



PRESIDENTS MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 8, 2009
CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

After everyone found the room, Steve MacDonald called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM, welcomed the group, and explained why he was chairing the session.

In attendance: Ken Andrews, Tom Flynn, Chris Hall, Jim Douthat, Jim Harris, Mike MacDowell, Tom O'Hara, Tim Gilmour, Ted Long, Lex McMillan, Jerry Greiner, Molly Smith, and Steve MacDonald

1. Jim Harris summarized recent work on promoting the Division III brand to highlight more than what we aren't – the Division that doesn't give athletic scholarships. Many presidents commented on the Division III Strategic Positioning Platform and how it clearly portrays the attributes and "reasons to believe" for our potential audience. It was noted that by being involved in this initiative, we might also help our own branding by highlighting the MAC for a national audience. The group voted 12-0 to be part of the pilot program. Ken Andrews will work with the National Office to implement the platform.
2. Jim also noted that the NCAA has asked for schools to volunteer for the Academic Reporting pilot. The initial focus will be on graduation rates, but the program is likely to expand to include other outcome data (the same direction Division I and II took). Similar to the Financial Aid Report, this information will be based on an internal comparison, not one between schools – how do an institution's student-athletes compare with the entire student body? Rather than leave this up to individual institutions, the group voted 12-0 to participate in the pilot as a conference.
3. In conclusion, Jim spoke about his role and the process for finding a successor for Myles Brand. He assured the group that the person will be a university president, almost definitely from Division I.
4. Lex McMillan summarized the discussion at the October 1 meeting of the strategic planning committee. These are the major themes that evolved:

The MAC Philosophy and Principles statement is great, but are we living up to all the expectations? Diversity, inclusion, and equity issues are most obvious shortcomings. The statement should be a framework for any strategic planning. A quality experience for our student-athletes is also paramount.

Governance issues surrounding communication and action between and among athletic administrators and presidents. The question emerged as to whether this was a problem on individual campuses or conference-wide – sentiment indicated that both were an issue. It was also noted that direct reports and FAR's need to be included in a meaningful way. Because a significant number of presidents and several direct reports will be in Atlanta, we will conduct a forum with athletic administrators on how to solve these problems.

Membership issues include the need for more football schools, the process (what did we learn from Stevens?), and the need to "stabilize" the conference. It was noted that although we have

had some “instability” caused by membership issues, compared to most contiguous conferences, we are in much better shape.

How do we better highlight the conference and improve the brand? Promoting the MAC, the NCAA identity initiative, and our centennial observance were all mentioned as vehicles for enhancing our image.

Despite strategic planning, action is not on hold. The Atlanta session on governance, cultivation of possible new members, work on diversity and equity, and marketing initiatives proceed in conjunction with the planning process. The committee will meet regularly in the short term and present a draft of main themes for the March meetings of athletic directors and presidents. Final adoption is scheduled for the May meeting with “roundtables” to discuss implications and implementation.

5. Ted Long summarized his conversations with Presidents Volpe (Hood) and Manning (Stevenson) regarding their interest in MAC membership. This is the most receptive they have been because of changes in the Capital (more public schools), their own position (Stevenson name change, adding football, and expanding academic program; Hood becoming coed and improving athletic facilities), and our strength (presidential leadership, similar institutions, athletic prowess, and reasonable travel). Although our primary focus is on Stevenson for football, they may be more inclined to see a package deal with a neighboring rival. After some conversation about the process for evaluating new members, most importantly the role of the athletic administrators, the group agreed to continue to work with Hood and Stevenson. Tom Flynn has a call scheduled with Kevin Manning and Ted Long will speak with Ron Volpe. Those conversations may result in offers for Ken Andrews to visit the schools to provide further information and assess their situation. Once that occurs, and assuming the findings are favorable, the Executive Committee will plot a course of action.
6. As approved by the athletic administrators, Ken Andrews described the championship and regular season format for women’s tennis: the status quo for 2009-10 and men and women both competing in spring 2011 (the individual tournament will be combined into one weekend).
7. Although we only have five definite sponsors of women’s golf, and the by-laws require that we have six for a conference championship, we might have enough participants as several schools have indicated that they might offer the sport. To help schools recruit teams and to plan for a championship, the group approved 11-0 a motion to start a women’s team golf championship in 2011.
8. Steve MacDonald, MAC Treasurer, reviewed the conference budget. He first noted that the “2000-09 approved” budget is technically the “2008-09 unaudited” budget. He reminded the group that in the interest of dues reduction we will not make contributions to the endowed account in the next two cycles. As requested by the presidents, Ken Andrews found about \$12,000 in conference cost savings. If some more cost saving measures for 2010-11 can be found without impacting the student-athlete experience or diminishing the activities of the conference office (for example: saving \$5,000 in rent with Ken Andrews working from home), those should be pursued. Ken Andrews indicated that he can probably find another \$5-6,000 in such savings. Steve MacDonald reiterated his commitment to housing the MAC office at LVC. If the MAC/LVC relationship ends, Ted Long expressed a willingness to explore the possibility of a similar arrangement at Elizabethtown.
9. The 2007-08 MAC Academic Report delineates the range of differentials for the schools, but it is tough to read and does not include conference totals. It was also noted that non student-athlete is a misnomer. The group recommended the following actions:

Ken Andrews work with an institutional research person at Lebanon Valley to make the report more readable and easier to transpose (Excel to Access).

Each school should be able to see their results compared to the rest of the conference.

By team, the report will only include first year to sophomore retention, GPA's; and a six year graduation rate.

10. The NCAA Financial Aid Report spurred some discussion about the data collection instrument and how our schools that have exceeded the 4% variance were all cleared after a "Level I" review. Because we have not had a school with a persistent excessive variance, there has been no move to examine corrective strategies.
11. The 2007-08 Equity Report raised several questions about the data collection for the EADA Report. Ken Andrews indicated two initiatives for this year:

The Equity Committee will develop a survey to examine how our schools are fulfilling Title IX legislation. This is likely to paint a better picture than the numbers in the EADA Reports.

At the March 2010 meeting of the athletic administrators, we will conduct a workshop on completing the EADA Report so schools can share how they are interpreting the guidelines and collecting the data.
12. The composition of the Executive Committee is out of sync because of conference membership changes – Scranton left and Alvernia moved from the Freedom to the Commonwealth. To rectify this situation, Tom O'Hara will stay on for another year (2010-11), Tom Flynn will terminate his tenure one year early (May 2011), a Freedom president will be named Vice-Chair in May 2010 to replace Kim Phipps, in 2011 a Freedom and Commonwealth president will join the group replacing Tom O'Hara and Tom Flynn, and Steve MacDonald will serve as chair from 2010-12 and be replaced with a Commonwealth colleague at the end of his term.
13. Because another conference uses MASCAC (Massachusetts State), MAC sounds better than MASCAC, and our own identity is tied to the MAC, the group voted 11-0 to refer to our conferences as "The MAC" – the Freedom, Commonwealth, and Middle Atlantic would be included under the Middle Atlantic Conferences umbrella. Ken Andrews indicated that the NCAA will have no problems with the change, but we might run into some copyright issues as two other conferences are known as the MAC/MAAC (Mid-American Conference and Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference).

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.