

FARA VOICE

February, 2007

Issue X



The month of Mr. Groundhog and Saint Valentine is upon us, as well as the lead up to

March Madness. The big blast that was to hit the mountains of North Carolina with snow, sleet, freezing rain, and all other kinds of apocalyptic devastations turned out to be a big bust, but other areas of the country have had ample measure of those commodities. I hope you all are having a great spring semester, even if your weather has been frosty and laden with precipitation.

Beginning in the fall of 2007 our November "Fall Forum" will be called the "FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium." Division I Executive Committee member Bill Edwards has a piece attached describing this new focus. This year's meeting will be held in Baltimore November 8-10, and I hope you already have it on your calendar. Everyone attending in New Orleans this past November would agree that the meetings were engaging and informative. If you missed out by not attending last year's meeting, be sure to come this year.

Roger Caves, Division I Vice President, is chairing an ad hoc FARA Committee that is studying the current relationship between FARs and their conferences, and ways in which communication can be improved and FARs can be more involved within their conferences. Attached is a note by Roger describing the work of the committee, and information concerning a brief instrument the committee will be sending to all FARs.

As noted in last month's issue of FARA Voice, February begins a three month period during which each issue will present the Executive Committee's discussion of a portion of the Presidential Task Force Report. I have summarized the discussion this month by the Executive Committee of the portion of the Report titled "Leadership's Bottom Line." I would be interested in receiving your response. In the March and April issues of FARA Voice, Lorrie Clemo and Dennis Leighton will present Executive Committee discussions on other portions of the PTF Report. While this report is focused mainly on Division I, it is likely that findings and actions resulting from this report will spill over into Divisions II and III.

There are always issues "out there" which FARs need to monitor. One is the possible restructuring of the governance bodies in Division I. Discussions held thus far indicate that some quite significant changes are being contemplated. It will be important that, whatever these changes might be, FARs continue to have a significant representation on the primary governance bodies of Division I. In Division III, there continues to be discussion of whether the division is too big, and therefore needs to be split. There would no doubt be both positive and negative implications were such a split to occur.

I hope you have a great February, enjoy the numerous sports seasons that are now under way, and find your classes to be filled with students eager for learning (the latter may be a bit of a stretch).

*Alan J. Hauser, Editor
FARA President-Elect
Appalachian State University*

FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium

What's in a name? In the case of our annual meeting, we hope it is more than suggestive. As you know, the theme in 2006 was "Empowerment." During the year the role of the FAR was carefully examined and the adoption of changes to the Guiding Principles included new wording to reflect our strategic relationship to student athletes, the university community, and the NCAA. For 2007 the theme is "Engagement." The theme indicates both

empowerment and action. To that end the Executive Committee of FARA believed that the Fall Forum should reflect these ideas. Could we give clear and more forceful meaning to what we do as an association? After much discussion the Executive Committee suggested a name change to "FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium." 2007 will be the inaugural year of what we expect to be vigorous involvement of FARs.

Bill Edwards
FARA Executive Committee
University of San Francisco

Report of the Presidential Task Force Leadership's Bottom Line

What follows is my summation, interpretation, and occasional quotation of the conversation the Executive Committee of FARA had at its January 6 session during the NCAA meeting in Orlando, discussing part one, Leadership's Bottom Line, of the Presidential Task Force Report. Future issues of FARA Voice will address the Executive Committee's discussion of other portions of the Report.

Without doubt, fiscal responsibility is now a crucial issue lying before all who work in intercollegiate athletics. The presidents are to be thanked for insisting that this issue be placed at the front of our agendas, especially since the cost of maintaining an athletics program is growing at a rate which, as the report notes, "might not be financially sustainable." While most everyone agrees that there are problems, key issues revolve around how serious the problems are, how we may reasonably and effectively work to address the problems, and how we may involve the entire institutional community in working to solve the problems.

The report places considerable emphasis on developing a system to produce "clearly defined and comparatively transparent financial data." It certainly is true that the best data bases currently available are filled with holes and imprecise categories, which make comparison difficult. However, the presidents may be asking more than is achievable when they indicate that they want "accurate and comparable data." Given the level of diversity between the many institutions within the NCAA, perhaps the most that one can hope for is data that is significantly more accurate and useful than what we have now. One member of FARA's Executive committee observed that "'accurate' is perhaps a stretch," and we should rather be speaking of data bases which we are continually improving. An especially difficult issue in this regard is how one deals with "indirect" institutional support of intercollegiate athletics, which is often fuzzy at best. Nevertheless, a persistent, careful effort aimed at standardizing and clarifying financial data should give us a considerably improved financial picture of intercollegiate athletics, which may be sufficiently accurate to assist the presidents in seeking their goals.

