

**THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
Washington, D.C.

The Faculty Senate

May 4, 2006

The Faculty Senate will meet on Friday, May 12, 2006, at 2:10 p.m. in the Alumni House, First Floor, 1925 F Street, N.W.

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order
2. Introduction of new members
3. Approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of April 14, 2006, as distributed
4. Resolutions

**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (06/1) Professor Sylvia A. Marotta, Faculty Co-Chair, Joint Committee of Faculty and Students (Resolution 06/1 is attached.)**

5. Introduction of Resolutions
6. Annual Report on the College of Professional Studies: Dean Roger Whitaker
7. General Business:
  - (a) Approval of dates for regular Senate meetings in the 2006-07 Session recommended by the Executive Committee as follows: May 12, 2006, September 8, 2006, October 13, 2006, November 10, 2006, December 8, 2006, January 19, 2007, February 16, 2007, March 9, 2007, and April 13, 2007
  - (b) Nomination for re-appointment by the President of Assistant Professor David M. Johnson as the Faculty Senate Parliamentarian for the 2006-07 Session
  - (c) Nomination for election of Chairs and members of Faculty Senate Standing Committees for the 2006-07 Session (list to be distributed)
  - (d) Nomination for election to the Dispute Resolution Committee for a three-year term commencing May 1, 2006: Robert W. Tuttle (GWLS)
  - (e) Nominations for appointment by the President to the following Administrative Committee: Joint Committee of Faculty and Students: Sylvia A. Marotta, Faculty Co-Chair; Lowell Abrams, Muhiuddinn Haider, Catheeja Ismail, Amy Mazur, David Truncellito, and Larry Williams

- (f) Nominations for appointment by the Board of Trustees to the following Committees: Trustees' Committee on Academic Affairs: Lilien F. Robinson; Trustees' Committee on Student Affairs: Sylvia A. Marotta; Trustees' Committee on External Affairs Lisa Benton-Short; and Trustees' Committee on Information Technology: Philip W. Wirtz
  - (g) Nominations for election by the Faculty Senate to the Student Grievance Review Committee: Michael S. Castleberry, Patrick Cook, Katherine Goodrich, Susan LeLacheur, Rumana Riffat, Edward Robinson, Sian Spurney, James Williams, and Sara Wolensky
  - (h) Report of the Executive Committee
  - (i) Annual Reports from Senate Standing Committees: Athletics and Recreation (Report attached); University and Urban Affairs (to be distributed)
  - (j) Tributes to retiring faculty
8. Brief Statements (and Questions)
9. Adjournment

*Elizabeth A. Amundson*  
Elizabeth A. Amundson  
Secretary

Attachments

**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (06/1)**

**WHEREAS** the Board of Trustees of The George Washington University is ultimately responsible for all University policy, and students are directly affected by policies set by the Board of Trustees

**WHEREAS** the University Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities explicitly endorses student involvement in the governance of the university, in that

- a) Article I (C) states that “the student body shall have clearly defined means, including membership on appropriate committees and administrative bodies, to participate in the formulation and application of the institutional policy affecting student affairs,” and
- b) Article V (A) emphasizes the intent to “encourage the inclusion of students as active participants in the formulation” of University-wide regulations; and

**WHEREAS** a 1970 Task Force appointed by the Trustees Commission on Student Governance recommended "fuller representation of student participation in academic policy making" and "more effective arrangements for bringing the thinking of students to the Board of Trustees"; and

**WHEREAS** the solutions that have been introduced—to appoint a recent Alum to the Board, or to invite students occasionally to speak to various Trustee Committees —do not succeed in providing full representation of student participation or in effectively bringing student thinking to the Board; and

**WHEREAS** students serve as Trustees in many private and public universities—including schools such as Duke, Tufts, the University of Miami and others that GWU considers its market-basket competitors; and

**WHEREAS** the current student body has demonstrated their high level of support for a Student on the Board through a Spring 2005 Student Association referendum and a November 2005 referendum, **NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

**That the faculty senate supports the creation of voting seats on the Board of Trustees of The George Washington University specifically for students enrolled in degree-granting programs of the University.**

**Joint Committee of Faculty and Students  
April 1, 2006**

## RATIONALE and HISTORY

### **The Inadequacies of the Current Representation**

Alumni Representation. In the 1970s, the Trustees voted to include a recent alum to the Board to address concerns that the Trustees might not understand the concerns and perspectives of the student population. However, this change has not adequately addressed the problem because alumni are too removed from the daily life of the student body. While recent alums can provide insight into issues that were relevant during their experiences at GW, recent alums have little knowledge of current problems, concerns, or student perspectives. It is more appropriate and effective to have student perspectives offered from those who are immersed in current student life and are aware of the concerns of the current student body.

