ATHLETIC BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019-2020

Introduction

The Athletic Board has broad responsibilities under the Faculty Policies and Procedures. It fulfills these essential duties by relying on individual committees that report to the Board. These include: (I) the Academics and Compliance Committee; (II) the Personnel Committee; (III) the Finance, Facilities, and Operations Committee; and (IV) the Equity, Diversity, and Student Welfare Committee. Each committee meets several times during the year and consults regularly with Athletic Department staff. The chairs of each committee and the Board chair also consult with staff, the University Committee, and many others to discuss pertinent issues. The Board’s work is carried out in the context of intense public and media interest in Wisconsin athletics. The 2019-20 academic year, including the board’s service, was deeply impacted by Covid-19. In this report, we provide an overview of the board’s work and department outcomes amid this historically challenging year.

Multiple academic records were set by UW student-athletes during the 2019-20 academic year. UW student-athletes carried a 3.246 cumulative GPA at the end of the Spring 2020 term. This is the highest recorded cumulative GPA on record.* 105 UW student-athletes held cumulative GPAs over 3.70 and were named Distinguished Scholars by the Big Ten Conference. Also, 330 UW student-athletes were named Academic All-Big Ten during 2019-20. This represents the most UW student-athletes ever named Academic All-Big Ten in a single year. Additionally, 380 UW student-athletes achieved the Dean’s List, Dean’s Honor List, or Dean’s High Honor List. This represents the most UW student-athletes ever named to these Honors lists in a single year.

The academic performance of UW student-athletes is a major interest of the Board and the Athletic Department. The Academic Progress Rate (APR) is a measure used by the NCAA to monitor graduation of student-athletes at each institution. Teams must maintain a minimum score of 930. The 2018-19 APR, which is the most recently available reporting year, was well above 930 for UW in all sports, including perfect 1,000 single-year APR scores for eleven sports: Football, Men’s and Women’s Golf, Men’s and Women’s Swimming & Diving, Women’s Cross Country, Women’s Hockey, Women’s Soccer, Softball, Women’s Tennis, and Volleyball. Of note, seven sports, including Men’s Basketball, Men’s and Women’s Golf, Men’s Swimming & Diving, Women’s Cross Country, Softball, and Wrestling each received APR Public Recognition Awards for achieving a multiyear APR in the top ten percent of all Division I teams in their respective sports. Football finished with a 986 multiyear APR, placing it in the top fifteen among all NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision teams.

UW student-athletes currently major in eighty-four diverse areas of study. Personal Finance, Retailing & Consumer Behavior, Communication Arts, and Economics are the most common majors among undergraduate student-athletes. Additionally, of these eighty-four areas of study, there are currently sixty-eight different areas in which ten or fewer
student-athletes have declared as majors. A total of 150 current student-athletes graduated with either a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree during the 2019-20 academic year. A total of 930 UW student-athletes have graduated since the 2014-2015 academic year.

These exceptional results may be attributed to the dedicated efforts of the student-athletes, the Athletic Department’s Academic Support staff, and the University at large.

*Note: As with all UW students, Spring 2020 term GPAs were calculated based on SD/UD grading due to COVID-19.

2019-20 Athletic Board Membership
The Athletic Board consists of 23 voting members and one (1) non-voting member.

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Tricia Droes</td>
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<td>Charlie Trevor</td>
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<td>Gretchen Viney</td>
<td>Academic staff</td>
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Committees
During the period under review, the chair appointed members to four standing committees of the Board: Academics and Compliance Committee; Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare Committee; Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee; and the Personnel Committee. Each committee is responsible for reporting or referring items to the plenary Board.

Board organization is related to the structure of the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics (usually referred to as the athletics department): the athletics department has one director, seven associate directors, and several assistant directors. In 2019-20, three committees of the Athletic Board served as “boards” that worked in concert with four of the associate directors (Academics and Compliance; Finance, Facilities and Operations; Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare). The Personnel Committee worked with seven sport administrators (one assistant and six associate athletic directors) and one department head (human resources). The Medical Advisory Group (part of the Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare Committee) includes the head trainer and an assistant director.

