

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON FACULTY COUNCIL ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Faculty Council on Student Affairs met at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, **April 28, 2003**, in 36 Gerberding Hall. Co-chairs Jeffrey Schwartz and Kathleen Fearn-Banks presided.

Approval of minutes

Approval of the minutes of March 12, 2003 was deferred.

Athletics at the University of Washington: Invited guests: Stanley Chernicoff, Director, Student Athlete Academic Services

Schwartz asked the council: "Should *we* do anything regarding Athletics at the University of Washington? We *have* concerns. I have put together a draft of a possible Class C Resolution to the Faculty Senate. For today's meeting, I have culled three key principles from the draft:

1. College athletes are students first, and their college experience must be as full participants in the student community.
2. Academic support structures for athletes must be fully integrated in university-wide programs, so that academic expectations and services are as robust for athletes as for other students. To ensure this goal, athletes on financial aid should receive adequate support to cover living expenses as well as their educational expenses, and athletes should be provided with appropriate advising and other assistance in meeting their academic obligations.
3. There should be faculty involvement in overseeing the athletic program. This would include both financial and academic oversight. Information on admissions, progress toward graduation, and graduation rates by sport and in comparison to the rest of the student body should be presented annually to the Faculty Senate."

Schwartz said no Resolutions can be submitted to the Faculty Senate until Autumn Quarter 2003. But he wanted to get the council's responses to the key principles of his draft.

Schwartz said it is extremely important, from his point of view, that student athletes are integrated into the mainstream of the University's student body. At present, there is hardly a semblance of that integration.

Kravas said the first two principles seem incontrovertible in their wisdom. Regarding the third principle, however, he said the words "overseeing" and "oversight" are problematic. The use of the word "oversight" in this context would be a definite "grabber," he cautioned. Schwartz said he meant "oversight" in the sense of "shared governance." Faculty, in this context, would "contribute to the process," said Schwartz.

Chernicoff said, "Robert Aronson, from the Law School, is the Faculty Athletic Representative. There is also a nine-member faculty advisory committee on Athletics. The Athletic Director, Barbara Hedges, makes a report to this committee. But, at present, this report does not go out to the full faculty. Norm Arkans, Associate Vice President and Executive Director of University Relations, was the representative of the President on the committee. It would be helpful to bring these various groups together." Kravas said it would be a good idea to have the chair of the faculty advisory committee on Athletics report to the Faculty Senate.

Chernicoff said there is significant NCAA monitoring of student athletes at the University of Washington, as at all major universities in the country. "Any student athlete who has completed his first two years of undergraduate work needs to prepare a graduating planning report. The University has been lax in allowing too generously for pre-extended majors. Student athletes stay on too long in this state [i.e., as

pre-extended majors]. But very high bars have been set for getting into many majors; thus, many students (athletes or not) have difficulty in gaining entry into their majors.

Schwartz said, “Our main concern is *for* these student athletes; that they get a fair shake, a fair opportunity to get into their majors and to have an academic education integrated into the campus’s university-wide programs.” Chernicoff said, “But *most* of the student athlete’s time is spent practicing for his sport, or training, or watching film, when not actually participating in his sport.” [Chernicoff stressed that virtually all the problems related to student athletes at the UW concern male, and not female, student athletes.]

Kravas said, “It would be good to know what the charge of the faculty advisory committee is.” Chernicoff said the advisory committee has been exceedingly effective, and is the President’s advisory committee on Athletics. “*I* report to the Board of Regents on the academic side of the student athletes’ lives at the University; and Barbara Hedges reports to the Regents on the athletic side.”

Chernicoff recommended contacting Paul LePore, Director of Undergraduate Program Development, for further information and advice on the issues being raised at this meeting. “The NCAA allows each institution to conduct the monitoring of progress towards graduation on the part of its student athletes on its own terms (so long as it meets NCAA standards and guidelines),” said Chernicoff.

Kravas said, “It seems that sometimes our student athletes come here and they have real pressure (*everyone* does); and they become *dependent* on people swooping down on them. *Is* there a *culture* here, in which they’re too dependent [the student athletes]?” Chernicoff said, “Low admission student athletes *should* be in community colleges. If you turned them loose, they’d just flunk out. They’re *not* prepared, quite often, to do the academic work they need to do at the University. What’s happening *now* is that these students [the ones definitely unprepared] are sent off to community colleges. If they do well there, they will be reconsidered for acceptance into the University of Washington. If we *didn’t* monitor and help these student athletes – help them remediate their deficiencies – they’d just fail immediately. Student athletes can either work real hard, *or* cheat, *or* flunk out. Student athletes can *only* attend the shorter of the two summer bridge programs; thus, they cannot gain the larger benefit the longer bridge program could afford them.”

Chernicoff pointed out that it is on the men’s basketball team that one finds the most egregious examples of student athletes who are struggling to survive academically, and who are all but completely cut off from integration with university-wide academic (and, for that matter, social) programs. “We haven’t graduated an African-American basketball player in 20 years,” he noted. “And a starting player on the 2002-03 men’s basketball team is no longer a student at the University.”

Fearn-Banks said, “They [the student athletes] need to be ‘turned on’ to the academic aspect of the University.” Chernicoff said, “The ones [among the student athletes] who graduate *are* turned on.” Kravas said, “Students need the opportunity to do things for themselves. But I see what you mean about these dependent students.” Chernicoff said, “We give them guidance; but they do what they need to do themselves. Again, however, I must note that virtually their whole day, and whole week, is taken up with tutoring and working out and practicing and looking at film.”

