Faculty Senate Athletic Committee Minutes, October 28, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am. Members in attendance were Aaron Estes, Sam Lopez, Jon McBride, Neal Schnoor, Laure Smith, Janet Steele, Matt Sullivan, and Nita Unruh. Chair Scott Unruh was not in attendance because he was attending the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Athletic Representatives meeting in Colorado Springs. While he was absent he was elected to continue as chair, and Janet Steele agreed to continue to serve as secretary.

In Scott’s absence, Laure chaired the meeting and said that our first task is to complete our review of the Athletic Department’s Policies. Three sections remain: initial eligibility, continuing eligibility, and playing and practice season. Laure handed out copies of these sections and asked to committee to review them prior to our next meeting.

Laure next said that, while new NCAA graduation rates are not yet available, the data are complied differently this year. For example, in the past only student-athletes on scholarship were counted in graduation rates, while the next graduation rates will include non-scholarship student-athletes. In addition, transfer students will no longer be counted “against” the school from which they transfer and will be counted “for” the school to which they transfer. Laure also handed a summary sheet of team GPA’s for UNK athletes during the 2004-2005 academic year. The overall department average was 3.15/4.00.

The committee next discussed the status of the assessment tool. No progress has been made on the tool since the last meeting of the committee. Laure said the NCAA is developing some “best practices” for exit interviews to be shared with schools. Aaron said one of the problems with our draft of the assessment tool is that the data couldn’t be separated the way our committee thought we needed the data separated. After some discussion the committee decided it wasn’t necessary to track individual athletes and we could get the answers we needed by assessing each athlete every year. Aaron said the current survey is rather long (35 questions) and some discussion was made about how to shorten the survey and how to have different branches to the survey. For example, if a student-athlete indicated his or her class standing was sophomore, he or she would get a different survey than other classes. A question about whether or not the student-athlete was returning to the program could be included to learn why student-athletes choose not to return. Sam suggested that the choices be changed to poor, fair, good and excellent so the student-athletes can’t choose “average” for every question.

Jon next reported on a career service company from the Atlanta area that is coming to campus next Wednesday. The RMAC has hired this company to help student-athletes think about career opportunities, and our career services on campus works well with this company. Two seminars will be presented – one to freshmen and sophomores, and a different one to juniors and seniors. Student-athlete attendance at these seminars is mandatory. On Thursday a representative from the company will meet individually with interested student-athletes. Laure also reported that we recently received a grant
(of sorts) from the NCAA that consisted of materials and supplies to develop a life-skills program for student-athletes. The committee briefly discussed the need for coaches to uniformly inform faculty of class absences for athletic events. Mid-term grades checks for athletes were also discussed, and the committee agreed that it would be helpful if there were a uniform deadline for these grade checks to be complete so that faculty could plan to have grades for student-athletes ready.

Lastly, Laure informed the committee that the NCAA has changed an eligibility rule. Student-athletes must now pass 6 hours of course work in their degree program during the fall semester to be eligible to participate spring semester, and/or 6 hours of course work during the spring semester to be eligible to participate fall semester. Summer course work does not count in this formula. Hardship rules do exist.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 am. The next meetings will be held December 9, 2005, and January 13, 2006.