

Minutes

Provost Level Employee Communication Council meeting – December 10, 2003

Present: Brian Bader, Doug Moseley, Kathy Soule, Jennifer Hitchcock, Linda Hunt, Ann Zook, Sarah Seat, Faye Snyder, Lauren Killgallon, Iva Gillet, Deirdre Davie, Anda Webb, Jean Varner, Kathy Woodson, Susan Fogler, Christopher Loss

Linda Hunt called the meeting to order for Jo Ann Addison who was absent.

Mark Fletcher, Associate Director of Athletics and Director of Intramural-Recreational Sports, gave a talk on athletics at the University of Virginia, where he has worked since 1985.

UVA embraces the student-athlete concept for men's and women's teams with an emphasis on winning and being best while maintaining integrity. Student athletes at UVA have an average GPA of 2.86 and a high graduation rate.

Facilities are intended to enhance the athlete and fan ("customer") experience. For example, the Scott Stadium expansion retained the inexpensive hillside seating, often used by families, and added more women's restrooms for convenience. Concerning the money donated for athletic facilities such as the new basketball arena, Mr. Fletcher pointed out that it is the donors' prerogative to support as they choose, but often a donor will contribute to academic as well as athletic programs. Facilities are designed for multi-use; University Career Services are located at Scott Stadium and the new basketball arena will host state and local community events.

UVA athletics are self-subsidized, earning revenues from association with the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and television. No state or UVA money is used to support athletics. The Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAS) supports athlete scholarships for in- and out of state recruitment.

In summing up, Mr. Fletcher pointed out that the UVA Department of Athletics has two primary goals: 1) to win ACC and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championships and 2) to graduate 100 percent of its student-athletes.

Moving on to intramural recreational sports, Mr. Fletcher pointed out that they are not funded by Athletics Department money, but rather by student and faculty/staff fees and some state money. Most Division I universities create separate intramural facilities. At UVA, Athletics and intramural sports share some facilities, giving programs such as aquatics and tennis higher visibility. Intramural sports at UVA are for the entire university community (most collegiate programs focus on undergraduates), and facilities may be used by students, faculty, staff, and families. There is high participation on the part of undergrads (94 percent) as well as non-students. Multiple locations and various programs support the philosophy of student/non-student use of facilities. There are 6:30 AM early morning classes, pre- and post-natal classes and events, children's learn-to-swim and tennis programs, indoor soccer on a basketball court for international students less inclined to play basketball or baseball, personal trainer programs, mind/body programs, facilities open 360 days a year, and the summertime Cavalier Day Camp. Mr. Fletcher also pointed out that workout facilities are designed to meet the demands of the two main types of users at such facilities: 1) those who want to see/be seen and 2) those who wish to maintain a low profile.

Mr. Fletcher then fielded questions and comments from the council.

Concerning reduced tuition for athletic camps, Mr. Fletcher pointed out that because of NCAA rules, this is not possible. Individual coaches give the camps, and any discounts on tuition might be construed as favoritism or a recruitment violation.

Staff fees for intramural-recreational sports memberships are subsidized from the benefits pool in the amount of \$25.00. Any initiative to increase this amount should come from staff or faculty.

Unlike parking fees, recreational sports memberships are not considered a pre-tax benefit due to IRS regulations (sports are not deemed a necessity like parking). Athletics is exploring this question.

Exclusive faculty/staff classes are currently not offered. In the past such classes held in the early morning had low participation.

Bowl proceeds indeed support UVA academics. For example, such money was used to endow a professorship. ACC bowl money is distributed evenly among conference members.

Recent winter weather left part of the running track covered with snow and ice. Since it is difficult to get frozen precipitation off a rubber track, the best solution might have been to stay off the track.

The UVA Board of Visitors rejected a plan to use VAF scholarship money to support high-visibility programs such as basketball (a "tier program"). The VAF raises money to support a maximum number of scholarships.

Having child care for staff who use recreational facilities is difficult due to staffing and state licensing issues. When a certain ratio of providers to children is reached, child care becomes daycare, a potentially high expense for parents. UVA Athletics is exploring the possibility of some kind of child care with Children's World, the official UVA daycare provider, but the issue of enrollment expenses might remain.

Recent flooding near the tennis courts below Alderman Library raised a concern that improper drainage of the tennis courts might be a cause of high water. Mr. Fletcher remembered severe flooding in the same area in the 1980s before the courts were built. Topographic and drainage considerations go into construction planning for all new athletics facilities. For example, the area known as the "Dell" will have a drainage pond to accommodate runoff water from new construction.

A classified staff member with an unlisted address and phone number recently received a promotional mailing from Visa/Bank One for a VAF Saber/Cavalier credit card. It is not known how this person got on the mailing list for this offer.

There will very likely be faculty/staff discount ticket promotions for basketball games at the new basketball arena.

University Hall still houses locker rooms for athletes in various sports. Its ultimate disposition, and that of neighboring Onesty Hall, are currently unknown. The costs of teardown and renovation are about equal. The new basketball arena opens in the fall of 2006.

The new basketball arena will be a venue for non-athletic events (graduation, concerts), but since it lacks ice making capabilities, no ice capades.

One council member, whose son was in the UVA football program, put in a plug for the hard work and dedication of athletes. In addition to practice, games, and travel, athletes have a demanding study schedule and often participate in high profile community and charitable events.

Finally, as a promotion for intramural-recreational activities, each council member was offered a four-visit free pass to UVA facilities, expiring in mid-January 2004. Mr. Fletcher would like everyone (classified and staff) to know that if they are thinking of joining the gym and would like to try it out first, a four day pass is available at the business office for the asking.

Following Mr. Fletcher's presentation the council snacked on holiday treats and exchanged gifts.

The next council meeting will be held on January 14, 2004, in Room 116, Alderman Library.

Submitted by Brian Bader