

Proposal for the Creation of an Athletics Advisory Board

To: John A. Reeves, Director of Athletics
CC: Thad Dohrn, Associate Athletic Director, External Affairs; Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University
Subject: Proposal for the Creation of an Athletics Advisory Board
From: Columbia College Student Council, Engineering Student Council, General Studies Student Council, and Barnard College Student Government Association

Observations:

There is a serious lack of support amongst the students of Columbia University for our athletic teams and programs. A considerable disconnect currently exists between the athletic and non-athletic communities; furthermore, there is presently no institutional means for non-athletes to communicate and to interact with the athletic community.

Promotion and the consequent attendance of athletic events suffer as a result of this disconnect. The University acted generously in last year’s decision to make admission to Baker Field free as well as in its offer of shuttle buses to Baker Field, free of charge, for football games. Despite these attempts, student attendance at these events continues to be low. Still, combined efforts between athletes, the Athletics Department, and student leaders offer the hope of addressing this situation.

Specifically, the Midnight Mania event—planned by representatives of more than a dozen student organizations, along with student athletes, coaches, faculty, and Athletics staff—attracted more than a thousand students to the Blue Gym to support the Men’s and Women’s Basketball teams. Hopefully, this excitement will translate into increased support and attendance at games.

Proposal:

The Columbia College Student Council (CCSC), Engineering Student Council (ESC), General Studies Student Council (GSSC) and Barnard College Student Government Association (SGA) propose that an Athletics Advisory Board be established for the purpose of opening a dialogue between the Athletics Department and students. This Board shall take as its purpose the promotion of athletics, the integration of student athletes and non-athletes, and the facilitation of communication between the Athletic Department and the greater Columbia community.

Argument:

** Columbia College Student Council: ccsc@columbia.edu * Engineering Student Council: esc@columbia.edu * General Studies Student Council: gssc@columbia.edu * Barnard College Student Government Association: sga@barnard.edu **

We feel that a major cause of the low levels of student support for Columbia athletics programs is a lack of communication between the Athletics Department and students. While the Athletics Department has made some efforts to reach out to students, the absence of any formal dialogue has ensured that these efforts have been limited in effect. The creation of a standing committee to address issues related to athletics on campus will provide a forum for student input on these issues and will foster an environment in which events like Midnight Mania can occur more often. The committee should include representatives from each undergraduate student council, as well as students from each undergraduate school including athletes and non-athletes, administrators, coaches, and faculty. It should take as its mission marketing of athletic competitions to members of the Columbia community, planning of events to build school spirit and promote pride in Columbia athletics, and working to integrate athletes and non-athletes.

Eva Colen
Student Services Representative
Columbia College Student Council

Matthew Harrison
Vice President, Funding
Columbia College Student Council

Ravi Desai
Vice President, Class of 2005
Columbia College Student Council

Christopher Cheng
Student Services Representative
Engineering Student Council