

## **Faculty Athletic Committee Report AY 2023/2024**

The Faculty Athletic Committee (FAC) thanks the Faculty Senate for its support and submits the following report for the 2023/2024 Academic Year.

### **1. Membership**

Membership on the Faculty Athletic Committee during the 2023/2024 Academic Year consisted of the following members.

#### **FAC Faculty Members**

Chair – Dr. Ben Bencomo – Facundo Valdez School Social Work

Secretary – Dr. Melanie Zollner – Department of Business Administration

Dr. Seonsook Park – School of Education

Dr. Erika Derkas – College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Gerardo Moreira – Department of Business Administration

#### **FAC Ex-Officio Members**

FAR – Dr. William Hayward, College of Arts and Sciences

Co-Athletic Director – Shanna Halalilo

Co-Athletic Director – James Deisler

Assistant Athletic Director of Compliance and Success – Cody Cole

For the 2024/2025 AY Dr. Ben Bencomo will move into an Ex-Officio role as FAR. Dr. Gerardo Moreira and Dr. Erika Derkas will not be continuing with the Faculty Athletic Committee. Dr. Kathy Jenkins and Dr. Laura Hansen have joined the committee. The FAC would like to note that this creates a gender balance concern on the committee, as there will be three female voting members and one female non-voting faculty member, in addition to Ex-Officio members.

### **2. Meetings**

The Faculty Athletic Committee met on the following dates during the 2023/2024 Academic Year.

9/21/23

10/5/23

11/2/23

11/30/23

2/7/24

3/20/24

April FAC meeting cancelled due to the cyberattack experienced by NMHU

5/7/24

### **3. Minutes**

Dr. Zollner, FAC Secretary, kept minutes for each Faculty Athletic Committee meeting. Please see attached copies of minutes for the FAC meetings listed above.

#### 4. Reports to Senate

On 9/21/2023 the FAC sent the Faculty Athletic Committee yearly report for the 2022/2023 Academic Year to the Faculty Senate.

On 2/22/2024, Dr. Lauren Fath sent an email communication to Co-Athletic Directors James Deisler and Shanna Halalilo, and cc'd FAC Chair Dr. Ben Bencomo, along with members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. In this email communication, Dr. Fath relayed questions and concerns from the Faculty senate regarding possible inability of the FAC to fulfill some of the charges as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. This email communication was shared with all members of the Faculty Athletic Committee via email, and then reviewed in detail at the 3/20/24 FAC meeting. The full charge of the Faculty Athletic Committee, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, was also reviewed with the full FAC during the 3/20/24 meeting. No FAC members reported sharing any of the concerns expressed by Dr. Fath in her email, and agreed that these concerns may have stemmed from a possible misunderstanding or miscommunication. On 2/29/24, Co-Athletic Director Shanna Halalilo responded to Dr. Fath's email expressing full support for the charge of the Faculty Athletic Committee and re-affirming the Athletic Department's commitment to working with the FAC to ensure that they are able to fulfill all aspects of the Faculty Handbook charge. On 3/25/24, FAC Chair Dr. Ben Bencomo responded to Dr. Fath's email, on behalf of the full FAC, thanking Dr. Fath for bringing these concerns to the attention of the FAC, responding to each concern listed in Dr. Fath's email, and reaffirming the FAC's understanding and commitment to the FAC charge, as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. FAC Chair Dr. Ben Bencomo and Co-Athletic Directors Shanna Halalilo and James Deisler attended the Faculty Senate committee meeting on 3/27/24, at the invitation of Dr. Fath. However, due to time constraints, FAC concerns were not discussed. Dr. Ben Bencomo then attended the Faculty Senate committee meeting on 5/8/24 on behalf of the FAC. At the Faculty Senate committee meeting on 5/8/24, correspondence from the Faculty Senate to the FAC and the responses from the FAC to the Faculty Senate were reviewed and no further concerns were reported.

#### 5. Duties and Responsibilities

Per Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Athletic Committee has the following duties and responsibilities (see below).