A key matter here is facilities. As one Executive Committee member noted, facilities are key to recruiting, as well as to institutional image, so expenditures here may be especially difficult to bring under control. Many institutions have to take on long term indebtedness in order to construct bright, shiny new facilities, and that can place potentially serious stress both on the athletics program and on the institution. Nevertheless, institutions feel constrained to do this in order to maintain their competitive edge. Institutional inabilities to “keep up with the Joneses” are painfully obvious in brick, mortar, and turf. Institutions may seek corporate support for facilities projects, but that then raises the issue of whether the institution will be able, in the long run, to control such corporate involvement if they become heavily dependent on it.

Several members of the Executive Committee noted that those who can afford to spend “big bucks” on intercollegiate athletics will do so. Competitiveness is at the very core of intercollegiate athletics. One would hardly be surprised if those with the greatest skills on the court or field maximize the use of their talent in the heat of competition. One should therefore not be surprised that athletics programs which have the financial muscles will also flex them. As I noted in my piece in the December issue of *FARA Voice*, “Will a president be willing to sacrifice the success of her or his own campus’s athletics program on the altar of fiscal restraint and integrity?” Herein may lie the crux of the dilemma in the call of the Presidential Task Force Report for individual presidents to exercise fiscal restraint. The rapidly escalating cost of coaches’ salaries in Division I provides an excellent example of the intensity of competition between institutions in their athletics

programs, an intensity which continues to fuel a major arms race. This arms race in salaries certainly parallels the facilities arms race discussed above. In such an environment, appeals for restraint that are not backed up by significant sanctions may not work any better in intercollegiate athletics than they do in the financial markets. One member of the Executive Committee put it succinctly, “The presidents have good ideas and intentions, but they will be difficult to implement.” Perhaps the presidents have some sort of legislative proposals in mind for helping with fiscal reform.

There was consensus among Executive Committee members that it will be important to share and explain the contents of the fiscal reports the presidents are seeking with the Faculty Senate on each campus, as well as with the broader institutional community. Transparency in sharing fiscal information, involvement of faculty governance structure(s) in the discussion of this information, and close discussions of financial data between the president, the FAR, and the AD are several matters the Executive committee sees to be crucial if progress is to be made in dealing with fiscal matters in intercollegiate athletics. One Executive Committee member emphasized that it is very important for the FAR to periodically discuss the athletics budget with the president, noting that FARs cannot be faulted for trying to point out problems and failing, but each FARs can be faulted for not trying to bring matters of fiscal concern to her/his president’s attention.

As editor of *FARA Voice*, I would welcome your comments on what the Executive Committee has said in responding to Part I of the Presidential Task Force Report.

Alan J. Hauser
President-elect of FARA
Appalachian State University

Conference Outreach

A FARA Ad Hoc Committee on Conference Outreach was recently constituted to develop a framework for FAR's to engage their own conferences with the purpose of assessing and improving the involvement of FAR's within NCAA Conferences. The members of the Ad Hoc Committee are Roger Caves (chair), Jill Gremmels and Cecil Carter. Please be on the lookout for a short instrument that we will

be sending all FAR's via the FARA listserv to assess how they participate in conference and other matters. We encourage you to participate in this important endeavor. We will also be checking with conferences on the role of the FAR. The results of this endeavor will be discussed at the FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium in Baltimore.

*Roger W. Caves
Division I Vice President, FARA
San Diego State University*



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 6, 2007	National Student-Athlete Day	
May 13-18, 2007	NCAA Regional Rules Compliance Seminars	Denver, Colorado
June 3-8, 2007	NCAA Regional Rules Compliance Seminars	Miami, Florida
November 8-10, 2007	FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium	Baltimore, Maryland
November 13-15, 2008	FARA Annual Meeting and Symposium	San Diego, California
January 11-14, 2008	NCAA Convention	Nashville, Tennessee
January 14-17, 2009	NCAA Convention	Washington, DC

TELL US HOW WE ARE DOING!

**We would love to hear from you regarding the *FARA Voice*.
If you have any comments, questions, or ideas for future articles,
please direct them to Karen Cooper at kcooper@ncaa.org.**

