

## **The Ohio State University Athletic Council Annual Report 2019-2020**

### **Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Chairperson**

The Athletic Council maintains policies and programs that are designed to improve the academic progress and well-being of student athletes. The committee also advises the Department of Athletics on decisions about finances and facilities.

The Council consists of sixteen voting members – eight tenured and tenure track faculty; two undergraduate students; one graduate student; one professional student; two alumni; and two staff. In years past, the Council consisted of only 15 voting members. In 2018-2019, the Council voted to add a second staff member for purposes of equity. In 2019-2020, that second staff member began serving a four-year term on the Council, up from two years, making staff membership and length of tenure of service by nonstudent members consistent across the Council.

The Council met on the first Wednesday of every month during the fall and spring semesters with representatives of the Athletic Department, Student Athletic Support Service Office (SASSO), the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR), and the president of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee.

The Council has three standing committees: Academic Progress and Eligibility (AP&E), Equity and Student Athlete Well-Being (ESAW), and Finance and Facilities (FiFa). Each committee met monthly, or more frequently as needed. The Council also had one ad-hoc committee – the Ad-Hoc Committee on Sexual Misconduct – which began work during the 2018-2019 academic year to help the Athletic Department review existing university and athletic department trainings and protocols related to sexual misconduct. The committee anticipates completing its work by August 30, 2020.

The Athletic Council took up the following issues during the 2019-2020 academic year:

- OSU sport psychologist Dr. Jamey Houle led a discussion on the role of sports psychologists in the Athletics Department. He explained that their primary goal is student athlete wellness and that they concentrate on preventative care. Athletics has added three fulltime counselors to assist in this work this past year.
- Deputy Director of Athletics Janine Oman addressed the Council on the evolution of sports science and student athlete performance and discussed recent steps taken by the Athletics Department to enhance student athlete performance. These measure have included adding a sport psychologist and nutritionist. She also reviewed recent

upgrades and additions to the university's sports facilities designed to enhance student athlete training and spectator experiences.

- The Council heard a presentation by Rick VanBrimmer, the Assistant Vice President for Trademark & Licensing, on the trademark and licensing of Ohio State's name and Athletic brand. The Council discussed ongoing national, legal, and legislative developments related to student Athlete control of their "Name, Image, and Likeness" with Athletic Director Eugene Smith. The Council met separately with President Michael Drake to discuss his role on the NCAA's Name, Image, and Likeness exploratory committee and talk about the implications of pending litigation and legislation for Ohio State University and Ohio State student athletes.
- The council reviewed, discussed, and approved by voice vote the annual report of the Athletics Department's Institutional Control Standards Committee.
- The council reviewed, discussed, and approved by voice vote changes to wording in its by-laws regarding the timeline for the transition of the Faculty Athletic Representative.
- In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Council requested and received regular reports from Athletic Director Eugene Smith regarding the processes and procedures being followed to ensure student athlete well-being and departmental compliance with NCAA rules, as well as projections for the FY21 and FY22 budgets.
- The Council instituted two, new, recurring agenda items at its monthly meetings. The Council added "hot topics," a time for Council members to bandy about thoughts and ideas as a collective, in conversation with Athletic Department administrators, to see if further discussion or deeper exploration of the chosen topic by a Council committee was warranted. Topics discussed included potential pitfalls of student athlete over-enrollment in online courses - a pre-COVID-19 discussion. The second new agenda item was "student voices." The Council made a concerted effort to hear directly from student athletes at every meeting. The Council, for example, welcomed presentations from the leadership of African-American focused, student athlete organizations RAS and SHEROS, as well as from participants in the Bucks Go Pro program and Wolstein Leadership Academy.

The Athletic Council's three standing committees engaged in the following work during the 2019-2020 academic year:

#### **2019-2020 Academic Progress & Eligibility Committee (AP&E)**

Chair: Courtney Lynch

Members: Kurt Koelling, Ken Lee, Kisha Radliff, Keely Croxton, Judy Villard Overocker, Treva Lindsey, Hasan Kwame Jeffries, DaVonti' Haynes

AP&E ensures that OSU athletic teams provide student athletes with the resources they need to excel in the classroom, particularly when competing away from campus, by requiring and reviewing rigorous academic mitigation plans for travel for each varsity team. AP&E also closely monitors the progress of students who have been deemed ineligible to play because of poor academic performance, a key safeguard to maintaining academic integrity within the department of athletics, and an important part of the process for getting struggling students back on track. AP&E also selects student athlete award winners.

