

Provost's Athletics Oversight Council (PAOC) Meeting Minutes

Date: November 13, 2025

Time: 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Location: Hospitality Suite

Chair: Dr. Daniel Niederjohn, Faculty Athletics Representative

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting called to order by Dr. Niederjohn.
- Attendees included faculty representatives, athletics staff, and invited speakers.

2. Approval of Minutes (September 4, 2025)

- Minutes approved as presented; no revisions requested.

3. Athlete's Address – Baron Hopson (Football)

- Shared experiences as a student-athlete:
 - Transferred from Jackson State; biggest adjustments were campus size and traffic.
 - Commended staff for supporting schedule flexibility for practices and classes.
 - Discussed challenges with scheduling due to practice blocks (6 AM–12 PM).
 - Suggested improvements for class registration and scheduling conflicts.
- Academic and athletic updates:
 - Civil Engineering major; plans to pursue a master's degree starting January.
- Team perspective:
 - Positive morale due to recent success; emphasized need for nutrition and recovery facilities.
- Transportation:
 - Uses both personal vehicle and campus shuttle (B.O.B.); praised reliability.

4. State of the Department

- Milton Overton absent; Dan share highlights:
 - Men's Basketball: 3–0 start.
 - Women's Basketball: 2–1 start; Coach Blue achieved 50th career win.
 - Volleyball: 16–8 overall; tournament upcoming.

- Soccer: Key senior day win vs. Jacksonville State.
- Football: 7–2 overall, 5–0 in conference; major game upcoming.
- Cross Country: Women placed 5th, men 4th at championships.
- Tennis: Fall season concluded successfully.

5. Marching Owls – Missed Class Concerns (Dr. Brandon Meeks)

- Challenges with midweek games and late-night commitments:
 - Tuesday night game ended at 11:30 PM; students returned at 2 AM.
 - Freshmen most impacted due to early classes and commuting.
- Proposed consideration for excused absences for early classes following late games.
- Discussion on policy gaps for post-competition absences; current policy covers pre- and during-competition only.
- Faculty education suggested to improve understanding of student-athlete and band obligations.

6. Student-Athlete Academic Update (Dr. Randy Kennedy)

- APR report:
 - Average score: 986 (out of 1000); qualifies for NCAA academic disbursement
 - Eight teams scored a perfect 1000
- Finals preparation underway.
- Bowl game implications:
 - Potential conflicts with finals and graduation ceremonies; contingency planning in progress.
- Recognition:
 - Nominations for NCAA postgraduate scholarships and McClendon Award.

7. Student-Athlete Welfare & SAAC Update (Meghan Stoltzfus)

- Upcoming SAAC meeting and baseball stadium tour.
- Planning for January Choice Awards and spring community service initiatives.
- Mental health awareness event proposed for April.
- Completed fall development sessions

- Financial literacy workshop received positive feedback.
- Spring programming
 - Freshman cultural competency, nutrition for sophomores, resume workshops for juniors, networking scrimmage for seniors.
- Additional financial literacy sessions planned for NIL participants.

8. Compliance Report & NCAA News (Matthew Iwanski)

- Key updates:
 - NCAA football signing date moved to January 2; logistical challenges anticipated.
 - Ongoing lawsuits regarding eligibility rules; potential congressional intervention (Score Act).
 - Sports gambling legislation: professional sports betting likely to be permitted; collegiate betting remains prohibited.
- Emphasis on continued education for athletes and staff regarding gambling restrictions.

9. FAR & Admissions Advisory Committee Update (Dr. Niederjohn)

- Admissions standards reverting to pre-COVID requirements; standardized tests reinstated for Fall 2026.
- Committee reviewing high-risk student-athlete admissions cases.
- Discussion on committee structure:
 - Consideration of moving from college-specific representation to at-large membership.

10. Other Business

- Review of pregame excusal policy for midweek games:
 - Positive feedback from athletics; no faculty concerns reported.
- Future considerations:
 - Potential policy revisions for post-competition absences.
 - Faculty education initiatives for onboarding and orientation.
- Next meetings scheduled:
 - **February 5, 2026**
 - **April 2, 2026**

Adjournment

- Meeting concluded at 1:45 PM.
- Chair thanked attendees; wished everyone happy holidays.