

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
FACULTY COUNCIL ON STUDENT AFFAIRS**

The Faculty Council on Student Affairs met at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2002, in 36 Gerberding Hall. Co-chair Kathleen Fearn-Banks presided.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of November 19, 2002 were approved as written.

**Update on the University Councils Committee – Kathleen Fearn-Banks**

Fearn-Banks said that nothing was decided at the last meeting of the newly-constituted Special Committee on Faculty Council Organizations. “They are looking at the eight ‘next steps’ [see handout of the Draft Agenda of the committee’s November 25th meeting] to see how the recommendations of the Rose Report might be implemented. They will start with the Faculty Council on Research (FCR) in a pilot program to test the workability of the University Councils.”

**Intercollegiate Athletics: The Effect on Student Athletes – Guest: Stanley E. Chernicoff, Director, Student Athlete Academic Services, Intercollegiate Athletics**

Chernicoff said he has checked with people throughout the University community, and he believes that “this concept of having an ‘entertainment business’ (football, men’s basketball, and women’s basketball, mostly) is an incredible flaw.”

“Many of these students are not prepared for academic life at the University of Washington. And we can’t ignore this reality,” said Chernicoff. “This type of program does exist, and is going to continue to exist. We can either ignore it, or try to help those student-athletes (predominantly, but not exclusively, in the sports just named) who are most in need of assistance and mentoring, to become genuine student-athletes, and to become part of academic and campus life at the University.”

Chernicoff said that a great many of the 652 student-athletes in 23 sports at the UW are genuinely a part of campus and academic life. “But my day is monopolized by football and basketball players, most of whom are below the bar in the admission index. The average GPA in the admission index is 3.72, but many of these students have a high school GPA of 2.50 and an SAT score of 820 or less. We try to help these under-prepared students as best we can.”

Chernicoff said there are requirements these student-athletes have to meet to retain their standing with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) benchmarks for progress towards degree. “This is different than it was in the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s,” he pointed out. “Now, every student must have 12 credits per quarter, and complete 36 credits in an academic year. And he or she must finish his or her degree in five years.”

These students can only take nine credits in the summer; they must take 27 credits during the academic year, if they do take credits in the summer. Their GPA will have to be above 2.00 from now on. “The bar has been set higher,” said Chernicoff. “The NCAA has increased its benchmarks for progress towards degree. Students now must have completed 40% of their program after two years, 60% after three years, and 80% after four years. Again, their degree must be earned after five years.”

The student-athlete must be certified by the department of the student’s major each year, said Chernicoff. “Sometimes students don’t get into a major until their senior year; they’re under-

prepared, and 20 hours of their week are taken by the sport in which they're involved. These students are exhausted. They're the most under-prepared students on campus. And with the myriad rules that apply to getting a major at the UW, these students' under-preparedness leaves them even further behind their fellow students."

Chernicoff said that it redounds to the University's credit that the Student Athlete Academic Services program at the UW is the best such program in the country. The program has existed since 1971, and has been under the leadership of several directors in those three decades. The program serves all 652 student-athletes in the University's 23 sports.

Chernicoff said Student Athletic Academic Sciences has a math and science drop-in center "at the upper end." But for more challenged students, 70 tutors are available every day. "It's a complex program with 21 FTE's on the staff. We took plenty of resources from the Athletic Department, because of the success of the football program."

Chernicoff said he is in his fifth year as Director of Student Athletic Academic Sciences. "There was a period of 'collecting' directors, including one Ph.D. from Harvard University. Harvard, however, had no such program, and that director was ill-prepared to assume control of the program."

"It was an experiment: to send a faculty member – myself – down there. I'd had 18 years in a regular upper campus environment. President McCormick asked me to stay on [as director]. My relationship to faculty is good; that helps in resolving problems for student-athletes as students. I have the ear of their coaches. I invite 10-20 faculty each week to watch a football game: to see what absurdity these student-athletes are subjected to on Saturday. Students like that. They say, 'That's my professor there!' It creates positive relationships. If we don't do this – create a positive environment and positive interaction between faculty and student-athletes – the situation at the UW will be as bad as it is on other campuses."

Chernicoff said, "There are problems such as plagiarism with these students, though that applies to other students as well. Many student-athletes – again, poorly prepared for University-level academic life – do not know precisely what constitutes plagiarism. When a student is caught plagiarizing, I bring him before an ethics committee and make him aware that this kind of behavior is beneficial to no one, least of all himself, and will not be tolerated. I will say that I've almost never had a coach come to me and ask me to do anything wrong for one of his athletes."

Chernicoff pointed out that he "does not work for Barbara Hedges, the University's Athletic Director. I work for the University of Washington. Otherwise, there would be a conflict of interest. I am well placed not to have my office completely under the aegis of the Athletic Department. George Bridges, Dean of Undergraduate Education, has provided office space for my office in Mary Gates Hall, which is good. Eventually it would be best to have us completely under the aegis of George Bridges and Undergraduate Education."