I. Academic and Compliance Committee  
Co-Chairs: Bruce Klein and Seth Pollak

The Academic and Compliance Committee, charged with reviewing academic and compliance issues, met five (5) times during 2019-20. The Board is responsible for approving competition schedules with more than six (6) missed days of class. The committee approves or denies schedules based on several factors, including but not limited to the various student-athlete academic performance measures (FGR, GSR, APR). Student-athletes with a cumulative GPA of less than 2.5 remain limited to six (6) missed days of class, irrespective of committee approval. Teams that have schedules with less than six (6) missed days of class are also reviewed by the committee but are typically approved automatically.

Academic Services, led by Dan Rohrer, introduced various members of its staff to provide context on the daily work done to support UW student-athletes. The Committee was provided with an overview of the NCAA’s academic measurement tools – APR and GSR – as well as the internal measures Academic Services calculates in their Annual Report. After COVID-19 caused the university to pivot virtually, the challenges and successes of online learning, along with information on directed studies, were presented to the full board. Finally, the Committee continued to celebrate the academic achievement of UW student-athletes, i.e., Academic All-Americans, Division IA FAR Award Winners, and NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship recipients.

Under the direction of Joel Ott, the compliance staff continued to provide education, proactively monitor regulatory compliance, and self-report violations. The compliance office continued its educational programing utilizing various methods to increase awareness of rules and foster a compliance conscious environment. A letter from the NCAA Division I Committee on Academics Subcommittee on Data commending Wisconsin for its diligence and cooperation during the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s NCAA Division I Academic Performance Program Data Review Process.
evidenced the great collaboration of Academics and Compliance with the Registrar’s Office. The compliance office reviewed documentation submitted by coaches and other staff to ensure compliance as it relates to National Letter of Intent Signings and donation requests. Additionally, the compliance office shared updates with coaches and staff throughout the legislative cycle. The Athletic Department reported no Level I or Level II violations and fourteen Level III violations to the NCAA during the 2019-20 academic year. These numbers are consistent with previous years and evidence the university’s commitment to maintaining a level of trust that encourages self-reporting as a vital component of the department’s compliance efforts.

2019-20 Academics and Compliance Committee Roster

Seth Pollak and Bruce Klein  
Co-Chairs - Faculty

Dan Rohrer/ Katie Smith  
Staff Liaisons

Andrew Norman  
Legal Counsel

Susan Lederer  
Faculty

Peter Miller  
Faculty

Kenneth Mayer  
Faculty

Rob Kalejta  
Faculty

Doug McLeod  
Faculty

Charlie Trevor  
Faculty

Karl Shoemaker  
Faculty

Gretchen Viney  
Academic Staff

Paul McCann  
Alumni

John Schaeffer  
Alumni

SA rep  
SAESO/SAAC

ASM rep  
ASM

Tricia Droes  
University Staff

II. Personnel Committee
Co-Chairs: Ken Mayer and Andrea Mason

The Personnel Committee worked alongside the Board and Athletic Department staff to monitor procedures related to search and screen policies, the hiring of coaching staff, and matters related to sport liaisons. One area of focus involved the clarification of the duties of each sport liaison. Said individual is expected to monitor the student-athlete experience. The Post Season Bonus Policy dated October 2015 had no substantive changes. The Board continued to review head coach evaluations, which are brought to the full Board for approval.

The personnel committee’s typical review of student-athlete evaluations was challenging in the Spring 2020 semester. In previous years, the personnel committee
reviewed and discussed coach evaluations four times during the spring semester: once in January, once in April, and twice in June. The committee met as planned in January. Since several teams’ seasons were cancelled on very short notice, not all teams were able to complete seasons and not all student-athletes were able to complete coach evaluations that would typically be addressed in the April and June meetings. Personnel committee co-chairs Mason and Mayer were able to meet with department sport administrators and athletic board team liaisons to discuss each of these sports’ coaches during this period.

