



OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT

July 23, 2024

Mr. Whit Babcock
Director of Athletics
Jamerson Center (MC0502)
25 Beamer Way
Blacksburg VA 24061

RE: Annual Report of the University Athletics Committee

Dear Whit:

I am pleased to present the annual report on behalf of the 2023-2024 University Athletics Committee (UAC). The report includes committee membership and meeting agendas. It remains a great privilege to have worked with you, Jen Irish, and Rachel Holloway as well as many other athletics and university leaders throughout the past year. A special thank you to our Athletics Department-UAC liaison, Danny White, senior associate athletics director of student-athlete services/university affairs, who provided significant assistance throughout the academic year.

Most meetings were held virtually and were well attended by committee members (or designees). Each 90-minute meeting was structured to allow for collaboration between UAC members and key constituents. Guest presenters were strategically selected to enhance committee members' knowledge and understanding of topics specifically related to the charge of the UAC.

Jen Irish, faculty athletics representative appointed in August 2021, remains a tremendous asset to our student-athletes, UAC, university, and Atlantic Coast Conference. As appropriate, I will continue to advocate for former FARs to serve as ex-officio members of UAC. Joe Tront continues to provide broad perspectives and understanding of the complex landscape of university athletics.

As a part of each meeting, Sarah Armstrong, director of student-athlete academic support services, provided UAC members with information related to all aspects of academic support provided to our student-athletes. Topics included tutoring processes, faculty progress reports, academic progress rate guidelines and calculations, graduation success rates, and academic celebrations.

Of special note, UAC members approved by majority vote the revised Athletics Department Scheduling Policy and Procedures guidelines as well as the removal of "scholarship" from the description of two athletes (one from men's sports and one for women's sports) eligible for appointment to the UAC. In addition, the UAC subcommittee of the missed class policy group received approval by UAC members and the provost's office for student-athletes to participate in an NCAA and Olympic trials qualification track and field competition during the spring 2024 final exam period.

Recommendations for UAC in 2024-2025 include:

- Determine goals for UAC that correlate with reviews conducted by peer ACC institutions.
- Develop relevant meeting agendas that include special guests (including new head coaches)/presentations at strategic times throughout the academic year. Intentionally involve student athletes appointed to the UAC for reflections/presentations during meetings as appropriate.
- Increase committee members' awareness and understanding of support provided to student-athletes by the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services unit including compliance to university, ACC, and NCAA standards and regulations.
- Continue to review and update, as appropriate, Virginia Tech Athletics Policies and Procedures.
- Prepare resolution to University Council to remove "scholarship" from the description of athletes eligible to serve as UAC members.
- Continue to appoint UAC faculty members as a subcommittee, chaired by the university's FAR, to review and approve missed class requests and athletic competition scheduling conflicts/requests.
- Monitor changing NCAA regulations and impacts on Virginia Tech student-athletes (e.g., Name, Image, and Likeness [NIL] endorsement deals, academic incentive, student-athlete well-being).
- Provide feedback related to program balance between revenue and non-revenue sports, NCAA compliance, and general intercollegiate athletic budgetary and operational matters.
- Provide advice to senior university officials on such matters related to student-athlete academic success (e.g., academic progress, admissions policies, academic advising, mental health and overall well-being) and relationships with faculty and academic departments.

It has been an honor and privilege to chair the University Athletics Committee since 2020. I have the greatest confidence that John Galbraith, recently appointed UAC chair for 2024-2025, will provide outstanding leadership, continuity, and knowledgeable perspectives as university leaders continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of collegiate athletics. I will continue to work and learn alongside of university leaders to advance opportunities for our student-athletes in order for them to demonstrate the greatest levels of academic success and athletic achievements. If I can be of any assistance in the future or if you need additional information, please let me know. Go Hokies!

Sincerely,

Susan E. Short, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Engagement
Outreach and International Affairs

University Athletics Committee 2023-2024 Membership

Chair – Susan E. Short
Representing Virginia Tech Alumni – Lisa Karlisch
Representing Virginia Tech Athletic Fund, Inc. – Jim Petrine
Representing Council of College Deans – Dan Givens

Representing each of the nine colleges:

Leanna House - Science
Kenneth Stiles - Natural Resources and Environment
Liesel Ritchie - Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
John Galbraith - Agriculture and Life Sciences
No representative – Architecture, Arts, and Design
Travis Burns – Veterinary Medicine
Miguel Perez/Robin Queen – Engineering
David Tegarden – Business
Mark Feldmann – Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

Representing Faculty Senate – Eric Stanley, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
Representing the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Dan Thorp, History, College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences
Representing the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty - Susan E. Short, Office of Engagement Administration
Representing the Staff Senate – Amy Ingram, Student Success Initiatives
Representing Athletes – Erin Carleton, Women’s Sports; Frank Thompson, Men’s Sports
Representing the Graduate and Professional Student Senate – Phillip Miskovic, Public Administrator/Public Affairs
Undergraduate Student Senate – Alex Efird, Political Science

Ex Officio Members:

Ken Miller - Vice President for Finance
Chris Wise – Designee for Vice President for Student Affairs
Rachel Holloway - Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Whit Babcock - Director of Athletics
Brad Wurthman - Senior Associate Athletics Director, External Operations
Jennifer Irish - President’s Appointed Faculty Representative to NCAA
Joseph Tront - Past Faculty Representative to NCAA

UAC Resource Personnel:

Sarah Armstrong, Director, Student-Athlete Academic Support Services
Danny White, Senior Associate Athletics Director, Student-Athlete Services/University Affairs

Agendas for 2023-2024 UAC Meetings

Each meeting included a review and approval of previous meeting minutes, special presentation(s), and an update and Q&A session with Whit Babcock, director of athletics, or designated representative such as Danny White, senior associate athletics director for student-athlete services/university affairs. All meeting minutes can be found at [Governance | UAC \(vt.edu\)](https://www.uac.vt.edu).

