Dear Stephanie,

Happy (almost) Thanksgiving! Time has flown by this fall as we flew past Halloween, right to turkey day and before we know it, Christmas will be here. I got a lot of positive feedback from my last letter, which pulled back the curtains a little bit on how we do things, so I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a little more off-the-field information on Georgia Southern Athletics.

For this letter, I wanted to give you insight into SAAC. I’m not sure how many of you know what that is, but it’s a very important part of our department as well as the development of our young leaders. SAAC stands for Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Student-athletes have a voice in the NCAA through advisory committees at the campus, conference, and national level. I’m taking this from the NCAA website, but it’s spot-on as to what SAAC is. On the campus level, SAAC’s role is to:

- Promote communication between athletics administration and student-athletes.
- Disseminate information.
- Provide feedback and insight into athletics department issues.
- Generate a student-athlete voice within the campus athletics department formulation of policies.
- Build a sense of community within the athletics program involving all athletics teams.
- Solicit student-athlete responses to proposed conference and NCAA legislation.
- Organize community service efforts.
- Create a vehicle for student-athlete representation on campus-wide committees (e.g., student government).
- Promote a positive student-athlete image on campus.

Members of a campus SAAC have the opportunity to address issues affecting student-athletes at their institution; furthermore, members have the opportunity to offer input on issues that may be national in scope. These student-athletes have a voice in NCAA legislation, which is a huge step for them. I feel so strongly about building up our SAAC that I have personally taken over as the department advisor to the group. We meet once a month to discuss important topics nationally, as well as on our campus.

One of the hot topics of late is the ability of our student-athletes to profit from one’s name, likeness and image. Although the NCAA has recently approved their ability to earn a profit, there is still a process that must be approved to make sure we still maintain the collegiate model of athletics.

The potential revenue from this would come from businesses and the student-athletes’ ability to generate revenue through their name, likeness and image; Universities they represent would not be paying these athletes. I support our student-athletes and their rights to earn profits in this manner, but I firmly believe that we need to maintain the parts of the current athletics model that benefit all student-athletes like it currently does. View the 2019-
20 Georgia Southern SAAC.

I also like to drop new information when I get a chance here, so here’s one for you. In advisement with our Center for Sustainability on campus, we will begin installing new LED lights at our baseball and softball facilities. LED lights can reduce energy consumption by as much as 90% and this is one of several initiatives we’ve worked with the CFS to do our part on campus.

This is one of the busiest times of the year with the crossover of fall and winter sports. We have a lot of home basketball games coming up and I encourage you to get out to Hanner Fieldhouse to cheer on both teams. The men’s squad is picked to finish high in the Sun Belt and new women’s coach Anita Howard is bringing an upbeat and fast-paced tempo to her team that you will want to catch.

Our football team has played well of late, including a big win over No. 20 Appalachian State on Halloween Night in Boone. With the win over ULM, we’re bowl eligible again and ticket pre-sales are already underway. I can’t stress enough how important it is to purchase tickets through our department to help us remain fiscally sound. Our final home game is nine days away against Georgia State and we’ll honor 16 seniors beforehand. I know it’s the Saturday after Thanksgiving, but we need all of Eagle Nation to show up and lead us to a victory over the Panthers!

Finally, I wanted to congratulate our newest members of the Champion Society, who were recognized.


As always, tickets for any of our sports can be purchased at GSEagles.com.

#HailSouthern,

Tom Kleinlein
Director of Athletics, Georgia Southern University
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