Fearn-Banks asked, "Are players comfortable with you because you're in the Athletic Department?" Chernicoff replied, "Yes, to some degree, but not only because of that. I've worked with Bruce Bennett [FCSA ex officio member] well in working with students." Bennett said, "Yes, because Stanley is faculty, a member of the academic community, he is trusted."

Chernicoff gave a list of "Things to Do" to enhance the University's Student Athlete Academic Services:

- “We need to increase the University’s willingness to remediate these student-athletes in basic learning categories. Courses have been created to help students in math and other areas. These are actually high-school level courses that under-prepared student athletes need if they are to progress toward their majors.”
- “We need to offer a study skills program. We need to teach these student-athletes about plagiarism, and how to write effectively at a basic level.”
- “We need a campus-wide awareness that we have these students who are severely under-prepared. The pressure on these kids is great: the psychological and emotional demands. Some sports take upwards of 30-40 hours of a student-athlete’s life per week. After all this, the students are utterly exhausted.”

Schwartz said, “Can we help? Can FCSA help?” Chernicoff said, “Much can be done. But more than anything, there needs to be flexibility on the part of the coach and faculty both. These student-athletes are subject to two power centers: the coach and the faculty.”

Chernicoff emphatically stated that “student-athletes should not be penalized for having to, say, travel to another city [to participate in a game] while representing the University of Washington.” He said he would love to see a brochure from the Faculty Senate stating that students representing the University when traveling [to participate in a game] need to be dealt with flexibly in their academic programs. “I want students not to have to default to a major they don’t want (because they have to drop a course in the major they do want because of difficulties arising from their having to travel).”

Chernicoff said, “Most of our student-athletes do know that academics are more important than athletics for their future. But student-athletes now train all year round. There is no ‘down time’ after their team concludes its season. There is no time off. We as faculty might address that. We might suggest that they need time off for a fuller life at the University. Here, at the UW, student-athletes are not perceived exclusively as athletes by their coaches. If there are problems, their coaches come to me, or I go to them. There is a free flow of information. It’s not a ‘win at all cost’ University. You don’t get to play here, if you don’t study here.”

Chernicoff was asked about “boosters.” He said there have been problems with boosters – some of them well documented – “but we watch them like a hawk. They can’t meet with athletes one-on-one. They need to report to a compliance group, though the compliance group would best be unaffiliated with the Athletic Department, and would report to the president.”

Chernicoff said coach cooperation “can be a problem sometimes. Coaches need to cooperate when a student is guilty of academic misbehavior (and as I mentioned previously, most all coaches are fully cooperative). If I recommend that a student-athlete needs to be disciplined, the coach needs to comply.”

Chernicoff said, “UW Athletics is one of 15 such programs in the country that receive no money from the University’s general fund, and is thus completely self-sustaining. The new president of the University hopefully will be more involved in this whole process, and be in charge of the Athletic Department. And the Faculty Senate should be active in this process as well.”

Asked about the pandemonium that broke out after the Washington State University vs. University of Washington football game in Pullman, Chernicoff said, “There was an almost total absence of security at the game, and no discernible police presence. And people were almost looking for a fight, with so much at stake in the game, and the tensions arising from the longtime rivalry. The outbreak could have been worse.”

Fridley said, "Are there any institutions that really understand – and have – the fit they want, with respect to athletics and academics?" Chernicoff said, "I'm not sure anyone has done this successfully. We're not going to eliminate these sports programs, so we want to do the best we can to develop trust between the faculty and the Athletic Department, between faculty and coaches. Students need to be monitored, as well, in their behavior in their classes."

Fearn-Banks said, "The problems start at home. They're brought up to be athletes. And now it's worse. They won't make enough money as doctors. There's more pressure to be athletes. We don't do a good job of helping students with documented learning disabilities. We need special education people who can help remediate this problem. Faculty could help develop a program that deals with this."

It was noted that degree completion among athletes at the UW is near the top of institutions in the Pac-Ten conference. 90% of the University's student-athletes who complete their academic eligibility do graduate.

Schwartz asked, "Do student-athletes feel that they are part of campus life?" Chernicoff said, "Football players do, yes. Men's basketball players do not. They have fragile personalities, for the most part, and are kept separate not only from other students, but even from other student-athletes."

Chernicoff asked council members to call him with any questions they may have. And he said he would be happy to revisit the council at a future meeting.

**Next meeting**

The next FCSA meeting is set for Wednesday, January 15, 2003, at 2:30 p.m., in 36 Gerberding Hall. The chief discussion item will be the proposed University Councils: the Rose Report.

Brian Taylor  
Recorder

**PRESENT:** *Professors* Schwartz and Fearn-Banks (co-chairs) and Fridley;  
*Ex officio members* Bennett, Lewis, McKinsty and Morales;  
**ABSENT:** *Professors* Herwig, Karmy-Jones and Williams;  
*ex officio members* Feetham, Hatlen and Kravas.