

Aligning Athletics and Academics The University of Colorado at Boulder

Introduction and Background

There have been a number of national studies that indicate that universities and their respective Departments of Intercollegiate Athletics can both significantly benefit from improved collaboration and a more robust integration of athletics into the fundamental infrastructure of the university. In the past 18 months, the University of Colorado at Boulder has taken a national leadership position in the way in which athletics is incorporated as an integral part of the university. These efforts and the success in this regard have helped to answer questions regarding the academic mission of the university, improved the public perception and support for the university, increased the quality and number of students applying, and helped to eliminate the negative perception of the university in the eyes of the state legislature, the media and the citizens of the state of Colorado stemming from a number of issues that had previously garnered national attention and publicity.

The specific actions taken can be classified into a number of major areas, each of which is described in more detail below.

I. Role and Responsibility of the Athletic Director

Athletic Director Mike Bohn reports to Chancellor G.P. "Bud" Peterson and serves on the Chancellor's Senior Leadership Team. Athletic Director Bohn also has a reporting responsibility to the Senior Vice Chancellor for the financial and business affairs of the department. In addition, he meets and interacts directly with Provost Phil DiStefano and the academic deans on a bi-weekly basis.

Expectations of the Athletic Director include:

- Coordination with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on academic issues
- Coordination with the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs on student-athlete issues
- Coordination with the Vice Chancellor of Administration on facility issues
- Coordination with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications and the campus spokesperson to ensure transparency to the public in cases involving athletes with off-the-field issues that gain the attention of the public and the media
- Ensuring the athletic department staff has regular and effective interactions with their university administrative and business office counterparts – and maintain compliance with all relevant policies and procedures

II. Expectations of the Coaches

Compensation for the Athletic Director, football and men's and women's basketball coaches is dependent upon:

- Academic progress towards graduation of student-athletes
- Citizenship and community engagement of student-athletes
- Integration with and support of campus constituencies
- Community involvement
- National leadership in athletics
- Coaches and athletics department staff citizenship

Athletic Department staff work with the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to ensure student-athletes are fully integrated into campus life.

New student-athletes are required to participate in new-student orientation prior to their enrollment and be a part of the Athletics CU 101 class, a first-year life-skills course which provides support for academic and athletic performance, personal and career development and commitment to service.

We have hired three new head coaches; Football (Coach Dan Hawkins), Men's Basketball (Coach Jeff Bzdelik) and Women's Basketball (Coach Kathy McConnell-Miller), who fully and enthusiastically support our efforts and who have made academic achievement and student development for their players a touchstone of success.

As an example, in the past year our coaching staff:

- Met with the Presidents Leadership Class, an elite scholars program at CU-Boulder, on Sept. 4 for two hours and talked about the strength and virtues of leadership in a well-received session
- Broadcast weekly TV shows from academic buildings such as the Chemistry Building, the Wolf Law Building, and the Atlas Building
- Spoke about the importance of academics in media press conferences such as the annual Big 12 Media Day
- Wrote congratulatory letters to honored faculty and visited with donors in support of the academic areas
- Conducted more than 100 campus outreach visits and talks in the past year
- Lectured at the CU 101 life-skills course

These efforts clearly demonstrate that our coaching staff is committed to a strong presence in CU-Boulder's academic community and to strengthening the university's academic mission.

III. Enhanced Oversight of Athletics

To strengthen the relationship between athletics and the university, we have significantly strengthened and clarified the responsibilities of the Boulder Faculty Assembly's Intercollegiate Athletics Committee (IAC) and the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), both of which have existed for a number of years.

The Boulder Faculty Assembly Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics deals with academic issues affecting student athletes, recommends academic policy modifications to the Boulder

Faculty Assembly approves student-athlete handbooks and conducts policy reviews and monitors all recruitment activities including compliance with CU-Boulder policies and NCAA regulations.

The Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR), Professor David Clough, maintains oversight of all aspects of Intercollegiate Athletics. He is directly involved in all matters pertaining to compliance with university, state, Big 12 and NCAA rules, working closely with the Athletics Director of Compliance. He also interfaces with the Associate Registrar to determine eligibility of the student-athletes. The FAR also works with the Athletic Director of Student Academic Services to monitor academic support services provided to student-athletes.

In addition to these two groups, we have established the University of Colorado at Boulder Athletics Board (CUBAB). This newly created committee reports directly to the Chancellor and consists of seven faculty members, the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, a varsity coach, an athletics administrator, a student-athlete and various campus constituents. Its primary function is to serve as an advisory committee on all matters relating to Athletics including budgets and business planning, including oversight of athletics related capital construction, student-athlete support, athletic summer camps and personnel. In addition, the CUBAB coordinates with the IAC and the FAR in the review of student-athletes' entrance test scores, progress toward degrees, grade-point averages, graduation rates and personal development.

With the assistance and oversight of these three groups, the Athletic Department conducts an annual self-study of its progress in meeting NCAA certification criteria which include academic integrity, student-athlete welfare, governance, compliance and gender equity and diversity.

