

THE LAW PROFESSOR AS FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE: A ROUNDTABLE

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Every college or university that is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) must have a Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR). The FAR is a member of the faculty whom the institution designates to serve as a liaison between the academic side of the institution and the athletics department.¹ The FAR also serves as a representative of the institution in conference and NCAA affairs.

The role of the FAR is “to ensure that the academic institution establishes and maintains the appropriate balance between academics and intercollegiate athletics.”²

FARs have long been integrated into the infrastructure of the NCAA. They are prominent in almost all levels of NCAA governance, and they regularly serve as points of contact between their campuses and the NCAA in the conduct of intercollegiate athletics program.³ Many FARs serve as chair of their institution’s

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¹ *NCAA Bylaw 6.1.3* states:

A member institution shall designate an individual to serve as faculty athletics representative. An individual so designated after January 12, 1989, shall be a member of the institution’s faculty or an administrator who holds faculty rank and shall not hold an administrative or coaching position in the athletics department. Duties of the faculty athletics representative shall be determined by the member institution.

² *What is a Faculty Athletics Representative?*, FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION, http://www.farawebsite.org/what_is_an_far.php.

³ Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the NCAA Bylaws recognize the involvement of faculty athletics representatives in the organization, legislative authority and legislative process of the NCAA, and the important role of faculty athletics representatives in the local institutional control of intercollegiate athletics programs. Specifically, the NCAA Manuals indicate the following:

Each member institution is required to appoint a faculty athletics representative. (*NCAA Bylaw 6.1.3*)

Qualifications of those who may serve as faculty athletics representatives are described in *NCAA Bylaw 6.1.3*.

athletics committee, but each institution determines the role of the FAR at that particular college or university.

The FAR often assumes a role in handling NCAA or conference investigations and hearings. He or she may chair or take a lead role in on-campus proceedings. Another obligation of a FAR is to review conference and NCAA legislation. As such, law professors frequently serve as FARs for their college or university.

While legal training is a clear asset, there are also some disadvantages for a law professor serving as a FAR. There are few current student-athletes in law school, so law professors do not have the day-to-day classroom interaction with the student-athletes that many undergraduate professors may have. In addition, many law schools are not located on the institution's main campus, so there is also less contact with the faculty members who are teaching student-athletes.

In an effort to address not just the general issues that face every FAR, but specifically the issues that face law professors who serve as FARs, we invited FAR law professors to participate in a roundtable discussion at the 2012 meeting of the Southeastern Association of Law Schools. Those in attendance included representatives from the University of Georgia, the University of Nebraska, the University of North Carolina, Texas Tech University, and Ole Miss.

Prior to the meeting, each participant prepared a short paper to circulate to the group. These papers served as the basis for the discussions that followed. We were quite happy to receive insight from Lissa Broome, the FAR for the University of North Carolina. We were also particularly happy to have Jo Potuto, president of the 1A FARs (FARs from FBS institutions) present at the meeting.

The faculty athletics representative is recognized as the representative of the institution and its faculty in the relationship between the NCAA and the local campus. (*NCAA Bylaw 4.02.2*)

The FAR is one of only five institutional representatives authorized to request an NCAA legislative interpretation on behalf of the institution. The chief executive officer, director of athletics, senior woman administrator and compliance coordinator (or their designate) are the other individuals permitted to do so. (*NCAA Bylaw 5.4.1.2.1.2*)

Faculty Athletics Representatives Handbook, FACULTY ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVES ASSOCIATION, http://www.farawebsite.org/FARA_Handbook.html.

The following papers provide a look at an area of collegiate sports management that is not well-known or understood. We hope it will prove to be of interest to everyone who follows college sports, but we especially hope it benefits those chosen to carry out the duties of a Faculty Athletics Representative at any college or university.

