 our goal. And so far we have raised around $1.5 million dollars since 2003.

During our meetings we also met with Latrice Sales, who spoke to us about nutrition and supplements as an athlete. Karen Morrison and Mary Wilfert from NCAA Health and Safety also spoke to us about transgender student-athlete participation in the NCAA.

Lastly, we met with DII Management Council as a part of our annual joint Summit, where we discussed student-athlete affairs, health and safety, nutrition and supplements, and championships. Overall it was a very productive meeting and Division II SAAC is excited for the upcoming academic year and all the new initiatives to share with Division II student-athletes.

Rose Broderick, Softball Student-Athlete
Northern Kentucky University
Chair, Division II Student Athlete Advisory Committee
NCAA Division III SAAC Update

The Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) convened in Indianapolis, Indiana for one of our three yearly in-person meetings with many exciting topics of discussion. Some key issues discussed during our meeting were the Division III drug education and testing pilot study, transgender student-athlete athletics participation, and sports wagering.

The committee received drug education and testing pilot information and discussed potential drug testing models, but also encouraged the NCAA to provide funding for institutions to tailor a drug-testing program and/or education toward each institution’s concerns regarding student-athlete drug use.

Another interesting topic discussed was transgender student-athlete athletics participation issues with competitive equity and transgender student-athlete well-being. The committee noted that gender reassignment is not a decision made without serious consideration, and it is unlikely that an individual would initiate the medical process for gender reassignment simply to gain a competitive advantage. As a result, the committee noted that well-being and educational concerns should be a priority in any related discussion.

The most recent sports wagering survey was reviewed and discussed around the concept that Division III student-athletes gamble more frequently than our Division I and II counterparts. A reason we believe this may be is in part due to the perception that Division III student-athletes are not violating athletics integrity by wagering on athletics competition outside our division. Also of note, Division III student-athletes are not in jeopardy of losing athletically-related financial aid and as such, may be more willing to gamble with only athletic eligibility at stake. The committee suggested exploring enhanced and alternative educational initiatives such as using general student orientations to present sports wagering educational materials, pushing educational initiatives through collegiate coaches and repeating educational efforts throughout a student-athlete’s academic career. Because the data showed that student-athletes begin gambling activities prior to initial collegiate enrollment, the committee recommended that gambling education occur prior to collegiate enrollment and should also continue after enrollment.

Also of note was the review of the NCAA Division III Haitian Humanitarian Relief Student-Athlete Challenge. The Student-Athlete Advisory Committees of Division III have surpassed the $100,000 goal set by the leadership of the Division III Presidents Council, Management Council and Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) at the beginning of 2010. We congratulate student-athletes that have already helped to answer the need for Haitian relief and continue to encourage relief efforts.

Effel Harper, Division III Vice President from FARA, met with the committee to discuss how faculty athletic representatives may better facilitate communication between student-athletes and faculty athletics representatives. We discussed issues student-athletes confront when missing class due to athletics competition. The committee also observed that continued efforts should be made to strengthen the relationship between student-athletes and FAR’s on campus. The DIII SAAC is excited to have a member attend the FARA Fall Forum in Baltimore, Maryland in November.

We will meet again as a committee later in November to further discuss some of these hot topics and construct formal positions on 2011 NCAA Convention proposals.

Marie Godwin, Volleyball Student-Athlete
Macalester College
Chair, Division III Student Athlete Advisory Committee
~ 2010 ~
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