September 14, 2023 – Virtual Zoom

- Newcomers Session/Orientation
- Reviewed Committee Charge
- *Presentation:* Clint Wattenberg, associate athletics director/sports nutrition (services overview, support of student-athletes and successful performance)
- *Presentation:* Derek Gwinn, executive associate athletics director/compliance (sports wagering)
- FAR Update: Jen Irish (ACC expansion, graduate certificate programs/eligibility)
- Athletics Director Update: Danny White (ACC expansion, future topics request, graduate certificate options)

October 12, 2023 – Virtual Zoom

- FAR Update: Jen Irish (ACC Fall Governance meeting update, graduate certificate approval for scholarship athletes) **Please note:** UAC appointed John Galbraith and Liesel Ritchie to the Academic Success sub-committee.
- *Presentation:* Reyna Gilbert-Lowry, executive associate athletics director/inclusive excellence and alumni engagement (ACC priorities, equity, student athlete experience, conference expansion, staff development and retention)
- SAASS Update: Sarah Armstrong, SAASS director (2023 academic performance, student-athlete incoming profiles, degree program enrollments, new staff members, AD Honor Roll recipients)
- Athletics Director Update: Whit Babcock (NCAA legislation, NIL, transfer portal, lawsuits, revenue sharing, research demands on student-athletes)

December 14, 2023 – Virtual Zoom

- *Presentation:* Brad Wurthman, executive associate athletics director/external affairs and advancement – Reseat 101 (ticket sales, reseating, and revenue generation)
- *Presentation:* Gary Bennett, associate athletics director/clinical and sport psychologist (counseling and mental health performance, student-athlete training in the areas of sexual assault, mental health, and suicide prevention)
- FAR Update: Jen Irish (ACC sub-committee focused on academic best practices, missed class policy. **Please note:** UAC approved the revised Athletics Department Scheduling Policy and Procedures guidelines.
- SAASS Update: Sarah Armstrong (reading day events, commencement celebrations/recognitions, final grades, bowl certification process for football student-athletes)
- Athletic Director Update: Danny White (legislative update – including NCAA President Baker’s memo in relationship to compensating student-athletes, recent court case related to immediate eligibility for transfers)

January 18, 2024 – Virtual Zoom

- SAASS Update: Sarah Armstrong (Fall 2023 student-athlete academic success, team accomplishments, winter enrollments)
- *Presentation:* Frank Thompson, Men’s Tennis – Student-Athlete Perspectives (involvement with Student-Athlete Advisory Committee – SAAC, Leadership Institute, academic interests)
- Athletics Director Update: Whit Babcock (topics included ACC grant of rights, NCAA class-action law suit, NCAA leadership, and congressional involvement with NIL) In addition, Whit discussed concerns related to how “big money” may impact Title IX.

February 8, 2024 – In-person Facilities Walking Tour

- UAC members toured English Field, the indoor softball facility, indoor track and field, and Student Athlete Academic Support Services offices (Lane Stadium).
- *Presentation:* John Szefc, head baseball coach and Kurt Elbin, associate head coach (Fall semester academic success, complex renovations and upgrades, practice and travel schedules, scholarship distribution)

- SAASS Update: Sarah Armstrong provided a tour of the facility and shared several updates regarding interns and an upcoming open house.

March 21, 2024 – Virtual Zoom

- *Presentation:* Brandon Hall, executive athletics director/athletics chief financial officer (overview included impressions from his first month on the job, priorities include to graduate athletes, create positive experiences for athletes, and prepare athletes for life)
- SAASS Update: Sarah Armstrong (facilities, support programs, and current focus on course requests, degree completion, and academic watch list)
- FAR Update: Jen Irish shared information from the ACC Winter meeting. These included ACC postgraduate scholarship awards, ACC excellence awards, challenges and sustainability of managing transfers during the winter transfer portal window, and the future division 1 model of unlimited educational benefits. She informed the group that the UAC subcommittee/provost's office approved participation in an NCAA and Olympic trials qualification track and field meet during the spring final exam period. In addition, an update was provided related to changes to section B3 of the Athletics Department Scheduling Policy and Procedures (typographical corrections only).

April 11, 2024 – Virtual Zoom

- *Presentation:* Brad Wurthman (provided information related to seat selection as well as updated wayfinding in Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum)
- *Presentation:* Danny White, Derek Gwinn, Mitch Gerber - *Triumph NIL*, and Matt Sams - *The Hokie Way*. The group provided a high level overview of a number of topics including HB 1505, NIL, helping athletes build their brand, make connections, and prepare for the future, as well as the charitable arm of Virginia Tech's Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) infrastructure.
- FAR Update: Jen Irish shared information related to her perspectives regarding NIL and the transfer portal, SAAC conversations, and faculty perspectives related to missed classes and make-up exams (how to facilitate an alternative option instead of a dropped assignment).