2019-20 Personnel Committee Roster
Ken Mayer and Andrea Mason  Co-Chairs - Faculty
Craig Hanson  Staff Liaisons
Andrew Norman  Legal Counsel
Bruce Klein  Faculty
Dan Lisowski  Faculty
Susan Lederer  Faculty
Andrea Mason  Faculty
Kenneth Mayer  Faculty
Peter Miller  Faculty
Rob Kalejta  Faculty
Seth Pollak  Faculty
Jeff Mack  Alumni
Doug McLeod  Faculty
Charlie Trevor  Faculty
Ann Sheehy  Faculty
Karl Shoemaker  Faculty
Jackie Hank  Academic Staff
Gretchen Viney  Academic Staff
Paul McCann  Alumni
John Schaefer  Alumni
Jeanan Yasiri Moe  Alumni
Tammie Hodgson  University Staff
Tricia Droes  University Staff
ASM rep  ASM
ASM rep  ASM

III. Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee
Co-Chairs: Karl Shoemaker and John Schaefer

The Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee met three (3) times during the 2019-20 fiscal year, which began July 1, 2019 and ended June 30, 2020. The committee primarily focuses on the following functions as detailed in University Faculty Policies and
Procedures 6.26. Athletic Board: D.9) Sets policy for and approval of uses of Division of Intercollegiate Athletic Facilities; D.10) Participates actively in the development of fiscally responsible departmental budgets and approves them for recommendation to the chancellor; D.11) Approves prices and policies for tickets for Division of Intercollegiate Athletic events; and certain aspects of D.12) Monitors compliance with all rules and regulations of the NCAA, Big Ten and WCHA; reviews and approves petitions to the NCAA, Big Ten, and WCHA; takes appropriate action on proposed legislation by the NCAA, Big Ten and WCHA; certifies to the NCAA, Big Ten and WCHA compliance with their eligibility requirements. The Athletics Department supports 23 sports and approximately 900 student-athletes. The committee meets 3-4 times per year to discuss financial reports, construction activities, and any other business of the department.

The committee reviewed the Baker Tilly Financial Audit Report that was issued January 6, 2020. This report is used to assess internal controls and agreed upon procedures. The department again ended the year slightly in the black, contributed money to the rest of campus, and had a clean audit opinion from the external auditors. Annual operating revenues during fiscal year 2018-19 were $132,865,841, which exceeded annual operating expenses of $132,704,603, leaving a positive net margin of $161,237. The committee reviewed the fiscal year 2020-21 budget and recommended its approval to the full Board. At each meeting, the committee tracked the budget to actual progress, noting actual results trended in-line with budget pre-COVID and then material adjustments as a result of the COVID impact. Issues at the forefront of our discussions this year prior to COVID included planning for two significant building projects, the South End Zone of Camp Randall and an addition at the Kohl Center. Once COVID hit, discussions pivoted to the financial impact on current and future operations. Due to the historically sound financial management, the Athletic Department is in a better position to make it through these challenging times than the majority of their peers.

Senior staff continue to plan for the economic future of the Athletic Department, though now with a materially different fact pattern than had been considered prior to the pandemic. The co-chairs met regularly with members of the senior staff to discuss various issues. The mechanisms and procedures for substantive interaction between the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Athletic Board through the Finance, Facilities and Operations Committee are in place and working.

2019-20 Finance, Facilities & Operations Committee Roster

Karl Shoemaker and John Schaeffer Co-Chairs
Adam Barnes / Jason King Staff Liaisons
Andrew Norman Legal Counsel
Doug McLeod Faculty
Andrea Mason Faculty
Kenneth Mayer Faculty
Peter Miller Faculty
Ann Sheehy Faculty
Charlie Trevor Faculty
Tammie Hodgson University Staff
Jackie Hank Academic Staff
Jeff Mack Alumni
John Schaefer Alumni
Jeanan Yasiri Moe Alumni
SA rep SAESO/SAAC
Tricia Droes University Staff
John Horn Ex-Officio
ASM rep ASM

IV. Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare Committee

The Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare Committee met five (5) times during 2019-20. 