- AP&E reviewed teams' missed class time forms and accompanying mitigation plans.
- The Chair of AP&E met with the Student Athlete Support Services Office (SASSO) and the Faculty Athletic Representative to review and provide feedback on the Academic "Stress Test" before it was brought before Council.
- AP&E reviewed, discussed, provided feedback on, and approved Academic Mitigation Plans and Academic Recovery Plans for the small number of students who were struggling academically.
- The Committee remained in close contact with SASSO to ensure that all student athletes received the support that they needed during the transition to online classes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- AP&E had the pleasure of voting on two awards: the Big Ten postgraduate scholarship award as well as the Big Ten Medal of Honor.

### **2019-2020 Finance and Facilities Committee (FiFA)**

Chair: Treva B. Lindsey,

Committee Members: Kurt Koelling, Ken Lee, Courtney Lynch, Derek West, DaVonti' Haynes, Chris O'Neil, Ted Adams, Steve Chappellear

Ex-Officio- Kris Devine (Business and Finance), Hasan Jeffries, Joe Odoguardi (Athletics), Brett Scarbrough (Athletics)

The Finance and Facilities Committee reviews and make recommendations to the Athletic Council regarding the Department of Athletics' budget, facilities, ticketing, and the University Golf Course. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the committee met six times and conducted the following business:

- Reviewed the Department of Athletics' budget for FY 2020-21
- Approved and recommended full council approval of basketball ticket pricing for 2019-20 season
- Reviewed long term plans of the Department of Athletics for facility construction and maintenance
- Formed an Ad Hoc Committee to assess the decline in football season ticket sales among students
- Developed a survey for students regarding interest in football season tickets

- Reviewed and recommended adoption of pricing for 2020 greens fees and membership fees at the university golf course
- Reviewed student, faculty, staff, alumni outreach regarding the fan experience
- Reviewed potential impact of “dynamic pricing” for public/single ticket inventory
- Approved and recommended full council approval of football ticket pricing for 2020 season

FiFa would like to once again commend the Department of Athletics for its long-range planning efforts and fiscal responsibility and stewardship. During these increasingly challenging times, the committee remains enthusiastic about the Department’s vision.

### **2019-2020 Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being (ESAW)**

Chair: Kisha Radliff

Committee Members: Keely Croxton, Judy Villard Overocker, Treva Lindsey; Kevin Petrilla; Matthew Hamrick, Dan Pitts

Ex Officio Members: Hasan Jeffries, Gene Smith, Janine Oman, Julie Vannatta, Parker Siegfried (SAAC President), John Davidson (Faculty Athletic Representative)

In an effort to further include alumni in Athletic Council committees, the following individual was invited to attend ESAW meetings as a guest: Stehen Schappelear (alumni representative).

The Equity and Student-Athlete Well-Being committee (1) monitors issues of equity related to student-athletes and provides timely reports on equity matters to the Council; (2) monitors issues related to the well-being of student-athletes, including emotional and physical health, personal development, social responsibility, sportsmanship, and ethical conduct; (3) serves in an advisory capacity to student welfare and development programs within the Department of Athletics including, but not limited to SASSO, and SAAB; (4) monitors media coverage and encourages efforts to provide accurate information about student-athletes to the university community and general public; and (5) fosters communication about the progress and success of student-athletes to the university community and the general public.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the committee met on the following dates and conducted the following business:

- September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019: At ESAW’s first meeting of the year, the committee welcomed Dr. Jamey Houle, Lead Sport Psychologist for the Department of Athletics, who oversees the mental health services provided to student-athletes. Dr. Houle provided an overview of the Sport Psychology Treatment Team, their initiatives that contribute to a “Culture of Wellness”, and student-athlete referral process. After Dr. Houle’s presentation and discussion, the committee felt positive that the Sports Psychology Treatment Team was engaging in proactive measures and providing a wealth of services to support student-athlete wellbeing and resiliency. Further, these services were provided in multiple ways (e.g., individual, group, programs) to meet the diverse needs of student-athletes.