IV. Further Faculty Involvement

A network of more than 100 faculty members volunteer to meet with prospective student-athletes and their parents to explain academic expectations and campus climate and to host campus tours. During home football games they entertain and host recruits and their families at halftime and serve as honorary team captains, taking part in the pre-game coin toss as a symbolic nod to their importance in our reforms. They sit in on the coach's pregame talk, take part in team activities during the week and address the team after practice on Thursdays.

Faculty communicate with the Director of the Herbst Academic Center on student-athlete class attendance, test scores and tutoring needs and also serve on Athletic Department hiring search committees.

The Athletics Office of Academic Support Services collaborates with the Office of Admissions to review prospects' academic viability for success at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

V. Financial Interface and Oversight

The Business Manager for the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics has a close working relationship with the Associate Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance (Controller), and provides regular updates of departmental fiscal health.

The Athletic Director presents his proposed budget to the Controller, the CFO and the Chancellor for detailed review and approval. Mid-year proposed budgetary updates are reviewed and changes are approved by this group. Over-realized revenue is returned to the campus, with the expenditure of any over-realized revenue from Athletic initiatives requiring approval of the Chancellor.

VI. Recruiting Policies and Regulations

The most stringent football recruiting rules in the nation were put into place in March 2004, and have been updated annually. These have now been extended and applied to all sports.

Campus visits by recruits reflect immediate acculturation into the academic mission and a first gauge on whether the university is a good fit for the prospect. Each prospect is evaluated academically, meets with at least one faculty member and tours academic facilities such as libraries, classrooms or laboratories.

Recruiting visits are limited to 48 hours, mirroring NCAA policy. However one rule that distinguishes CU recruiting policies from many campuses is specific language that prohibits recruits and their student hosts from being in the presence of anyone consuming alcohol or drugs.

Every prospect is advised on behavior expectations during the visit and signs a *Declaration of Adherence* to CU's recruiting policies and NCAA rules. Each student-athlete host is trained and certified. The host accounts for all entertainment expenditures which are capped at \$30 per day for both the host and the prospect. Receipts are turned in within two business days. The host and prospect must stay within 30 miles of campus. Sex, strippers, gentlemen's clubs and escort services are prohibited.

The midnight curfew is enforced by a member of the coaching staff. No additional host or hostesses, companions or personal tour guides are arranged for the recruits, which distinguishes CU from many other campuses. Regularly scheduled Admissions tours are available.

CU coaches who invited the prospect develop the itinerary to limit unstructured time and ensure appropriate supervision. They conduct a formal exit meeting with the prospect and the host to obtain a description of activities and complete a summary report of the visit.

Funds from private sources such as camp accounts, boosters or a coach's personal funds cannot be used in any aspect of recruiting. Lodging and restaurants patronized come from a list approved by the Athletics Compliance Office to ensure it is within the scale of normal student life.

Student-athlete hosts sign a statement after the visit attesting that all rules were followed. Student athletes violating policies will be suspended from competition until the Chancellor

reviews the violation. Violations may be forwarded to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Prospects in violation of policies may be denied admission by the Chancellor.

VII. Title IX Adviser

CU appointed foremost Title IX expert Nancy Hogshead-Makar in March 2008 to work with officials in Athletics, the Office of University Counsel and the Office of the Chancellor to review the university's policies and practices regarding sexual violence and harassment. She makes recommendations on creating enhancements and programmatic improvements in these areas and will be a key resource for students who may experience sexual harassment on campus.

Hogshead-Makar is a prominent attorney and a tenured professor at Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville, Fla., where she teaches federal gender-equity law. She is known as one of the country's strongest advocates for the advancement of women's issues. Her appointment is for five years.

VIII. Expectations of Student-Athletes

Student-athletes are unique ambassadors of the university. Their presence in the public and media spotlight requires that they recognize the impact and scrutiny of their actions both on and off campus, which demands a heightened level of responsibility. Student-athletes are responsible for their actions and for those of their teammates. They are expected to demonstrate exceptional character as a member of the campus community, the larger Boulder community and as a participant in athletic competitions.

They must be dedicated to their academic endeavors, committed to earning their degree and maintain academic eligibility. They attend classes regularly and complete all assignments, consult with academic counselors and attend tutoring sessions, and they keep a course load of at least 12 hours per semester. Like all students, they are expected to abide by the Boulder Campus Student Code of Conduct, the Academic Honor Code, Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policies, and all federal, state and local laws.

They are expected to abide by written policies on hazing, ethical conduct, sportsmanship and sports wagering among others.

They conduct themselves in a manner that upholds traditions and ethical standards of the university and the athletic program and do not discredit the university or harm its reputation.

