

Date: September 1, 2019

TO: PROFESSOR OLIVER O'REILLY CHAIR  
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

FR: MARK D'ESPOSITO, CHAIR  
SENATE ATHLETICS COUNCIL

RE: **2019 SENATE ATHLETICS COUNCIL REPORT**

### **BACKGROUND**

This report summarizes the activities of the Senate Athletics Council (SAC) since I assumed the responsibility of Chair in the Spring, 2018. I have been a member of the SAC since the Fall, 2015. Considering the progress we have made since the formation of this committee, as well as plans that this committee has for the future, I would like to request consideration that the SAC become a permanent committee of the Academic Senate.

Originally, the SAC was formed and took its direction based on the report of the Chancellor's Task Force on Academics and Athletics issued in September 2014. The SAC was given the charge "to advise the Senate and Administration on matters pertaining to the welfare of student athletes both in and out of the classroom. The council membership should include at least four at large senate members (including the chair), a faculty representative of the Undergraduate Council, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and two current student athletes."

Although the SAC was charged to meet once per semester, the SAC has met four times per semester since I have been Chair. I would also like to note that the SAC was not provided a Academic Senate Staff analyst, and thus, all administrative tasks (e.g. scheduling, forming agendas, taking meeting notes, contacting visitors, etc) related to committee business has been performed by the Chair, or committee members. However, I would like to acknowledge the general support we have received from Deborah Dobin in the Academic Senate office.

In order to form a greater link between the Athletic Program and the SAC, as Chair, I have become a official member of two committees: the University Athletics Board, and the Committee on Academic Integrity.

Finally, over the time period that I have been Chair, the SAC has invited many individuals to our meetings to inform us about various issues, as well as guide us towards actionable goals. The following is a list of the individuals who have recently met with SAC members:

## Athletic Program

1. Jim Knowlton, Director of Athletics
2. Tennis Coach Peter Wright
3. Lindsay Huston, Head Team Physician
4. Ryan Cobb, Senior Associate Athletics Director, Performance, Health & Welfare
5. Jay Larson, Senior Associate Athletics Director, Administration

## Faculty

1. Professor Derek Van Rheenen, Director, Athletic Study Center
2. Professor Meg Conkey, Anthropology
3. Professor Arthur Ogus, Mathematics

## Students

1. Ella Boyce

## **PROGRESS**

The following is a brief description of the major issues we have addressed.

### 1. Faculty Fellows Program

The Task Force Report (in the section on Academics & Athletics and the Senate) found that current and prospective student athletes could benefit from greater access to faculty members, who could confer with prospective student-athletes about their academic interests and serve as informal advisors to student-athletes throughout their academic careers. Given this charge, a major focus of the SAC has been to revisit the "Faculty Fellows Program", originally started by the Athletic Study Center, and administered and maintained by the heroic efforts of Professor Meg Conkey. We have met with AD Jim Knowlton to discuss the goals of this program and he has fully endorsed expanding it in many different ways. For example, the Athletics Program will host an annual luncheon for Faculty Fellows and they will be recognized during a football game each year. We have also developed plans to recruit Fellows for every team on campus as well as find other faculty that would like to serve as advisors to student athletes in a less time consuming manner. Also, the SAC, with significant input from Jennifer Simon-O'Neill, Executive Senior Associate Athletics Director, have written a document that describes the duties and responsibilities of Faculty Fellows. In the future we plan on continuing to be very active in the development of this program in innovative ways.

## 2. Concussion in student-athletes

Several meetings were spent discussing concussions in student-athletes. During one meeting, Dr. Lindsay Huston and Ryan Cobb presented various aspects regarding this important issue such as (1) how athletes are educated regarding concussion, (2) how coaches are educated regarding concussion, (3) resources available from the PAC-12 (such as the GoHuddle Program) and NCAA regarding the education of concussion, (4) procedures that are followed by the medical and training staff after a student experiences a concussion (there are about 50 concussions per year in student athletes). I also met with Dr. Anna Harte, Medical Director of the UC Berkeley University Health Services to obtain further information about concussion education and treatment for the student body at large.

## 3. Mental Health Services for Student Athletes

We had one meeting dedicated to a presentation by a former Cal student athlete, Ella Boyce, who is partnering with the NCAA, Pac-12 and Cal to develop a mental health program for athletes. The goal of the program is to raise student awareness of mental health issues and was inspired by the work of a company called HumorThatWorks. In the future, our goal is further learn about the mental health services provided by the University Health services, where there are two psychologists that work directly with student athletes. We also plan on making contact with the Director of the Psychology Clinic in the Department of Psychology, which to my knowledge has never had any interactions with Athletic Program.

## 4. Admission Procedures for Student Athletes

One of our meetings was dedicated to a visit by Jay Lawson, Compliance Officer, who spent considerable time during the meeting providing details of the admission process of student athletes and answering questions from SAC members.

## 5. Bridging Masters Program

There were several discussions regarding a proposal by Professor Aponte to create a "Berkeley Masters Bridging Degree Program" which would provide an avenue for students who were previously unable to pursue a desired career path (e.g. student-athletes being one such group of students) while at Cal due to limitations in resources, experience and time as a result of exceptional contributions to the University and its community. This program would be comprised of individual master degree one year programs designed to provide Berkeley graduates with professional development and the ownership of the fundamental disciplines necessary for advancement to post graduate professional careers.

## FUTURE PLANS

We would like to continue to meet yearly with Jim Knowlton, Dr. Huston and coaches in order to maintain a close relationship with the Athletics Program. We would also like to increase our visibility among faculty on campus in order to strengthen our role as a liaison between the Academic Senate and Athletics program. Finally, if the SAC becomes a permanent Academic Senate committee, we will revisit our charge and formalize it with the Academic Senate. Finally, in addition to continuing to address the issues described above, there are also many new issues that we plan on addressing in the coming year which includes:

### 1. Athletic Study Center (ASC)

There are several aspects of the ASC that we would like to explore further including: (1) an assessment of the level of funding for the ASC, (2) how departmental faculty and GSIs can communicate better with advisors and tutors from the ASC, to provide more coordinated assistance to student athletes, particularly student-athletes of color who are struggling to balance academic and athletic responsibilities, and (3) consideration of ways that the SAC could work to ensure that the ASC is better integrated into campus culture.

### 2. Course scheduling and flexibility of majors for student athletes

We would like to invite the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education to visit the SAC to gather information regarding space/ classroom availability issues that play a role in accommodating student-athletes when taking into account practice schedules, NCAA rules, and other factors specific to student-athletes.

### 3. Summer Bridge Program

We would like to learn more about the Summer Bridge Program, and its interactions with the Athletics Program.

### 4. Golden Bear Advisory Committee (GBAC) and the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) association

Our SAC student representative asked us to assist the GBAC, the voice of student-athletes on campus, in obtaining representation in the ASUC.

### 5. Cameron Institute

We would like to invite Dr. Marissa Nichols, the Director of the newly formed Cameron Institute, which is a “new program that aims to provide student-athletes with skills for success after graduation. The program will be based on three pillars — leadership and personal development, career development, and community engagement — and will seek to help athletes pursue personal success after graduation.