During the 2019-20 academic year, the Equity, Diversity and Student Welfare Committee (EDSW) addressed multiple issues. The committee discussed the social justice efforts in the athletic department, led by the Inclusion and Engagement office, mental health issues facing student athletes with the Athletic Department (AD) staff psychologist, and the nutrition program. EDSW evaluated the AD career development programs and the job placement statistics for student athletes. Time demands on student athletes were discussed, in line with the national attention now being paid to this topic. EDSW completed a detailed gender equity review, paying attention to specific issues such as equal access to practice facilities and trainers, proportional opportunities to participate, proactive publicity efforts, and recruiting and retention practices. With the onset of Covid-19 toward the end of the spring semester, EDSW co-chairs Hank and Lederer took active roles in communicating with AD leaders on plans for assisting student-athletes with travel home, training adaptations, and physical/mental health needs associated with the pandemic.

2019-20 Equity, Diversity & Student Welfare Committee Roster

Jackie Hank and Susan Lederer Chairs
Doug Tiedt Staff Liaison
Andrew Norman Legal Counsel
Susan Lederer Faculty
Seth Pollak Faculty
Gretchen Viney Academic Staff
Rob Kalejta Faculty
Ann Sheehy Faculty
Andrea Mason Faculty
Bruce Klein Faculty
Tammie Hodgson University Staff
Faculty Athletic Representative Activities

Ann Sheehy and Peter Miller served as the University of Wisconsin’s Faculty Athletics Representatives (FARs) to the Big Ten and NCAA. Activities of FARs included (a) attending Big Ten and NCAA meetings; (b) reviewing and approving waivers, compliance violations, and requests for reinstatement; (c) certifying coaches through the administration and grading of certification exams; and (d) monitoring the implementation of policies and standards related to missed class days for conference championship events. FAR meetings, traditionally held approximately six times per year, were ramped up to multiple times monthly with the onset of Covid-19. Conference FARs met every other Monday morning (via Zoom) with Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren and other conference leaders, with the intent of learning about and advocating for student welfare.

Current Issues and Concerns

The 2019-20 academic year was, for athletics, a tale of two semesters. The first semester witnessed numerous successes academically and competitively, promising developments in student welfare, and stable financial conditions. The second semester brought Covid-19 and all of its overwhelming accompaniments. The athletic department, like the broader university, entered a new reality in many ways. Particularly, the department faces significant short and long-term challenges in areas of student welfare and financial stability. This being said, the athletic department’s infrastructure for adapting in such a difficult period appears solid in comparison with peer institutions across the conference and NCAA.

Student welfare issues for UW athletics must also continue to be closely examined as they relate to social justice. As the broader university and surrounding community are called to reflect upon past practices in areas of race, equity, and health -- and to advance with urgency in the present and future, so too is the Athletic Department. UW Athletics serves close to 900 student-athletes on 23 teams. Hundreds of staff and coaches work in the department. With renewed commitment, the athletic board should learn about the department’s efforts with and for these valued members of the campus community. The board can lend key guidance and support in ensuring that all are granted robust opportunities to flourish in the department and beyond.

Finally, intercollegiate athletics is in the midst of a major period of reform. Judicial and legislative action targets areas of “pay for play” and “name, image, and likeness.” Significant changes are underway addressing student-athletes’ opportunities to transfer between schools. Inquiry into student-athlete safety – for example, prevention of
concussions -- continues forward. All of these and other areas of possible change are seen at institutional, conference, and national levels. These matters, together with the instability brought forth by Covid-19, shape a terrain of Division 1 intercollegiate athletics that is marked by more uncertainty than any time in recent memory.

In this shifting landscape, the Athletic Board must be especially active in lending watchful support and oversight. The board should work in concert with the Athletic Department and university administration to advocate for UW’s commitment to holistic student-athlete experiences across a broad program of sports. Student welfare and opportunity are at the heart of the Board’s work with the Athletic Department and shall remain so in this active era of change.