IX. Student-Athlete Training

In 2004, a Sexual Assault-Harassment Task Force reviewed CU's programs and initiatives related to the reduction and prevention of sexual assault and violence against women for all students in the campus community. As a result of the work of this Task Force, a number of recommendations were made and have been implemented. These are summarized below:

- The CU Student Code of Conduct was revised for standards of conduct, investigation, adjudication, notification and reporting related to sexual harassment/misconduct
- Sexual harassment training and education were enhanced for students, faculty and staff with a strong focus on student-to-student harassment, with follow-up training created and implemented for specific populations of the campus community

- CU-Boulder's New Student Orientation program was revised with a key emphasis on sexual assault, harassment and student-life issues
- A new campus group, "Men Confronting Violence," was created. In 2006, the group hosted a national conference titled "Violence Comes to College" on the Boulder campus that focused on themes that included violence against and harassment of women
- CU-Boulder's Office of Judicial Affairs created a special position to organize and conduct information outreach and training to, and for, students on issues of sexual misconduct
- The Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs formed and chaired a Sexual Assault-Sexual Harassment working group that meets regularly to assess the prevention of sexual harassment on campus and to monitor enforcement of policies
- CU formed a Title IX Task Force to study Title IX, the Clery Act and all current campus policies and procedures
- A Sexual Misconduct Case Management Team was established to start a new protocol for responding to incidents of sexual harassment and misconduct
- A Sexual Misconduct Response Protocol was developed for faculty and staff
- Staffing was enhanced in the Office of Judicial Affairs to implement new sexual harassment investigation procedures for student violations to ensure that investigations and reporting are done consistently with our new policies on sexual harassment
- All departmental staff, including student workers, have participated in sexual harassment training since 2003
- Also since 2003, the department has coordinated a section of The CU Experience course for first-year student athletes. Included in the course are presentations by the Interactive Theatre Project, the COURAGE Program and the Sexual Health Education program
- Each student athlete is given a handbook which contains sexual harassment/sexual assault-related information (since 2000)
- CU has made a commitment to upgrade and continue educational presentations on sexual assault/date rape and drug/alcohol awareness during pre-season camps and orientations that it began in 2000

X. Student-Athlete Outreach and Service

Student-athletes through the organizational efforts of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee visit children at Children's Hospital and read to school children in classrooms encouraging them to read and to pursue a college education and a career. They participate in sports programs with Special Olympics Athletes, coordinate a Christmas gift program for needy children and organize a number of food drives including one at the Homecoming football game.

CU athletes teach clinics and distribute jerseys to YMCA youth through the Junior Buffs program. Inner-city youth enjoy game-day experiences through Denver Parks and Recreation. In addition, football and basketball game-day experiences are extended through the Boy Scouts, Ralphie's Kids Roundup and Chauncey's Kids Roundup.

Women athletes host an annual all-sports clinic on the concourse during a women's basketball game. Athletes encourage kids to live a healthy lifestyle in a morning of fun-filled activities on Folsom Field prior to the annual spring football game.

XI. Outcomes

Feedback from the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics Faculty Summit on October 15, 2007, in Washington, D.C., indicated that CU-Boulder is considered a national leader in intercollegiate athletics reform and that the university is widely perceived as "doing it correctly."

Evidence for this abounds. As of November 26, 2007 the University of Colorado is bowl eligible – a remarkable one-year turnaround from last year's 2-10 record.

In men's basketball, new head coach Jeff Bzdelik and his team opened the 2007-08 basketball season with one of the largest home crowds ever. One of his stated reasons for coming to the University of Colorado from the United States Air Force Academy was the commitment of the CU-Boulder administration to academics, to an athletic program of integrity and transparency, and to a winning attitude on and off the court modeled for his players.

Women's soccer advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Men's and women's cross-country competed for a national title.

In other sports – women's basketball and tennis, men's and women's track & field, skiing and golf – student-athletes continue to excel in the classroom and on the field of competition. Our coaches continue to stress the development of the whole individual, not just the athlete portion of "student-athlete," and emphasize conduct, character, honor and integrity. These are not slogans or pep talks: they are real, living values within our intercollegiate athletic programs.

The university's effort in support of the NCAA Academic Performance Program is gaining national recognition.

A national alliance of faculty senates from 55 Division I schools – the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA) – has praised the CU-Boulder Athletics Board (CUBAB) as a national model.

CU-Boulder already had many of the reforms in place that were recently recommended nationwide by both (COIA) and the NCAA's 50-member Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics. This includes a primary recommendation by both groups of integrating athletics into the university mission, culturally and operationally.

XII. Conclusion

We believe that we have achieved great success as a model for bridging the cultures of athletics and academics on university campuses. We continue to improve and enhance our reporting, oversight and budgetary structure for athletics as we strive for complete integration of athletics into the university's structure and into its day-to-day operation at CU-Boulder.

Beneath the myriad, tangible measures and reforms we have undertaken is something greater: a new spirit. This spirit is about more than mere "cooperation," it is a spirit of common purpose, mutual commitment and active good will. For many years, our academic community at CU-Boulder viewed our athletic programs with suspicion and our athletes and coaches felt under-appreciated and isolated from the life of the university.

Today, even a casual visitor to our campus would see our new spirit manifested in everything from the gold "spirit t-shirts" worn by thousands of our student-fans on game day to the warm feelings of appreciation when a professor gets a note of congratulations from a head coach. We are trying to develop something bold and different at Colorado - the Greek ideal that athletic achievement and intellectual/spiritual development can thrive together in unison for the betterment of all.

G. P. "Bud" Peterson
Chancellor