

MIAC Student Athletic Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2024

Video Conference

Attendees: Kennedy Stein, Pollei Buux (AUG); Autumn Earney, Spencer Kring (BU); Jerica Friese (CON); Taona Mhwandagara (GAC); Ally Steffensmeier (HU); Justin Potts (MAC); Erin Loterbauer, Olivia Weil (SCU); Max Doom (SJU); Maya Wachter, Allie Urlaub (SMU); Travis Miller (STO); Grace Hadlich, Lizzie Northquest (CSS); Dan McKane, BJ Pickard, Jax Collins (MIAC Staff).

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – 8:01 p.m.
2. **NCAA Updates**
The DIII membership approved four proposals at the NCAA Convention in January, most notably a new philosophy statement for the division.
3. **MIAC Updates**
Updates were provided regarding new MIAC rules approved by the membership in December, a rough draft of the next MIAC Strategic Plan was shared, and the new [MIAC Sports Network](#) is doing very well this year. The MIAC membership agreed to two year trials matching NCAA D3 Playing & Practice Seasons and Eligibility.
4. **NCAA Division III National SAAC Updates**
Grace Hadlich, NCAA National SAAC Member from St. Scholastica, shared her experiences and insights from the recent NCAA Convention, including the introduction of mental health best practices and the formation of working groups focused on mental and physical health and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Numerous lawsuits currently involve the NCAA, which could change the Association in the future. The NCAA is doing a social media campaign called D3 and Me, where you can tell your story, which all MIAC students are encouraged to participate.
5. **Special Olympics Partnership with NCAA DIII and MIAC**
Student-athletes were provided resources for Special Olympics Minnesota including volunteering opportunities, unified games, and Polar Plunge events. A special shoutout to two campuses (Bethel Athletics and Hamline SAAC) for being two top fundraisers in the college/university category for SOMN. The Minnesota contact for Special Olympics Minnesota is Zak Armstrong (zak.armstrong@somn.org / 763-270-7173).
6. **SAAC Resources**
 - MIAC Student-Athlete Resource Page - www.miacathletics.com/about/saresources
 - NCAA DIII SAAC Page - www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/division-iii-student-athlete-advisory-committee
 - Student-Athlete Voice: https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/governance/d3/webinar/Mar2021D3Gov_Webinar-SAACVoice.pdf
7. **MIAC Initiative**
Student-athlete highlights this spring. Planning to showcase two students from each campus. ([spreadsheet](#))
8. **Open Discussion**
The group engaged in an open discussion, sharing SAAC campus initiatives, highlighting successes and challenges, and Special Olympics involvement. A summary of highlights shared is included below.
9. **Adjourned** – 8:55 p.m.

MIAC SAAC - Open Sharing / Campus Initiatives Summary:

Bethel

- SO: Softball participating in the polar plunge.

Gustavus

- Digital Well-being: Incorporating digital wellness into SAAC and campus. Willing to share resources. Contact: sydneyhauger@gustavus.edu

Saint John's

- SO: Swim meet on April 14. SAAC and S&D team volunteers.
- Groups: Found success breaking duties into groups and creating new friends across sports.

Saint Mary's

- Community: Partner with local elementary schools to engage athletics with them. Mentor program for older students.
- Helper Helper: Tracks community service / outreach hours.

St. Olaf

- Event Support: Established sibling team events.
- Semester Events: Spike ball, dodgeball games to engage teams together.

St. Scholastica

- SO: Athletic dept and polar plunge participation.
- SO: Unified game partnered with Proctor (local community city).
- All Sports Gathering: Fantastic success for the community of athletics. Mixer, social, fun games, music, food, t-shirts.
- Bags: Cornhole tournament. Partner with campus rec for additional boards and many have extra.

MISC

- SO: Several indicated via hand raise they are participating in Polar Plunge.
- All In Voting: MIAC and member institutions participating to encourage participation in voting. (AllInChallenge.org)
- SAAC: Placing emphasis on participation. Increased student involvement to 80 individuals. Willing to share resources.
- SAAC Meetings: Find when other groups on campus meet if SAAC is struggling with participation/attendance.
- Instagram: Encourage following other SAAC Instagram accounts across the conference.