

## NEW BRUNSWICK FACULTY COUNCIL

### **Resolution on the Faculty Role in Athletics Recruiting and Oversight**

#### Background

Intercollegiate athletic competition is a long standing, significant, and visible component of the culture of higher education in the United States. In addition to the so-called revenue sports, football and men's and women's basketball, universities may compete in more than 30 other sports. Almost every member of the AAU has a large and generally successful athletics program. Many of our peer aspirant universities such as U Cal Berkeley, UCLA, Stanford, Duke, and most members of the Big Ten have outstanding athletics programs. Not only are they successful competitively, but as a result they also are successful in creating a positive spirit among all members of the university community. These successful athletics programs generate substantial revenue and can be credited with enhancing the university's brand and maintaining the interest and allegiance of their alumni, and in the case of public universities, of the citizens of their state.

But in recent years, Rutgers has been the exception. It seems as if not a week goes by without one or more negative stories about Rutgers athletics appearing in the local or national press. Whether the stories are about our poor performance in football, the most visible of all intercollegiate sports; or about stratospheric severance payments resulting from poor hiring decisions, or about the numerous legal difficulties of student athletes who generally wouldn't have been recruited to Rutgers had serious character assessment been part of the process; all of these stories do significant harm to the reputation of the university.

One of the consequences of all this negative publicity is a serious decrease in revenue generated by the athletics program. The resulting deficit, which is much larger than that of any other Big Ten athletics program, has raised great concern and has impelled many faculty members to publicly criticize this shortfall and by extension the athletics program. Such public dissension within the university community harms the university both internally and externally.

In order to provide sound evidence-based advice to those in positions of responsibility, the New Brunswick Faculty Council is considering approaches that have been successful in the past as well those that are successful now. The most striking change in recent years has been a major reduction of any significant participation by faculty in recruiting of student-athletes. In the past faculty members would meet with almost all recruits for the three revenue sports. Such meetings would provide an opportunity for these faculty members to make judgments about the character of the student athlete and how well the student athlete would become integrated into the Rutgers community. At the same time the faculty could use the opportunity to assist, often very effectively, in convincing the recruit to choose Rutgers. Since faculty no

longer have this role, it is not surprising that the overall athletic quality of recruits in the revenue sports has generally decreased while the number of character issues has increased.

Further evidence of the value of academic participation for the student athlete can be found in the quality of our Academic Athletic Support program. The reporting relationship of this program is an academic one, not an athletic one. As a result, we continue to maintain our relatively high APRs and increase our GPAs to new levels while minimizing the academic difficulties of our student-athletes.

The Rutgers Division I athletics program is associated entirely with the New Brunswick campus. The New Brunswick Faculty Council is the only representative shared governance body of the New Brunswick campus. Accordingly, we wish to provide our advice to the Chancellor on how we can improve our athletics program.

Therefore, be it resolved that

1. The NBFC urges our Chancellor to encourage and facilitate as much participation as possible by the faculty in the recruiting and mentoring of student-athletes with a particular focus on the revenue sports.
2. The NBFC urges our Chancellor to require all recruits in the revenue sports to meet with at least one member of the Academic Athletics Oversight Committee (AAOC) before we make a formal scholarship offer to the recruit.
3. The NBFC urges our Chancellor to work with the NBFC and the faculty more generally to implement measures that will increase revenue from the athletics program.