

## **Athletics Committee Final Report**

### **Stated Goals for 2017-2018**

Examine issues related to student-athlete free speech rights; work to create more academic mentoring opportunities for student-athletes; examine concussion issues in contact sports; work with COIA; and highlight student-athletes and faculty members' academic partnerships.

### **Committee Accomplishments**

As a committee, we had the opportunity to meet five times. I wish we could have met more, but I believe the meetings were constructive and productive. Some of the major highlights are as follows: We met with student-athletes for a meet and greet during an informal breakfast. During this breakfast, students chronicled their journey as student-athletes at UT while also elaborating on the crucial role that the Thorton Center play on their academic development and progression. They also expounded on the vital role that some educators played in continued academic success.

Student-athletes implored us to urge some educators to exhibit empathy in regards to their hectic travel schedule when assessing their work and setting deadlines. Student-athletes were also in support of being highlighted as students around campus rather than being perceived merely as athletes. We were able to glean from student-athletes that parking and an accumulation parking violations were some of their greatest concerns or issues with UT. Faculty members and student-athletes demonstrated a strong desire to expose student-athletes to more unique majors, to give student-athletes a broader range of professional careers. We also discussed ways to ingratiate more faculty members into the world of college athletics.

### **Next Year's Expectations**

We will attempt to explore the world of concussions in UT's athletic programs. We will speak with athletic trainers and other medical personnel to learn and to understand the latest traumas and concussion protocols impacting UT. We will try to give more academic programs an opportunity to pitch their majors to student-athletes and Thorton academic advisors. We also plan on developing practical strategies to highlight student-athletes' academic accomplishments to faculty and staff members at a macro-and-micro level within the UT community.

Sincerely,

James A. Williams, Ph.D, DM, CHE, CC

Athletic Chair, Faculty Senate