

Highlights of the 16th Annual Meeting of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics
<http://www.thecoia.org/>

Strengthening Faculty Senate Relationships with Athletics Departments

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee Campus

February 22-24, 2019

UT administrators, staff, and faculty shared insights on the need for robust faculty participation from Faculty Athletic Representatives (FARs), COIA representatives, and Faculty Senate members in the governance of Intercollegiate Athletics (IA) on our campuses, and for the desirability of building strong faculty relationships with student athletes. UT system Title IX Director Ashley Blamey brought us up-to-date on proposed changes in that directive. Representatives of the NCAA (Jenn Fraser, Binh Nguyen, Jennifer Henderson) presented successes and challenges of the last five years. They pointed to changes on the horizon, acknowledging that several were prompted by Knight Commission initiatives. Amy Perko, CEO of the Knight Commission, underscored the necessity for local faculty involvement in oversight of IA because NCAA certification of athletic departments has ended. She shared available web resources on the income and expenditures of athletics departments at public Division IA universities. She urged COIA representatives to talk to their Faculty Senates to arrange for FARs to present annually on the NCAA Institutional Performance Program (IPP) dashboard on academics, race, gender equity, etc. Fritz Polite, President of the Drake Group, offered an appraisal of issues in athletics, including athlete health, race, gender, and academics. Tom McMillan, President of LEAD1 Association encouraged faculty participation in governance of intercollegiate athletics and offered to facilitate COIA surveys of the 130 athletic directors in that membership group.

Speakers hit on a common theme: the relevance of greater faculty involvement in planning for the perils of sports wagering, preventing academic misconduct, and protecting the health, safety and well-being of student athletes.

Following the presentations, COIA members identified best practices to build positive relationships and maximum collaboration between Faculty Senates and Athletics Departments:

- 1) Advocate for transparency about finances and policies in Athletics Departments;
- 2) Engage COIA representatives with Faculty Senate, Athletics Department, and Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR);
- 2) Invite Division I FARs to COIA annual meetings;
- 3) Engage Faculty Senate members with intercollegiate athletics by sharing and discussing information on the NCAA and Knight Commission websites with them; maintain information flow between the Faculty Senate and Athletics Department;
- 4) Clarify the best ways to integrate all parties: Faculty Senate, FAR, Athletics Department, and COIA. Clarify who reports to whom, and how they communicate.
- 5) Advocate for a diverse, combined Intercollegiate Athletics Counsel or Board, which includes staff and students, to ensure that multiple perspectives will be involved in discussions.
- 6) To maintain continuity, Faculty Senates should make the COIA representative a three-year term.

The 2020 COIA meeting will be held on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge next February. More information will follow soon.