The Model FAR Document developed as a result of the inaugural Division II FAR Advanced Leadership Institute in 2011 remains as the primary guideline for defining the FAR role as a liaison with the athletics department, advocating for student-athletes, assisting with institutional control, and communicating the benefits of intercollegiate athletics with internal and external audiences.

The Guiding Principles in the Model FAR Document noted that:

- FARs should also serve as advocates for the student-athletes' well-being and a quality experience in an environment of tolerance, respect, and inclusion.

- Further, FARs should play an active role in communicating the vision and values of Division II intercollegiate athletics at the campus, conference, and national levels, and with the community at-large.

Participants at the second institute in 2013 developed this addendum to further explain the section in the Model FAR Document that encourages empowering FARs to "communicate about local, regional and national issues related to intercollegiate athletics as part of the athletics communication team and be willing to interact with the media when appropriate."
FARs are vital in an institution’s strategic communications chain

- The relationship between intercollegiate athletics and higher education continues to be misunderstood by many external audiences as well as internal constituencies.

- National attention devoted to Division I restructuring, high-profile court cases and increasing commercialization of big-time college sports has stirred a climate of criticism and exacerbated the standard suspicions of athletics as antithetical to the mission of higher education.

- The FAR functions in a matrix that includes student-athletes, coaches, athletic administrators, academic leadership and other campus administration, the faculty, and the public at the campus, conference and national levels. Thus, FARs are uniquely positioned to articulate the benefits of intercollegiate athletics to faculty, the media and the public.

- FARs bring the academic perspective and priorities to the discussion, providing a fresh perspective to reporters and broadcasters who are accustomed to interacting only with athletics administrators and coaches.

- As such, FARs are advocates for Division II’s mission of “Life in the Balance,” as they champion student-athlete academic success and help ensure the quality of the athletics experience.

FARs enhance communication with internal and external audiences

- Clarify the FAR role
  FARs are not employed by athletics, but rather serve as independent liaisons between academics and athletics. They protect academic integrity by ensuring compliance and oversight, and work to further student-athlete well being.

- Explain the student-athlete experience
  Division II student-athletes enjoy a highly competitive athletics experience through which they gain unique experiences in teambuilding, leadership, and time management. Division II student-athletes graduate at rates higher than the general student body. Division II student-athletes have time to devote to community engagement, internships, seminars and other activities that help prepare them for life after graduation.

- Explain the DII mission
  “Life in the Balance” means athletics is not a full-time pursuit. Division II student-athletes balance their passion for playing sports with their commitment to success in the classroom and take part in servant leadership activities within their communities.

- Promote the relationship between athletics and higher education
  As the “front porch” to the institution, athletics promotes the institutional mission and values of higher education to external audiences. FARs can help articulate this by creating a culture and climate of open-door discussions with programs such as “Coffee with the FAR.”
FARs Help Bridge Gaps with Various Stakeholders

- **Faculty**
  While most faculty support the athletics mission, some exhibit indifference, annoyance, or even hostility toward athletics. Perhaps they view athletics as antithetical to academics, or perhaps they feel marginalized or crowded out by the prominent role athletics plays on campus. Other faculty may not be interested in sports in general, or they may disapprove of the values of competitiveness and the aggression that they perceive as the product of sport. As such, the FAR plays an important — and sometimes challenging — role in communicating the values of athletics to other faculty. They can have meetings with faculty through pre-arranged venues on campus, invite and involve faculty in athletics competitions, and find opportunities to have conversations about athletics at meetings of higher education organizations like AAC&U and with accrediting organizations. And of course, a major role of FARs is to work to ensure both a quality student-athlete experience and student-athlete well-being.

- **Student-athletes**
  As the Model FAR Document states, FARs should offer themselves as independent sources of support and advice to student-athletes, and be an advocate for student-athlete interests with the institution, the conference and the NCAA overall. As such, FARs should be accessible for student-athletes and be involved as much as possible. For example, ask to attend a team meeting in order to advocate for how student-athletes balance their athletics and academic success, attend a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee meeting in order to learn about student-athlete issues and concerns, or meet regularly with campus officials such as the dean of student affairs, the registrar and residence life personnel to advocate on student-athletes' behalf.

- **Community**
  With community engagement being such an important tenet for Division II, FARs can effectively and positively communicate the values of DII student-athletes on campus and throughout the community. FARs can provide valuable guest-speaker opportunities with Rotary Clubs, corporate sponsors, alumni groups, booster groups and other potential supporters of the institution's athletics program.

- **Media**
  FARs offer a unique perspective on student-athlete academic success for reporters and broadcasters who know only about the athletics side of the equation. In addition, FARs can be positioned as trusted, independent sources whose advocacy is less likely to be perceived as biased by members of the media. As such, FARs can help dispel common myths about the role of athletics within higher education, and in particular, distinguish Division II behaviors from the more high-profile incidents in big-time college sports programs.