

Provost's Athletics Oversight Council (PAOC)

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 5, 2026

Time: 12:30–1:45 PM

Location: Hospitality Suite

1. Welcome and Introductions

Presenter: Dan Niederjohn, Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR)

- Dr. Niederjohn welcomed members and thanked attendees for their time.
- New and recently joined participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of Minutes (November 13, 2025)

- The minutes from the November 13, 2025 PAOC meeting were approved as presented.
- Motion: Approved by consensus.

3. Athlete's Address

Presenter: Cohen Ridenour, Women's Lacrosse Student-Athlete

Cohen provided an in-depth student-athlete perspective, highlighting:

- Her background as a sophomore lacrosse player and nursing-track student.
- The growth of women's lacrosse at KSU and the significance of upcoming competition (including games against Mercer and Florida).
- Academic rigor faced by student-athletes, particularly those in lab-based majors.
- Challenges associated with extended travel, including missed labs and coursework.
- The importance of academic advising support during travel, including interest in:
 - Hybrid or virtual study halls
 - Increased advisor access on longer road trips
- Emphasis on mental health, adjustment to being away from family, and balancing athletic and academic expectations.
- Appreciation for PAOC's role in advocating for student-athlete welfare.

Discussion:

- Members discussed faculty awareness of excused absences, academic accommodations, and the importance of early communication.
- Athletics leadership acknowledged constraints related to staffing and budgets, but expressed commitment to exploring hybrid advising and virtual academic support models.

4. State of the Department

Presenter: Milton Overton, Director of Athletics

Key updates included:

Departmental Mission

- Reaffirmed focus on student-athlete graduation, academic success, and long-term well-being.
- Recognition of high-achieving student-athletes as a central measure of success.

Facilities and Strategic Investments

- Baseball facility is nearing completion and expected to be among the top in the conference.
- Progress on:
 - Champions Complex / Football Operations Facility
 - Sports Performance Center
- Development of a sports science and performance research center, supported by:
 - \$2M Wellstar investment
 - Dedicated faculty leadership
- Emphasis on injury prevention, performance optimization, nutrition, recovery, and holistic care.
- Vision for integrated data systems connecting sports medicine, strength & conditioning, and research.

Academic and Research Integration

- Opportunities for faculty and student involvement in applied research.
- Potential to strengthen recruitment, retention, and external funding.

- Plans to involve student-athletes in research and experiential learning opportunities.

5. Compliance Report and NCAA News

Presenter: Matthew Iwanski, Associate AD, Compliance and Risk Management

- Primary focus on misinformation regarding eligibility and seasons of competition.
- Increased need for clear communication to student-athletes to prevent academic and eligibility missteps.
- NIL landscape has stabilized; eligibility issues are now the most pressing concern.
- Ongoing education related to:
 - Gambling risks and NCAA compliance
 - Use of monitoring software to protect integrity of competition
- Noted successful and efficient football transfer portal period, with appreciation extended to campus partners.

6. Student-Athlete Academic Update

Presenter: Dr. Randy Kennedy, Associate AD, Academic Services

Highlights included:

- Record academic performance:
 - Fall GPA: 3.28 (highest on record)
 - ~75% of student-athletes earned a 3.0+
 - Multiple teams with significant numbers of 4.0 GPAs
- Positive outcomes despite staffing transitions and heavy athletic schedules.
- Coordination improvements during transfer portal and midyear enrollments.
- Upcoming initiatives:
 - Hosting a Division I Academic Summit in May
 - Preparing for shortened fall semester and longer class periods
- Continued emphasis on collaboration with campus partners.

7. Student-Athlete Welfare and SAAC Update

Presenter: Meghan Stoltzfus, Director of Student-Athlete Development

- Successful Owls Choice Awards event with strong student engagement.
- SAAC meeting postponed due to weather; upcoming focus areas include:
 - Community service initiatives
 - Collaboration with the new sports performance research director
- Career development programming:
 - Resume Remix (junior-focused)
 - Networking Scrimmage (senior-focused)
- Discussion regarding financial aid disbursement timing:
 - Acknowledged challenges related to rent and cost-of-living timing
 - Commitment to addressing delays and supporting students with documentation and emergency assistance as needed

8. FAR and Admissions Advisory Committee Update

Presenter: Dan Niederjohn, FAR

- Ongoing efforts to increase faculty awareness of student-athlete accommodation policies.
- Coordination with department chairs during high-impact academic periods (e.g., finals).
- Announced upcoming vacancies on PAOC due to member role changes.
- Encouraged members to share PAOC updates broadly within their units to increase campus awareness and support.

9. Other Business

- No additional items were raised.

Upcoming Meeting

- Date: April 2, 2026
- Location: Hospitality Suite
- Calendar invitation to follow.