Student Presentations to Board: Students are invited to present to select Trustees Committees to provide a student perspective on issues where the Trustees consider such insights necessary. While students are certainly grateful for the opportunity to present, this format does not allow students to participate fully, and therefore cannot fully inform the Trustees of student concerns and perspectives.

Furthermore, because the student presenters do not have a vote in policy decisions, this arrangement does not address the 1970s Trustee's Task Force concerns for "fuller representation of student participation in academic policy making."

Student President Participation. Currently, the Student President has the option to attend meetings but must serve as an observer, and therefore cannot participate in the development of policies and regulations for the University.

### **Student Support**

Student support for a Student Trustee is currently high, and such support has a long history at the University.

- Spring 1973 Marvin Center Governing Board referendum "*Should the students have voting members on the Board of Trustees?*" 88.01% voted in the affirmative.
- Fall 2004-13 [Corr] Student Association Senate Resolution "*A Resolution to Support Student Representation on the Board of Trustees*" was passed on October 12, 2004 and signed by the Student Association President on October 18, 2004.
- Spring 2005 Student Association referendum "*Should the President of the Student Association be authorized to appoint voting Student Association Representatives to the University Board of Trustees?*" had a 71.86% vote in the affirmative.
- Fall 2004-35 [Henchman] Student Association Senate Resolution "*A Resolution to Reaffirm Support for Student Membership on the Board of Trustees, and related purposes*" was passed on November 9, 2005 by unanimous consent and signed by the Student Association President on November 12, 2005.

### **Student Trustees at Comparable Universities**

Student Trustees are appointed to Boards of Trustees at a variety of American universities, and their experiences provide evidence that such arrangements are beneficial to the Universities. Student Trustees serve at (among others) Duke University, Southern Methodist University, Tufts University, University of Miami, Howard University, Cornell University, Brandeis University, and the University of California system. These universities employ a range of methods for appointing the Trustees, and designate their roles and responsibilities differently.

To: The George Washington University Faculty Senate

From: The Committee on Athletics and Recreation, Jack Friedenthal, Chair

Subject: Report of the Committee on the Admission of Athletes

Date: April 19, 2006

Attached hereto is a report of the Committee on Athletics and Recreation including its findings and recommendations regarding the admission of student athletes, a matter that has garnered adverse publicity in recent weeks.

The Committee wishes to thank the Director of Admissions, The Director of Athletics, and the Senior Vice President for Student Services for their excellent cooperation.

If you wish, the Committee Chair, Jack Friedenthal, is willing to present the report to the Senate in person and to answer questions about it.

## REPORT OF THE FACULTY SENATE COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS AND RECREATION

The Senate Committee on Athletics and Recreation met on March 29, 2006 to discuss recent reports in the media regarding the admissions process at George Washington University with respect to certain student athletes, particularly in the sport of mens basketball.

Present were Professors Patrick McHugh, Lisa Delpy Neirotti, Patricia Sullivan, Jack Friedenthal (Chair), and Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Development Craig Linebaugh (ex officio). Also present by invitation were Senior Vice President for Student and Academic Support Services Robert Chernak, Admissions Director Kathryn Napper, and Athletic Director Jack Kvanz.

The substance of the media reports, appearing in the Washington Post, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal, stated that at least two of George Washington's male basketball players had graduated from a private academy in Philadelphia, the Lutheran Christian school, that did not employ an appropriate academic program and was essentially a front for the purpose of allowing would-be college basketball players to be admitted to a university despite major academic deficiencies.

The matter before the committee was the university policy and practice regarding the admission of student athletes. It should be noted that the students in question had been cleared for eligibility by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Clearing House. Thus there were no questions regarding violations of the NCAA rules on recruitment or participation. However, it is important to note that the Clearing House determinations are flawed and are currently under an NCAA study to recommend reforms and the fact that NCAA clearance should never govern admissions to our university.

Issue # 1: Who decides on the admission of athletes? What role if any do coaches and other athletic personnel play in those decisions?

The Committee was assured, and is convinced, that the decision to admit (or decline to admit) a would-be student athlete is made solely by the admissions staff of the university in the same manner as the admission decisions of all other applicants. The decisions are all made by teams of three persons, two of whom are senior admissions officers. No member of the athletic department staff is involved. The athletic department forwards the names of those applicants whom

it wishes to be considered. It is fair to say that the athletic department personnel do their own evaluation of potential student-athletes and refuse to put forward those whom they believe would not be successful students at the university. Their decisions are based on the students' academic records in high school, the test scores, and an evaluation of the students' interest in being successful as students. Often the decision is buttressed by interviews with a student's family members to determine what type of support the student will have if admitted.

