

MIAC Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
Sunday, Dec. 5, 2010 – 1 p.m.
St. Catherine University – Coeur de Catherine – Room 355

Present: Jennifer Pulscher, Rick Wolke, Kelly Anderson Diercks (Augsburg); Megan Wilson (Bethel); Kelsey Jones, Kaia Sele (Concordia); Javan Copley, Rebecca McLaughlin (Hamline); Katie Lambert, Ambria Pfarr (Saint Benedict), Kayla Bergerson, Kelley Holmes, Sarah Vruday (St. Catherine); Brandon Kasper (Saint John's); Traci Pastoors, Becky Theisen (St. Thomas), Marie Godwin (National SAAC); Dan McKane, Matt Higgins, Sara Eisenhauer, Jill Millis (MIAC)

I. Call to Order: 1:05 p.m.

II. National SAAC Update (Marie Godwin)

Godwin gave an update on the National SAAC meeting in November. She announced Division III is rolling out its official partnership with Special Olympics beginning in January. Godwin shared an example of a form the National SAAC representatives will distribute to institutions to track how the partnership with Special Olympics is going. National SAAC received a NCAA update on topics such as the identity effort and what it means to be a part of DIII athletics. National SAAC reviewed the drug education testing pilot, and revisited a discussion on sports wagering, since it was found that DIII student-athletes wager on sports more than other divisions. She also discussed an educational packet provided to help make transitions with transgendered student-athletes. Godwin also encouraged SAAC groups to share their community services for nomination in the national SAAC Spotlight. She also encouraged interested seniors to apply for NCAA Postgraduate Internships.

III. SAAC Best Practices (Jill Millis)

Millis asked each institution to share their experiences from the first semester. Saint John's and Saint Benedict are putting on a dance to raise money for Special Olympics and Saint John's is teaming with another group on campus for a service project. Saint Benedict met with the Sisters of Saint Benedict to discuss how spirituality relates to athletics. Saint Benedict is also doing a green pledge to help the environment through sustainability and recycling. Student-athlete are working on finding environmental-friendly transportation and uniforms. St. Catherine put up Christmas decorations at the Ronald McDonald House in Minneapolis and learned about what the house does. St. Catherine also plans to volunteer with Feed My Staving Children this spring to involve more student-athletes. St. Thomas had a community clean-up. The football team did Up 'Til Dawn with St. Jude's Hospital. For the spring, St. Thomas is planning a student-athlete dinner-dance and student-athlete Olympics. Bethel's SAAC is focused on developing a sense of pride and being a part of the athletic department, such as developing student involvement at games, halftime shows, theme nights, the "Royal Cup" and other ways to compete, as well as a Red Carpet event to honor student-athletes. Concordia did a Cobber Kids PE program with youth and had a local Mascot Challenge through the Salvation Army. Augsburg worked on promoting athletic events and developed Pink Games to raise cancer awareness. Hamline has focused on improving SAAC attendance at meetings. Student-athletes also volunteered at a local elementary school. They are working with Relay for Life for an upcoming event and with the athletic department to improve game atmosphere. Millis said SAAC groups can learn about Special Olympics opportunities on the Special Olympics Minnesota Web site, and she said Special Olympic Bowling and the Polar Plunge are other ways to get involved.

Millis asked each institution to share a strength and a struggle from this fall. Hamline said attendance and discussion has increased due to starting meetings at 8 p.m., providing food and moving from a lecture-style meeting to more of a discussion-based meeting. Augsburg holds Sunday night meetings with pizza and has been pleased with productivity, but struggles with attendance. St. Catherine attendance has been good, but has struggled to keep their discussions focused and simple. Concordia meetings are run by administration and reported good student involvement, but struggles with the meeting time due to conflicts with chapel, classes and meal times. Bethel divides into subcommittees to accomplish more and meets on Sundays. St. Thomas has had more success with advance notice of meetings, and expanded leadership has helped flow and organization. Saint Benedict meetings are structured and organized with a detailed SAAC binder; the weakness is getting people involved and contributing more. Saint John's has had success with attendance due to pizza and discussion-based meetings.

Other best practice discussion was held on how SAAC members are chosen, how it is promoted and how all teams are represented. Tracking attendance has proved helpful for most groups.

IV. MIAC and NCAA Governance Update (Dan McKane)

McKane touched on Division III drug testing. He said due to expenses, Division III has decided to stick with drug-testing at NCAA championship events only and place more emphasis on drug education and awareness.

McKane gave an MIAC update. He said that at their last meeting, FARs discussed their involvement with SAAC and encouraged student-athletes to engage and involve their FAR. McKane said FARs discussed how athletic absences were handled and received feedback from student-athletes. It was suggested student-athletes should communicate with professors and even encourage them to attend games. McKane talked about sportsmanship and was pleased with how the fall went and encouraged SAAC groups to promote sportsmanship on the field and in the stands, especially in hockey. Baseball will move to a new playoff site in Minnetonka, tennis will have a roving umpire, and multi-event for outdoor track and field will move to St. Olaf. The MIAC has an officials' plan to improve education and communication. Artificial noisemakers have been banned for all contests.