- October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019: ESAW was joined by Derek Cowherd, the Director of OSU's Student-Athlete Support Services Office (SASSO), as well as Kim Doran, Director, Instructional Support Services & Chief of Staff, and Shaun Swearingen, Associate Director of SASSO. Mr. Cowherd, Ms. Doran, and Mr. Swearingen provided a discussion about the structure, goals (i.e., create independent learners), processes (i.e., individualized approach), and focus (i.e., start with the basics) of SASSO. The committee was impressed with the process of SASSO, providing services from recruitment to graduation, as well as post-graduation opportunities. The committee was pleased to learn that Athletic Department provides extensive supports to set student-athletes up for success even before they start at campus and that the services provided are exemplary as evidenced by their well-trained and highly knowledgeable staff.
- November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019:* The committee was joined by Derek Cowherd, the Director of SASSO, and several student-athlete leaders/representatives and advisors across several student-athlete groups or organizations to learn about these groups: SHEROS, RAS (Redefining Athletic Standards), SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee), Global Buckeyes, SVP (Sexual Violence and Prevention Program), and Peer Educators. Mr. Cowherd talked about the role of SASSO in working with student-athletes as they endeavored to develop groups and providing the groups with resources and supports. The student-athletes and advisors talked about the groups' missions, events for student-athletes, and the benefits of their involvement. The student-athletes discussed their involvement in promoting mental health and wellness amongst each other, tackling difficult or challenging issues, developing leadership, and engaging with the larger Columbus community. The committee recognized the great work of our student-athlete leaders and the wonderful support provided by the SASSO staff. It was clear that the student-athletes felt empowered to create groups based on their needs and engage in the work that they do and know that they would be supported.
- January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020: ESAW welcomed Monique Bowman, Associate Director of Visual Media & Public Relations for the Athletic Department, to our meeting. Ms. Bowman is part of the Digital Media Squad that manages the social media presence of OSU Athletics, provides social media education to student-athletes, and provides information to coaches if they have been made aware of or observed troubling information from student-athletes on social media. The committee enthusiastically agreed that our Digital Media Squad is fantastic at what they do, and that they are indeed at the top of their game as evidenced by their contributions for OSU Athletics being "recognized each of the last five years as the most engaged social media presence in the NCAA"!
- February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020: ESAW was joined by three student athletes (Maddie Smith and Lexi Miehl: Dance team) and (Maria Wisman: Cheer team) to discuss the Spirit Program; Brutus was unable to attend. They shared with the committee information about OSU's spirit program, their experiences in their respective sports, and the support they received from the Athletics Department. Ms. Maddie, Ms. Lexi, and Ms. Maria spoke about training for competitions, recruitment, becoming varsity status, and emphasized

the unique opportunity they had to engage with student-athletes across other sports when they perform at other sporting events. The committee was impressed with the work of the Spirit Program and the support from the Athletic Department for these student-athletes. We also applaud the Athletic Department and Varsity O for including the Spirit Program last year and recognizing these team members as student-athletes. It is clear the student-athletes see that the Spirit Program is valued by the Athletic Department.

- March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Dr. Keely Croxton, a committee member, discussed updates from the Athletic Council Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Misconduct. The committee was pleased to learn that the Ad hoc committee has made steady progress in addressing their charge and that the Athletic Department has been proactive in addressing this issue.
- On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 ESAW held its last meeting of the year where the committee was again joined by Sports Psychologist Dr. Jamey Houle, Lead Sport Psychologist for the Department of Athletics. Given the upheaval brought about by COVID-19, Dr. Houle discussed the supports, strategies, and changes his team had engaged in to continue to meet the needs of the student-athletes in the virtual setting. He also noted that the team was also focused on what good might come out of this experience (e.g., learning the effectiveness of new modalities for service delivery, identifying innovative methods of providing supports) and offering information and supports to coaches and other sports staff. The committee was highly impressed by the quick transition and the variety of supports that the Sports Psychology Treatment Team pulled together to support student-athletes and the broader Athletic Department. Dr. Houle and his team have done a tremendous job identifying, implementing, and innovating supports to address the well-being of the student-athletes.

In total, the student-athlete support programs that the committee met with and reviewed this year were comprehensive, tailored to the student-athlete, and outstanding. As was stated last year, and continues to hold true, the university as a whole could benefit from the innovative support programs developed by the Department of Athletics.

**Respectfully Submitted by Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, Chair, on May 31, 2020.**