Chernicoff informed the council that, beginning next year, access to post-season play and access to size of team (how many players a particular team will be allowed to carry on its roster) will be tied to graduation rates. “The [graduation] rate may be lower than what it might be, but it *will* be a positive change. There is far too much emphasis on competition. We will be able to better screen the student athletes who come to the University of Washington.”

Chernicoff addressed the key principles of the draft of possible Class C legislation [see above for full wording of the key principles]. He found the first principle fine as worded. As for the second principle, he said, “Expectations are more robust for athletes than for other students.” He added that, with respect to student athletes’ living expenses (in addition to their educational expenses), “They *do* need money for such things as going to a movie, or purchasing clothes; but we don’t give them the full cost of attendance. If we did, the Athletics department might go into the red, and it *has* to be in the black.”

Chernicoff said that, beginning Autumn Quarter 2003, there will be a new study center in Mary Gates Hall that *all* undergraduate students will have access to. It will serve upwards of 20,000 undergraduate students. It will be bigger than the instructional center, and will integrate student athletes with the other students. (Chernicoff stressed that the new study center will not vie with the instructional center, which closes at 5:00 p.m. The hours of the study center will encompass the entire evening. The center will close at midnight. It will be open Sunday through Thursday.)

Chernicoff delineated three kinds of students who will use the new study center: 1) students who want to learn more, and to enrich their learning; 2) students who want better grades: the “vast middle”; and 3) students who may be asked to take a special course at the study center, such as a ten-week course in “Studentship,” instructing students on how properly to take notes, and to develop better study skills. Graduate students and professors will also participate; professors will feed material to their graduate students. And though the students’ TA’s will not be available at the study center, senior equivalents of TA’s *will* be available.

Chernicoff said the study center should be “transformative” for student athletes, and should fully, or at least better, integrate them into the mainstream, into the environment of the main campus. He fully agreed with McKinstry that student athletes – indeed, all students – must learn to be more efficient in their use of library resources. McKinstry said, “We would be happy to have a Libraries person there in Mary Gates Hall to help the students.” Chernicoff said this would be extremely helpful. McKinstry also said the Odegaard Undergraduate Library (OUGL) could provide additional study space if the study center needs it. “We have 14 group study rooms,” she noted. “We would be glad to make some of that space available.” Chernicoff said the study center, for the most part, wants to be in one location; but having satellite locations near Mary Gates Hall – as would be the case with OUGL – would probably work well, he added.

Asked who else is involved in creating the study center, Chernicoff said, “Students will be my advisory board. I’m creating this, at the request of George Bridges and Undergraduate Education, but will be drawing on many people. I’ll be helped by the Academic Support Center. But mostly, I’m just *listening to students*.” He said George Bridges has been talking about a program like this for quite some time; now that conception will become a reality. The new study center, he added, would be under the aegis of the Office of Undergraduate Education.

McKinstry asked the status of the laptop program for student athletes, a program started in 1995 with the Libraries/UWired/ICA collaboration. Chernicoff said the laptop program “is moribund now,” but that hopefully it could be revived. McKinstry observed, however, that when such a program was initially experimented with, it worked best with the women student athletes, who were given more freedom to connect to campus while on the road. The success of the expanded program depended to some extent on the importance placed by the coaches on technology and research skills as means to improving grades. If support came from within a program – particularly from someone high up in a program – the laptop program might yet work in men’s athletic programs.

Asked about the reinstatement program for student athletes who fall out of the program, and out of the University, Chernicoff said, “If a student athlete falls below a 2.0 GPA (the GPA needed to graduate), he

has to bring it back to an overall 2.0, or get a 2.5 GPA, the next quarter, if he is not to be forced out of the University. He thus has one quarter of probation in which to remedy his academic standing.”

As an example of how much tougher the standard has become at the University of Washington, with respect to academic requirements for student athletes, Chernicoff said, “Only four out of 33 requests for reinstatement were accepted most recently.” He noted that this is, in some measure, tied to reducing the over-enrollment at the University. And he reiterated that the basketball program has already lost one starting player, and added that the football program also lost a “star quality” player due to academic failure. “So the coaches in Athletics are now *aware* of this problem. And he said that, next year, “a student athlete will need to *start* the academic year with a 2.0 GPA in order to compete, including star-quality athletes on major athletic programs (i.e., by the end of summer the GPA will need to be at 2.0 or better).” He added: “I think this can help student athletes to be part of the mainstream culture of the University.”

Kravas said, “The degree to which we help these student athletes turn their lives around will make a very good story.” McKinstry wondered what percentage of students who are aided by the student scholarship program are needy students. Chernicoff said, “There is a special assistance fund available that helps many needy students.” Kravas said, “More than 40% of the general student body receives *some* kind of financial aid.”

Next meeting

The next FCSA meeting is set for Monday, May 19, 2003, at 2:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall.

Brian Taylor
Recorder

PRESENT: *Professors* Schwartz (co-chair) and Fearn-Banks (co-chair);
Ex officio members Croft, Kravas, McKinstry and Moore-Reeploeg;
Guest Stanley Chernicoff, Director, Student Athlete Academic Services.

ABSENT: *Professors* Fridley, Herwig, Karmy-Jones and Williams;
ex officio members Feetham, Hatlen, Lewis and Morales.