



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Priority Registration Advisory Committee Members

**FROM:** Alice Poehls, University Registrar

**SUBJECT:** Spring 2009; Meeting to Discuss Appeals, Notes for October 3,

**DATE:** October 10, 2008

The Priority Registration Advisory Committee met on October 3, 2008 from 12:30 to 3:15 in UPENDO, SASB North, to consider whether to consider appeals of the decisions published earlier and made by the PRAC on September 24, 2008.

**PRESENT:** Benevino, Eaker-Rich, Phillips, Poehls, Straughan

**UNABLE TO ATTEND:** Demetriou, Thomas

**GUESTS:** John Blanchard, Senior Associate Director of Athletics; Robert Mercer, Director of Academic Support Programs for Athletics; Brown Walters, Director of Spirit.

Poehls opened the meeting by describing events that had caused her to request the meeting. Several individuals contacted her during the week to express concerns about the earlier PRAC decisions and to request an appeal or meeting with the Committee. In addition, and unfortunately, Poehls erred in entering the decisions into the Student Information System. Students whose groups were denied were inadvertently given a priority registration time; once the error was discovered, it was corrected and an e-mail sent to each student affected by the error.

Poehls summarized some of the comments and questions she received from those who submitted materials and from others who have followed the progress of PRAC:

- Many were expecting to be approved this year because they were approved last year.
- Some were complimented on their submissions last year and yet the Committee denied them this year even though they used the same format. Poehls explained that more materials such as the cover letter from Mercer and some competition schedules were supplied last year but not this year.
- Several individuals commented about the perception that priority may have been given to revenue sports.
- Participants were not aware they could appeal and would have appreciated an opportunity to provide answers to questions or to provide more information if it was needed.
- Several requested an appeal.
- The error Poehls made in adjusting registration times, though quickly corrected, contributed to the confusion and dissatisfaction.
- Some stated that the process of priority registration had been in place for over a decade and this was a sudden change in direction for which they were not prepared.

Poehls requested the Committee to discuss first what process they would like to use for addressing the issues at hand. Straughan stated that the Committee carefully considered the requests but stated that the participants could have been given more guidance and direction in advance. She also stated that one approach might be for PRAC to consider overturning the denials this semester and focus on greatly improving the process and instructions for the next semester. She stated that the revenue/non-revenue questions were never a part of the earlier discussions. Eaker-Rich stated that the error made in the OUR added to the confusion and she observed that the criteria should be more explicit.

Phillips stated that the same criteria were used as last semester but the PRAC had different membership and that explained the different results. She stated concern about reversing decisions because it could give the impression to students on campus, who she represents, that Athletes are being rewarded. She stated that those approved did appear to have stricter schedules and by reversing decisions a precedent would be set. She concurred that a better process is needed with a built in appeal process. Bevevino stated that he felt the PRAC made sound decisions based on the information provided although he expressed concerns about the perception that some sports, perhaps revenue sports, were given priority. He stressed that he perceived no intention on

the part of the Committee to consider revenue sports differently than other sports. The Committee concurred with his statement.

The Committee fully discussed all of these points. Straughan moved and Phillips seconded the following motion: *Because the Committee and those submitting recommendations for Spring 2009 did not share expectations related to process, the Committee should rewrite the form and the directions before the next semester and then communicate expectations better to all constituents prior to the deadline.* Discussion continued and then the motion was voted on and approved unanimously.

Straughan moved and Poehls seconded the following motion: *For this time, and this time only, the Committee shall reverse all denials made to groups on September 24 because the error in notification to students exacerbated the confusion about the process.* Discussion continued. The Committee invited the three guests to the table and invited their comments.

Mercer thanked the Committee and provided comments collected from team representatives (attached). He stated that confusion existed among the teams. They used the Field Hockey application from last semester as a model because PRAC complimented that application last semester. Last semester Mercer provided an overview with the Athletic submissions but he left it out this year because the Educational Policy Committee recommended that the Athletic teams be considered separately. He stated concern about the lack of consistency in the way in season and out of season sports were considered. He recommended that individuals with knowledge of athletics be added to the PRAC as non-voting members and that a time be allowed in the future for presentations.

Blanchard thanked the Committee for re-considering. He stated that some issues with sharing facilities were not understood by the PRAC. Volleyball, for instance cannot use its normal practice place. Rowing, as a team sport must have all members of the team present to do any practice making the scheduling difficult for all team members. He stated that he and Mercer had been involved in the PRAC policy design and that one of the goals of the policy group was to design a system that would assure a participating student is not disadvantaged by participating on a University athletic team.

Walters stated that the Cheerleading season is August 15 to April 16 and all participating individuals are active for the whole season. Because of the intense scheduling difficulties, cheerleaders must study during the day. They have seven Morehead-Cain scholars and a team gpa between 3.3 and 3.5. Scheduling classes is especially difficult for them because the cheerleaders support football, men's and women's basketball, and wrestling. They participate in many public affairs functions and the competitions which are often scheduled late because of the TV schedules. The cheerleaders must have carefully constructed schedules so they can complete their academic work during the day.

The Committee returned to its deliberations of the motion on the floor. The Committee reviewed the issues raised in their early discussion and the comments of the participants. Poehls called for a voice vote. Straughan and Eaker-Rich voted in support of the motion; Bevevino and Phillips voted against; Poehls abstained. The motion failed for lack of majority. The Committee agreed to meet again after Poehls drafted a new form and directions for next semester. The meeting adjourned.