*a. Work to support the student-athlete's academic and nonacademic learning and development.*

The Faculty Athletic Committee is committed to supporting the student-athlete's academic and nonacademic learning and development. To this end, the FAC worked with the Athletic Department throughout the 2023/2024 year to ensure that student-athletes academic needs were met, their holistic development was supported, and academic successes were recognized. The Athletic Department provided reports of their activities to address academic

needs and nonacademic learning and development at each FAC meeting, including, but not limited to, special achievements of student athletes, academic performance of athletic programs, and various supportive services offered to student athletes. The FAC worked with the Athletic Department to recognize student athletes who excelled in academics during the Fall 2023 semester at the Academic Night held by the Athletic Department on 2/3/24

*b. Work to promote and support the Highlands Athletic program.*

The Faculty Athletic Committee promotes and supports the Highlands Athletic Program. Faculty members of the FAC served on athletic staff and coach search committees, attended athletic events whenever possible, and along with many other HU faculty members, attended the Academic Night on 2/3/24.

*c. Review and monitor all athletic programs of the university to ensure that such programs are of benefit primarily to the student-athletes and that policies reflect local needs and interests of the university community.*

Co-Athletic Directors Shanna Halalilo and James Deisler, as well as Assistant Athletic Director of Compliance and Success Cody Cole, provided reports to the full FAC at each FAC meeting regarding all athletic programs currently available at NMHU, as well as proposed future planned athletic programs. The FAC did not review any specific athletic programs during the 23/24 AY.

*d. Maintain open communication with the Compliance Officer, Athletic Director, and FAR in terms of Highlands compliance with applicable athletic associations and conference rules and regulations.*

Co-Athletic Directors Shanna Halalilo and James Deisler, as well as Assistant Athletic Director of Compliance and Success Cody Cole, provided reports to the full FAC at each FAC meeting regarding athletic associations and conference rules and regulations. FAR Dr. William Hayward was invited to all FAC meetings, however did not attend any FAC meetings during the 2023/2024 Academic Year.

*e. Maintain open communication with the Compliance Officer, Athletic Director, and FAR in terms of Highland's conformity to the regulations of Title IX. Bring issues of compliance raised by faculty to the Compliance Officer, Athletic Director and FAR and assist these individuals as requested. Report results back to faculty.*

Training was provided to all faculty and staff regarding Title IX during faculty development week. No concerns related to conformity with regulations of Title IX were reported to the Faculty Athletic Committee during the 2023/2024 Academic Year. Title IX requirements for balance of gender in athletic programs was discussed on more than one occasion during FAC meetings, to include interest in possible future athletic programs at NMHU. The FAC recommends that

clarification be obtained by the Faculty Senate on whether this duty is the sole responsibility of the Title IX Coordinator or shared with the FAC, and whether the Title IX Coordinator should be invited to become an Ex-Officio member of the FAC.

- f. Review and make recommendations to the Athletic Department and the university administration for any additions or eliminations to the athletic program.*

Co-Athletic Directors reported to the Faculty Athletic Committee an interest in possibly pursuing a Women's Wrestling program at NMHU, however, reported no current efforts to begin this program have commenced. No other additions or eliminations of athletic programs are being considered at this time.

- g. Work with the athletic department and administration to minimize the impact of practice schedules, games, and postseason competition on student-athlete's academic success.*

The Co-Athletic Directors and Assistant Athletic Director discussed with the full FAC efforts to minimize the impact of games and practices on student's academic success, as much as possible. No athletic competitions or mandatory practices for student athletes were scheduled during finals week of either semester. No official recommendations were made to the Athletic Department regarding practice/game schedule changes during the 2023/2024 AY. Further, the FAC recommended to Athletic Department representatives, ways to increase communication to faculty regarding student athlete absences. It was recommended that a full schedule for each student athlete be provided to faculty early in the semester, so that faculty could consider scheduling of mandatory class activities, if they chose to do so, in addition to weekly communications regarding student athlete absences provided to faculty.

- h. Act as a hearing board for appeals from student-athletes in regard to matters of participation, transfer, or termination in an athletic program and other issues as appropriate. Due process guidelines shall be followed, and a requested hearing should be scheduled in a timely manner. A hearing board shall be composed of at least three (or more) members of the Faculty Athletic Committee. Mediation may be attempted before an actual meeting if both parties agree.*

No Appeals from student-athletes were brought before the Faculty Athletic Committee during the 2023/2024 Academic Year.