

## Senate Athletic Committee Final Report, 2020-2021

### Committee Membership

Heather Abernathy

Lisa Phillips

Kelly Banks

Drew Durham

Maggie Mnayer

Derek Reed

Flo DiGennaro-Reed

Jordan Bass

Jerry Crawford

Lisa Bergeron

Susan Twombly (Chair)

Susan Williams (Ex Officio FAR)

Paul Buskirk (Ex Officio representing Kansas Athletics)

The committee's specific charges for 2020-2021 were as follows:

1. Consider the COVID-19 emergency response by KU and KAI, how it affected student-athletes, and make recommendations for future emergencies.
2. Specific issues from this year's meeting that merit follow up by next year's committee:
  1. The number of and concentration of student-athletes in the BGS in LAS degree.
  2. The status of the proposed class absence policy.
  3. The mental health and general well-being status of student-athletes.
  4. Follow up of the proposed NCAA financial awards to conferences based on measures of academic performance. Perhaps Kansas Athletics will have more details about how this money will be spent and potential ramifications of such an "award."

The committee met five times to consider the specific and standing charges:

October 14

November 18

January 11

February 28

April 9

At its October 14 organizational meeting, the role/purpose and committee charges were discussed. The committee agreed to meet with Jeff Long, the Athletic Director and his staff as indicated in standing charge #1. The committee also determined that meeting with the Student Athletic Advisory Committee or its executive committee would be a good idea. The intent of these meetings is to help inform a useful agenda for the committee.

The November meeting was with Jeff Long and his staff. Although the meeting was largely informational, the Athletic Department indicated that it would like feedback on its compliance education activities for faculty and staff and how they might be made more effective.

The committee hosted David Reed, Senior Associate Athletics Director – Compliance & Student Services, At its January meeting to follow. As it turns out there really is no specific problem related to compliance education efforts with faculty and staff. The Athletic Department engages in extensive compliance education activities. Several useful recommendations were made to David for additional campus audience, such as the Center for Teaching Excellence and GTA orientation programs.

The focus of the committee's February meeting was student athlete academics. Paul made his annual report which showed really quite outstanding team academic performance in a very difficult situation. **Related to specific charge #1, Paul noted that the number of transfer student athletes, particularly in football had diminished and the number pursuing the degree was flat.** However, the number of non-student athletes pursuing the degree had declined so the percentage of degree pursuers was still over 50% student athletes.

The committee spent considerable time discussing the proposed excused absence policy. Karen Moeller, chair of APP, the committee considering the excused absence policy, invited representatives to meet with APP, which we did. Susan Williams provided APP with some suggested language. The last word from APP was that a final draft of the policy was ready to be sent to the Faculty Rights Board for consideration. The athletic committee has not seen the final draft. **This issue merits continued follow-up in 2021-22.**

Led by Jordan Bass, a subset of the committee met with some members of the SAAC Executive Committee on March 22. Issues that emerged out of that meeting included:

1. Numerous student-athletes said they go over the 20 hour a week maximum with required team activities. There seemed to be universal agreement on this point amongst the committee.
2. They also noted a decline in the medical and athletic training services offered, particularly noting overworked athletic trainers and having to pay for chiropractic service out of pocket when it was previously offered through the athletics department
3. Multiple student-athletes also noted they are required to take LDST 301, 302, and 303 – a course that has a zero or one credit hour option. They stated KU athletics will not pay for the one credit hour course and if they want it to count toward their degree, they have to pay for it out of pocket.

As noted in the April 9 minutes, several of the issues raised, specifically 2 and 3, were, in part, a result Covid-19 precautions and financial cuts in the athletic department. The sexual violence prevention requirement is being completely reshaped for the 2021-2022 academic year. **These issues merits monitoring.**

Recommended Specific Charges for 2021-22 Committee:

1. Schedule a session early in the year with the new athletic director to identify issues on which the Senate Athletic Committee might focus.
2. Meet again with SAAC early in the year (with no Athletic Department Administrator present) to gain a sense of academic and student life issues over which the Senate Athletic Committee has potential influence and could focus its 2021-22 agenda.
3. Follow up on status of Excused Absence Policy

4. Ask Jane Fulton for reports on the two SAAC issues raised this spring: the status of the sexual violence prevention requirements for athletes and the status of health services to for student-athletes.
5. Follow up on SAAC complaints about consistent violations of the twenty-hour rule.  
In light of national attention to issues of gender inequities in NCAA practices, it might be useful for the Senate Athletic Committee to request a presentation from Nicole Corcoran, Executive Associate Athletics Director/Senior Woman Administrator about how KU Athletic Department ensure that KU is a “model” of gender equity, not a problem.

FY2021 Standing charges:

1. To the extent possible the committee is encouraged to start each year with a joint meeting of the KAI Staff and the Athletic committee.
  - a. KAI would outline the things that are on their agenda that the committee could work on to help KAI and student athletes. The Senate Athletic Committee could do the same.
  - b. From this meeting, the agenda for the rest of the year could be built.
2. Review KU and Kansas Athletics Inc. (KAI) efforts to promote and maintain academic excellence for the student athletes.
  - a. Identify potential academic barriers and recommend mechanisms to overcome such barriers including collaboration with the student athlete academic support services.
  - b. Review current-year data on missed class days due to competition and travel.
  - c. Review the following KAI academic reports: Spring and Fall Student-Athlete Grade Summary, NCAA Academic Progress Rate Institutional Report, Graduation Rates and the KAI report on academic majors for student-athletes and non-athletes.
  - d. Review the effects of university changes regarding core requirements, majors, minors, certificates or other curricular issues.
3. Review KU and KAI efforts to provide a premier student athlete experience.
  - a. Review programs designed to ensure the personal development and personal welfare of student athletes including: nutrition and physical health, mental health, and safety.
  - b. Review reports from KAI exit-interviews and KAI survey questions regarding participation in the broader campus community.
  - c. Review Student Athlete Advisory Committee programs and recommend opportunities to improve student athlete involvement in extracurricular campus and community activities.
4. Help ensure KU maintains athletic compliance with University, Big XII and NCAA rules and Federal law.
  - a. Review educational programs and communication strategies to ensure the KU community better understands the combined responsibility for compliance.
  - b. Review and summarize KAI reports identifying athletic compliance parameters including but not limited to recruiting practices and university admissions.
  - c. Review KU and KAI policies and procedures on drug testing, diversity and sexual harassment including Title IX compliance, and alcohol use in matters of sexual assault reporting.
5. Help ensure KU meets its strategic goals pertaining to athletics.

- a. Recommend educational programs and communication strategies to enhance the balance between academics and athletics, as well as to promote a broad understanding of the goals and priorities of each.
- b. Recommend mechanisms for improved communication between KAI coaches and staff and KU faculty, staff and students.
- c. Maintain regular communications with the NCAA/Big XII Faculty Representative, the Athletics Advisory Committee (AAC), KAI and University Governance to ensure the needs of each are being served.