

Committee on Athletics Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 20, 2023 Meeting #1 – In-Person/Zoom

Present: Chris Karadjov, Madeleine Liseblad, Tais Nunez, Milton Ordonez, Arline Walter, Kurt Escobar, Bobby Smitheran, Brenda Vogel, Sandra Shirley, Anthony Regina, Damian Zavala, Larissa Santos, Vincent Le, Perla Ayala, and Kevin Valenzuela.

1. **Call to Order** at 3:05 p.m.
2. **Meeting agenda approved.**
3. **Approval of minutes** from April 19, 2023: Minutes approved.
4. **Introduction** – the committee members present briefly introduced themselves.
5. **Introduction and report from Bobby Smitheran** – Bobby Smitheran is the new CSULB Executive Director of Athletics (see <https://longbeachstate.com/staff-directory/bobby-smitheran/422>). He came from San Diego State and has a long history in athletic administration. He is familiar with The Big West and this is his fifth week on the job.

Bobby discussed some of the reasons he is excited to be at Long Beach State. They included how well our students are doing academically, the women's volleyball team upsetting the #1 team in the country and having the ninth largest crowd ever, women's soccer leading against Texas before losing, the NCAA providing The Big West's men's water polo champion an automatic qualification to the national championship, women's cross country finishing second at the UC Riverside Invitational, and men's and women's basketball starting workouts next week.

He wants to engage the university community and is currently building connections, listening and learning, with a goal to build a vision for what Long Beach State athletics should be. It's an interesting time in college athletics, with issues such as name/image/likeness, the transfer portal, and conference realignments. It's a good time to review who Long Beach State is and who we should be. We should invest in who we are and provide the best possible experience for our student-athletes.

Brenda Vogel asked Bobby if he is still happy he came and he replied he is. The job so far has been what he thought it would be. His family is still in San Diego, and will join him later.

Chris Karadjov asked about the financial situation. Bobby replied that they are examining revenue sources and how to become more solvent. He pointed out that they are now resurfacing the track.

Bobby wants to work on branding, who we are and how we move forward.

Chris was excited to see the crowd at the women's volleyball game. He thought it was very cool to see that much excitement and fun. Chris asked if increased student fee is going to help athletics. Bobby replied it will for sure. It has a tremendous impact on the budget and gets us closer to where we should be.

6. **The Bickerstaff Academic Center and the role of the FAR** - Chris asked Sandra Shirley and Brenda Vogel to explain what they do.

Sandra Shirley explained that the Bickerstaff Academic Center is the main support for student-athletes. They do team-based advising and meet with student-athletes every semester. Student-athletes can also use other advisors if they want. The BAC staff do proactive support and have peer mentoring and tutoring programs. They have course-based tutoring and the center is open early and late at night to cater to the student-athletes. The BAC staff work with faculty on student-athlete progress reports. The NCAA mandates regular check-ins.

Brenda Vogel is the Faculty Athletics Representative for the university. The role is a NCAA mandated position. Brenda is in the middle between faculty and athletics in a lot of ways. It's a time consuming role and Brenda reports to President Jane Conoley. Brenda does a lot of policy interpreting. The attendance policy was revised in 2017 and faculty can't ask for documentation for illness unless there are consecutive days missed or something significant due.

Chris asked about the student-athletes' travel letter and how it works for asynchronous classes. The student-athlete should be able to do their coursework ahead of time. Brenda explained it is an excused absence when an instructor assigns a window for someone to, for example, take a test, and the student-athlete is participating in an athletic event or traveling to/from an event.

7. **Election of chair, vice chair and secretary** – Chris Karadjov was elected chair, Larissa Santos was elected vice chair, and Madeleine Liseblad was elected secretary. The committee discussed how great it was to have a student as vice chair.
8. **The 2023-2024 COA agenda** – The committee needs to work on the committee charge and description this year. Chris Karadjov encouraged COA members to review the charge; we do some items better than others. Chris will open a Google document for the committee to review and provide input. Once the COA has finished working on the charge, it needs to be approved by the academic senate.

For the meeting agendas, the COA traditionally have reports from various sides of the academic-athletic relationship. Coaches that are off-season have an easier time coming to our meetings.

Chris reminded the committee about an important perk that comes with being a member – free tickets to athletic events. If we want to go to an athletic event, we need to send an email to Jeffrey Scott.

9. **Meeting mode** – Chris Karadjov suggest we keep the same meeting mode – hybrid – with both in-person and Zoom. The committee voted to keep the hybrid solution.

10. **Adjournment:** Meeting ended at 4:06 p.m. The next meeting is October 18.

COA: <https://www.csulb.edu/academic-senate/committee-athletics-coa>

Recurring Zoom link: <https://csulb.zoom.us/j/84550458692>