



FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES (FAR)

Academics & Athletics as an Integrated Whole: on Campus, in Governance

February 4, 2014

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Dear President Hatch, and Members, Governance Steering Committee:

As you know, I have previously submitted our 1A FAR Board's input and recommendations as the governance restructuring process has unfolded. I will not repeat our prior detailed submissions, but write briefly on behalf of the 1A FAR Board to focus on one key aspect of the future governance substructure: the composition of the new Council that will report directly to the reconstituted Board of Directors.

We believe strongly that the new Council should be comprised of an *equal* number of FARs and senior athletics administrators. Our universities, and the NCAA as an association, continually espouse a commitment to the collegiate model, with its focus on overall student-athlete well-being. But, what does that commitment mean? It means that we must recognize and embrace our student-athletes' opportunities to develop fully not only on the field or court, but also in the classroom; not only as elite athletes, but also as well-rounded students fully integrated into the full range of campus life; and not only for their contributions as members of an athletic team or sport, but also for their future contributions as citizens and productive members of society. Adherence to a collegiate model also means that our policy-designing body must be structured to draw upon the dual expertise of an *equal* number of FARs and senior athletics officials. Policy for intercollegiate athletics should be adopted and problems should be solved in a manner that not only embodies – but, equally, is *seen* to embody – the values of higher education and the enhancement of all facets of the collegiate student experience, including those directly related to the student-athlete experience.

You have heard from athletics directors about the need for those charged with day-to-day athletics operations to have a strong voice in the new governance system. And, we certainly agree with and support that premise. But, experience and expertise are not, and under true adherence to the collegiate model, *cannot* be experience and expertise solely reflected through the lens of senior athletics administrators. The goals and ethos of our colleges and universities must be front and center in the consideration and adoption of policies and bylaws that govern intercollegiate athletics. Having an *equal* number of FARs to work hand-in-hand with senior athletics administrators at the Council level will assure that issues are vetted and considered through both an athletics and a campus/academic lens.

The Division I Board has acknowledged the need to adopt more of an oversight role and generally leave the development of policy to those with on-the-ground experience and expertise. Such an oversight role is reflective of the campus model of how Presidents/Chancellors operate, and must operate, given the breadth of campus operations and responsibilities that they oversee and administer. Indeed, our campus structures embrace and rely on the different perspectives of ADs and FARs. The FAR represents the greater campus, and typically serves as the President's/Chancellor's eyes and ears on issues relating to intercollegiate athletics that often, but do not necessarily, mirror the perspectives of senior athletics administrators. On many of our campuses, moreover, the FAR has an oversight role regarding overall student-athlete well-being, academic, and compliance issues. No FAR disputes that ADs are, and must be, the ones directly charged with administering athletics departments. Similarly, no FAR disputes that ADs have such responsibilities on a 24/7 basis. But, college athletics also has a 24/7 **college/academic** component. The threats to health and continued viability of collegiate athletics programs can be met only through the active engagement of those with experience and expertise both in athletics and in the greater campus. The active engagement of both FARs and ADs is critical if the Board is to be well-served in exercising its leadership and oversight role.

In sum, if the collegiate model means anything, it must mean that college athletic issues need to be considered and resolved in a manner consistent with the campus ethos and campus values. Few, if any, college athletic issues are either exclusively athletic or exclusively academic. Our governance model should be structured to reflect that reality. If we do so, we will have positioned our governance design to better address and resolve college athletic issues within a collegiate model framework. Moreover, doing so will also allow the NCAA to be best positioned to respond to what we believe will be continuing external criticism that the "college" part of collegiate athletics is no longer relevant. Finally, because we believe that the collegiate model should continue to be a foundational cornerstone for college athletics, we respectfully urge you to incorporate our recommendation of constituting the new Council in the restructured governance model with an **equal** number of FARs and senior athletics administrators.

Sincerely,



Brian D. Shannon
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FAR, Texas Tech University
Charles "Tex" Thornton Professor of Law
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