

# University Senate Athletic Committee

## Final Report, 2023-2024

### Committee Membership

- Chair: Jana Fitchett, Business, Faculty, Voting, 2026
- Brett Bricker, Communication Studies, CLAS, Faculty, Voting, 2024
- Josh Arpin, Business, Faculty, Voting, 2026
- Megan Greene, History, CLAS, Faculty, Voting, 2024
- Scott Harris, Communication Studies, CLAS, Faculty, Voting, 2024
- William Collins, Engineering, Faculty, Voting, 2026
- Anna Abernathy, School of Business, Staff, Voting, 2026
- Derek Kwan, Lied Center, Staff, Voting, 2025
- Evan Riggs, Provost's Office, Staff, Voting, 2025
- DaNae Estabine, Student, Voting, 2024
- Joey Wood, Student, Voting, 2024
- Luke Parker, Graduate Student, Voting, 2024
- Ben Easters, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, Student, Voting, 2024
- JaBrandion Douglas, Student Athlete Visitor
- Ryan King, Assoc. Director of Athletics for Student Athlete Support Services, Ex-officio, Non-voting
- Susan Williams, NCAA Faculty Representative, Ex-officio, Non-voting

### Committee Charges

#### Standing Charges

1. Start each year with a joint meeting of the Kansas Athletics Inc. (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 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, and 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.

## Specific Charges

1. Monitor the continued impact of Name-Image-Likeness and the ways in which the university should be involved, specifically as it applies to time constraints placed on student-athletes.
2. Address mental health and well-being of student-athletes.
3. Monitor the athletic time commitments and impact on student-athletes, specifically in relation to their educational expectations.
4. Consider the future of college athletics, specifically the impact that being left out of a “super” conference or league would have on the university prestige and enrollment.

5. Continued monitoring of the academic success of student-athletes, specifically as the transfer portal continues to facilitate movement between schools.
6. Consider the impact of significant athletic successes (e.g., 2022 Men's Basketball National Championship, 2023 Women's Basketball WNIT Championship) on the university (enrollment, fundraising, etc.) and ways the university did use/could use it to benefit the university community.
7. Monitor any legislative action taken by the Kansas Legislature to discriminate against transgender athletes in college athletics. Consider any necessary supportive measures.
8. Explore ways the university could be integrated into the facility improvements on campus, specifically the proposed renovations of the football stadium.

## Specific Charges (received from KAI as per Standing Charge #1)

1. Student-athletes must be enrolled with 50% in-person classes. A lack of in-person classes over the summer is creating challenges for international student-athletes. Charged with finding classes to accommodate this issue.
2. Faculty accommodating student-athlete travel schedules: charged with reviewing options to help both faculty and athletes communicate and make up missed work.
3. Student-athletes need more interfacing with schools' academic advisors. Most student-athletes only see their Athletics advisors and especially important to meet with school advisors for careers that have prerequisites that aren't necessarily aligned with program requirements (e.g., pre-med). The athletic advisors aren't always aware of needed classes. Q: Should it be a requirement for student-athletes to get their schedules signed off on before enrolling by a school advisor? Or should school advisors be assigned to student-athletes so that they are up to date on both areas of needs?

## Summary of Meetings

The 2023-2024 Athletic Advisory Committee met 4 times during the 2023-2024 academic year. The committee met in-person and had outstanding attendance. The committee met with both members of the administration at KU Athletics and student-athletes at KU. One accomplishment of the committee this year was identifying/creating in person summer classes needed by student athletes with a total of 4 identified courses and two good lower-level options. Ryan feels we are in good shape for summer 2024.

In addition, we identified best practices to be used by students and athletes for times of athlete competition or travel. This is documented but is on hold until further modifications are made to the excused absence policy. Next year, we will finalize and send our best practices recommendations to all faculty and student athletes.

The committee conducted a student athlete survey to determine needs for interfacing with school academic advisors. Few athletes use non-athletic career advisors and there was a not a consensus as to whether or not that would be necessary. We will continue to research this next year and determine if advisors from each major can be identified and assigned to athletes. Current recommendations include:

1. Upper class students mentoring of younger students in the same sport and major prior to enrollment.
2. Having school advisors record a video to disseminate to relevant athletes via the Teamworks app.

Additionally, the committee heard a report from Ryan King on the academic progress of student athletes at KU. Record breaking GPA's! We learned about the issues the transfer portal has created causing decreased federal graduation rates, even though the athletes leave in good standing. Next year's charge should include monitoring how this might affect funding. The NCAA marker is not affected by students leaving and is at 90%. The top 3 schools in which student-athletes were enrolled are: CLAS, Education, Business. The top 5 majors in which student-athletes were enrolled are: liberal arts and sciences, sports management, exercise science, pre-business, communication studies.

The committee met with members of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. The athletes noted challenges with time management but largely felt the resources were in place at KU to support their needs.

## Next Year

### Recommended Charges

#### Standing Charges

1. Receive new charges from the KAI staff regarding athlete needs.
2. Continue to monitor summer in person classes to ensure availability.
3. Monitor and address the overall well-being of student-athletes including nutrition, physical health, mental health and safety.
4. Continue to monitor the changing landscape of college athletics and determine how changes might affect the University of Kansas.
5. Continue monitoring of the academic success of student-athletes by reviewing the KAI academic reports on grade summaries, graduation rates, NCAA academic progress, etc.
  - a. Identify potential academic barriers and provide recommendations.
  - b. Consider the effects of university changes regarding core requirements, majors, minors, certificates etc. and determine the effect on athletes. Solve as necessary.
  - c. Recommend mechanisms for improved communication between KIA coaches, staff, KU faculty and students.

6. Help to ensure KU maintains athletic compliance by assisting KIA with needed resources.

## Specific Charges

7. Coordinate creation of school advisor videos to disseminate to relevant athletes via the Teamworks app. These will share details and required prerequisites similar to what would have occurred at an in-person advisor meeting.
8. Depending on the outcome of the new excused absence policy, the athletic committee will continue to provide recommendations and when appropriate, distribute a best practices for faculty and student athletes when missing class for travel. Continue to monitor student athlete absences related to competitions and travel.
9. Review the Student athlete advisory committee programs and recommend opportunities to improve student athlete involvement in extracurricular campus and community activities. Review reports regarding this from KAI exit interviews and survey questions.
10. Follow issues with the transfer portal and review how these may affect funding. Share solutions accordingly.

## Meeting Dates (Capital Federal Hall 1170)

September 19, 2024 at 4pm

November 14, 2024 at 4pm

February 6, 2025 at 4pm

April 10, 2025 at 4pm