McKane asked for feedback from SAAC members about expanding the non-traditional season in the MIAC. Concordia said the fall nontraditional season in softball helps integrate new players to their team. Saint John's said it was really beneficial in football to regroup and move forward. Godwin said at Macalester it was difficult because of the lack of seniors and students studying abroad and taking advantage of other opportunities. She felt students would still study abroad with increased nontraditional dates. Bethel said student-athletes should have a certain level of commitment and that college players are at a disadvantage due to restrictions. Augsburg talked about the competitive disadvantage compared to other Division III conferences.

McKane asked for feedback from SAAC members on the proposed 3.5-year graduation rule that would allow graduated student-athletes to compete in their final semester of eligibility without being enrolled in any classes. Hamline talked about student-athletes who take one credit in their final semester in order to compete and that the rule would reduce the number of student-athletes who waste their time taking one course in their final semester. Augsburg worried that people in this situation would lose touch with their team. Saint Benedict talked about a track student-athlete on their campus who is upset because she graduated early and cannot finish her final semester of eligibility. Saint John's representative said he is doing internship for his last semester so he can run track. Augsburg talked about it not really being fair, but it isn't any different from students taking one credit. Saint Benedict said it's up to the student. Some would move on but the option should be there.

V. MIAC Community Service Projects (Dan McKane)

McKane asked if anyone had additional questions about Special Olympics and discussed the Rebuilding Together Twin Cities project coming up this spring. A date will be set and communicate to the SAAC group.

VI. 201 NCAA Convention – Proposal Review (Dan McKane)

McKane summarized the NCAA Convention proposals and Godwin provided National SAAC's positions on each proposal. McKane asked SAAC members for feedback and took straw votes on some proposals. McKane discussed proposal #4 which would allow fundraising money to be split individually among members of a team. Saint Benedict said they'd prefer if it was situational. SAAC opinions varied among members. Straw poll indicated *MIAC SAAC was in favor 9-5*. McKane discussed proposal #7 and 7-1, which would allow student-athletes to work with a certified strength and conditioning coach year-round. The 7-1 amendment would only allow for the proposal during the academic year. Godwin said National SAAC supported the proposal but was against the amendment because summer is when most student-athletes work on strength and conditioning. They wanted student-athletes to maximize potential and resources, but worried about special treatment and the pressure to work out. Concordia said some sports feel pressure to pay for outside help, so this would level the playing field. St. Thomas said their campus was largely in favor of the proposal to be the best they can be. St. Thomas said it fit Division III philosophy, and it was great from a safety and technique standpoint. Augsburg said for cross country and track student-athletes, the summer is their off-season and they would like to have an equal opportunity to work with a strength coach during that time. A SAAC member asked about the restrictions around a head coach who may also be the certified strength and conditioning coach. McKane

responded that a head coach who was also named an institution's strength and conditioning coach could work with their student-athletes, but workouts must still be voluntary and could only be for strength and conditioning purposes. He said that when the proposal was written, there was no limitation written around this because so many staff members at Division III institutions wear different hats within each athletic department. *MIAC SAAC was in favor 14-0* of the original proposal. McKane discussed proposals #8-10, which would increase the NCAA Championships travel limit. Concordia was in favor. Saint John's talked about the problems with football. Godwin said National SAAC supported this proposal because Division III is about the student-athlete experience and well-being. *MIAC SAAC was in favor 14-0*. McKane discussed proposal #14, which would allow student-athletes to accept prize money to cover their actual and necessary expenses for an individual open event. There was both support and concern among SAAC members, especially in the definition and documentation of "actual and necessary expenses." *MIAC SAAC was in favor 12-2*.

VII. MIAC Leadership Conference (Sara Eisenhower)

Eisenhower outlined the MIAC Student-Athlete Leadership Conference that will be held at Saint Mary's University August 5-7, 2011. She said speakers have been lined up and the institutions will receive information on student-athlete selection in February. She asked for feedback on how the students should be selected, adding that the MIAC was hoping for a variety of student-athletes including gender, age, sport and leadership experience.

VIII. Promotion of MIAC and student-athletes (Matt Higgins)

Higgins talked about the MIAC's efforts to promote the conference and institutions online. The conference has gotten involved with social media. YouTube and weekly highlight videos have been the most successful thus far. Higgins asked for feedback on how student-athletes are using the Web site, and what things they liked about their campuses' athletic sites that the MIAC should consider trying. It was suggested that the MIAC share its photos on Flickr, and provide more photo and video coverage from events. Higgins said he planned to do an online story about SAAC service projects, and would contact different SAAC groups for feedback in the coming month.

- MIAC Facebook page (become a 'friend') - www.facebook.com/MIACathletics

IX. Other

Anderson Diercks asked if student-athletes received academic credit for participation in athletics. Gustavus and St. Catherine indicated that they do receive credit. Godwin said Macalester had previously investigated adding credit across all student activities and instead added the participation on a transcript.

Adjourned: 2:55 p.m.