Report of the Faculty Athletic Committee, 2012-2013

The members of the Faculty Athletic Committee (FAC) are: Paul Achter (Chair), Hank Chambers, Jennifer Cable, John Earl (filling in for Rob Phillips) and Raymond Dominey (filling in for Jennifer Burnette). Ex-officio members of FAC are: Stephen Allred (Provost), Edward Ayers (President), Bruce Matthews (Assistant Athletic Director of Academics), and Rick Mayes (Faculty Athletic Representative).

The FAC had an unusually busy year, meeting several times to work with Athletics as it continued to implement its strategic plan. The group also met once with the Athletics Council, of which it is a part.

In the fall the FAC met with the hiring consultant for a new Athletic Director (AD) and interviewed AD candidates, and in the spring the committee met with new AD Keith Gill to welcome him to campus and talk about areas of concern. The committee also met with administration after the sports-mix decision was publicized last fall.

In our November meeting Bruce Matthews reported that our athletes are meeting key benchmarks used by UR and the NCAA to insure the integrity of the academic endeavor, including average team GPA, GSR (Graduation Success Rate) and APR (Academic Progress Rate). Our team APRs beat the average for other schools like us in almost every case.

With many new members the committee spent some time reviewing its charge, to facilitate communication and cooperation between athletics and academics at the university. Toward those ends, the committee discussed ongoing concerns about student athlete satisfaction with their experience at UR. We discussed progress on we have made student academic support, the perceived divide between athletics and academics, and the climate for LGBT student-athletes. We brainstormed and drafted a survey on student-athlete satisfaction we plan to administer next fall.

In the fall the committee met with Thad Williamson and Crystal Hoyt from Leadership Studies, who asked to visit about concerns related to Men’s Lacrosse given evidence of that sport’s partying culture. Members of the committee expressed concern that Lacrosse or any sport would be singled out before it had played a game, but the committee did agree that the chair, the committee, and Professors Hoyt and Williamson should introduce themselves to Coach Chemotti, begin a dialogue, and raise these concerns. Achter had productive meeting with Coach Chemotti and Hoyt and Williamson plan to visit with him soon.
In the spring the FAC invited new Athletic Director Keith Gill for a visit and introductions. Topics included possible conference realignment, the new Men’s Lacrosse program, and ways to bring faculty and athletics together around shared interests. The committee agreed it would like to continue to meet with Mr. Gill at least once each semester. We asked Mr. Gill to consider attending a faculty meeting in each of our schools, and Mr. Gill was very receptive.

Next year we will continue to work on the student-athlete survey and other mechanisms of implementing the Athletics Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Achter, Chair, 2012-2013