A would-be student athlete applies for admission just as any other student. He or she must complete all the forms, submit the appropriate transcript information and take the SAT or ACT examination. An admissions team reviews the file, the transcript or transcripts (if the applicant has attended more than one school), and considers the test score or scores. It is important to note that the admissions team does not accept a score that appears on the transcript or is otherwise provided by the high school, but obtains the score directly from the testing agency. The team does consider the input from the athletic department regarding its decision to request that the applicant be admitted. It is important to note that the admissions team does not merely provide rubber-stamp admissions for those applicants whom the athletic department puts forth; unqualified applicants are rejected.

Issue # 2: How does the admissions department know that a transcript is true and based upon a legitimate academic experience? How does the admissions department know that a reported test score is a legitimate score of the applicant?

The answers to these questions are key of the current controversy over the admission of athletes. It is alleged that the private high school to which student athletes transferred in order to meet NCAA requirements for eligibility to play in college was not a legitimate academic institution with regular courses and qualified instructors; in effect, then, it would be only a "diploma mill." Additionally there are questions about the legitimacy of test scores reported on the transcript from this school.

Turning first to the accuracy of test scores, the best that an admissions officer can do is to obtain the score directly from the testing service. That does not eliminate all problems; there can be fraudulent activity regarding the substitution of one individual to take the test in the name of another. However, the testing agencies do their best to eliminate such activity. When a student takes tests more than once, the admissions team can and does compare the scores to see if they are so out of line so as to make a higher score so suspicious that it is not considered legitimate. Scores on tests are also considered in light of high school grades to determine if a score is irrationally high..

Determining the legitimacy of high school grades is a much more difficult proposition. George Washington University received nearly 20,000 applications this year, involving graduates from some 5000 high schools. There is no way that a university admissions staff can be sure of the quality of the education at all 5000 schools. Many are public schools or organized parochial schools where one can be reasonably certain that classes are regularly held and instruction provided. Although one can wonder about the strength of specific classes and the meaning of certain grades given to the students, much of the records from such schools must be taken on faith. Of course if a pattern of bad experiences appears with regard to students entering George Washington from a particular school, that could affect future decisions. Generally speaking, however, there is little an admissions officer can do to decide if a class was a legitimate academic class.

Independent private schools, such as Lutheran Christian, pose an even greater problem because there is no assurance that they are part of a regularly run school operation. Some do exist solely to assist athletes in the last year of high school to become eligible to play college sports. The task of determining legitimacy is daunting. There are at least 1000 private academies. Some are first-rate and attract the best students from an area. Rarely would they be schools that cater to transfer students for the last year or year and one-half. Unfortunately, other private high schools exist only to assist students to meet NCAA requirements and do not run legitimate academic programs. The admissions staff at George Washington does have some possible clues as to whether a private school is or is not legitimate.. Are the grades from one's initial high school commensurate with those of the "academy" to which the student transferred? Is the academy registered with the testing services? How does the transcript appear? Is the test score in line with the grades received in classes? It seems clear that these matters are currently considered at the time the admissions decision is being made. An additional question that deserves consideration is whether the courses reportedly taken in a final year at the academy consist mainly of so-called NCAA "core courses" that are required for athletic eligibility.

The bottom line is that the admissions department has acted reasonably when basing its decisions regarding student athletes on the records available. However, as the media reports indicate, there remains a large gap between the records and the reality as to the legitimacy of the education reflected by those records.

It is difficult to believe that someone involved in the process at the university would not know or should not have known that a recruited athlete, who has what appears to be an appropriate record from an alleged high school, in fact obtained that record from a school that does not provide a regularized educational experience with qualified instructors. There are only a handful of

recruited athletes who attend private high schools. Fewer yet transfer to them from regular public or well-known parochial schools. The vast majority of problems are most likely to occur with regard to those sports in which student athletes may eventually hope to play for a professional team. At George Washington University, which does not have a football program, the major problem is therefore most likely to involve the mens basketball team. Yet only three or, at most, four, recruits will be sought each year and, as noted above, most will attend and graduate from public high schools or well-organized parochial schools. A handful of assistant coaches are involved in the recruitment process and it should certainly be possible for them to assure us that those students who end their high school careers at private, unaffiliated academies received a legitimate educational experience. For its own internal health, as well as to avoid additional negative publicity of the type that has been already engendered, the university must take additional measures to see that the errors of the past are not repeated.

Issue # 3: What is the standard for admission of student athletes and how does that differ from the standard applied to other students?

The stated standard for the admission of recruited student athletes is that the student has the capacity successfully to complete the academic program at George Washington University. The usual standard applied for non-athletes is that the student is a top performer who has the capacity and drive to excel at the university and is superior in that regard to applicants who are not admitted. Of course it goes without saying that there are small categories of applicants for whom admission is considered appropriate in the interest of the university or because of their special talents even though their records may not surpass others who are not admitted.

Athletes, especially those in the sport of basketball which involves considerable publicity for the school, contribute something special to the university. It is not for this committee to determine whether the current policy as to the standard for admission is justifiable in light of those contributions. Suffice it to say, however, that if student athletes who are admitted because of their athletic ability (and clearly many athletes are admissible in competition with other applicants), a good part of a justification would follow from the fact that, as noted below, student athletes have a solid record of academic achievement resulting in graduation.

Issue # 4: Are student athletes given special treatment through enrollment in certain “easy” courses that keeps them eligible on track for graduation?

One major question that has arisen with regard to the controversy regarding admission, is how can a student athlete who has had a deficient high school experience manage to succeed at George Washington University? The answer appears to be a comforting one. The athletic department, in selecting the athletes whom it recruits, does a reasonable job of determining those who have the drive and desire to do well academically.

Although student transcripts are not available to provide the details, we have sufficient information to say that hard work and devotion to school have paid off for student athletes whose graduation rate matches that of the student body at large. There is nothing in the transcript of student athletes that indicates that they are being enrolled in “special courses where high grades are assured,” a phenomenon not unknown at other institutions. Grades of each student athlete tend to be commensurate with his or her educational background, meaning that some clearly struggle more than others. We see some who regularly attend the university year round in order to make up deficiencies in order to keep up with their class so as to graduate on time. Tutors are available to assist student athletes who request their assistance. The tutors are monitored to insure that the assistance they give is legitimate. The tutors do not do a student’s work as has been the case at other universities. The bottom line is that student athletes at our school, even those who received their high school diplomas from questionable private academies, are managing to maintain their academic progress toward graduation, without any undue assistance from “soft” faculty members.

## CONCLUSION

The unfortunate media coverage of the high school records of a few of our student athletes has given the school an opportunity to assess our admissions situation. It has also given us some comfort to find that no one in the admissions department or the athletic department seems to have acted in bad faith or with knowledge that a student athlete’s record is not what it appears to be. It also has given us the opportunity to note that our student athletes have been able, to the same extent as the rest of the student body, to negotiate the “academic rapids” as they move toward graduation.

But there nevertheless is a “cold wind” at our back. We must take steps to make certain that we know when a high school record is, in effect, fraudulent. As we have noted, the problem cannot be huge. Only a few recruited athletes end up at private, unaffiliated high schools whose legitimacy needs to be checked. The first line of obtaining proper information regarding these relatively few athletes must lie with the coaches or assistant coaches who recruit them. The recruiters obviously visit with the potential student athlete and often with his or her family. Questions must be asked of the recruit regarding his or her academic experience.

He or she must be asked to describe the school, its location, the nature and timing of classes and the homework requirements. It does not take much time to ask such questions or to find out the size of the school and the classes and something about the teachers. The recruit should be asked who recommended the school and why he or she decided to enroll. The recruiter should call the school and ask for a brochure describing the school and the program.

If questions remain, the recruiter should make an unannounced visit to the school to see just what is occurring. Media reports indicate that the Lutheran Christian school was housed in two rooms in a commercial building. The rooms were said to be disorganized without proper desks and without substantial books. One look at such a “school” would tell a recruiter that something is amiss. Note that if the high school is located at a great distance away, and that it would be difficult or too expensive for a recruiter to visit, an alum or friend of the university living in the area could be asked to make the visit and report on what was found.

As noted above, the need for these special measures will be infrequent because student athletes normally will not attend private academies and when they do, often the admissions department will have adequate information as to their legitimacy.

We therefore recommend that each coach and assistant coach who engages in recruitment be provided with a form, developed by the admissions department, to be filled out any time a student athlete has graduated from, or attended, a private unaffiliated school that is not on a list of known, quality private schools kept by the admissions department. The form will merely require answers to a number of simple questions regarding the recruit's experience at the school and should be accompanied by a brochure from the school describing its staff and academic program.

#### The Senate Committee on Athletics and Recreation

John Banzhaf  
Donald Dew  
Jorge Garcia  
Patrick McHugh  
Lisa Delpy Nierotti  
Patricia Sullivan  
Gary Simon  
Craig Linebaugh (ex officio)  
Jack Friedenthal (Chair)